

# The Mail Bag

## GRAIN CO. PROXIES

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of April 23 appears a letter from Murdo Cameron, of Floral, Sask., re Grain Growers' Grain Co. proxies. The matter is one of great importance to all true friends of co-operation and of the above named company in particular. For several years I have pointed out the possibility of abuse in the voting of proxies and my solution is somewhat the same as Mr. Cameron's, except that I would go much further. I would have the company pay all transportation and hotel expenses of such delegates appointed by stockholders, providing they brought at least one hundred proxies, and a proportionate amount of such expenses for any number of proxies less than 100, or, in other words, 1 per cent. of delegates' expenses for every proxy voted up to 100. This arrangement would give the stockholders in Alberta and Saskatchewan an even chance of representation with the stockholders of Manitoba. It would place the company on a sounder and more democratic footing and thereby prevent any manipulation by interested parties and the suspicion which does exist at the present time throughout the country would disappear.

I would suggest that stockholders should give their proxies this year to men who would pledge themselves to such a policy and who would support a resolution at the coming convention which would provide for the introduction of such a provision to take effect this year. I would like to see a large number of letters in The Guide from stockholders during the next few months on this matter. Yours for co-operation.

J. E. PAYNTER.  
305 Darke Block, Regina.

## COST OF RAISING WHEAT

Editor, Guide:—Referring to a letter by Mr. McCurdy in the Mail Bag, Guide issue of the 16th inst., re a consideration of our article on the cost of producing wheat in the Saskatchewan section of March 22.

In that article we did not pretend to give exact figures as to cost of producing wheat and delivery of same to Fort William, as so many factors enter into wheat production, rendering an accurate statement impossible for all parties and conditions. The consideration would involve the kind of land, locality, distance from railway, shape and size of the farm, whether the operations were carried on on a quarter section, a half section or a whole section, or two sections en bloc; whether the soil was rich, heavy, rolling or level, free from stones, bluffs or sloughs, or whether it is a light sandy quarter section cut in two triangular pieces by the railway, one-half covered by bluffs and ponds and the grain raising operations carried on by cultivating little patches of every conceivable shape as an adjunct to stock raising. Then the kind of man who is the farmer and his adaptability for the business. Whether he thoroughly understands soils, management of machinery, horses and men, whether he understands the problem and business of marketing his product to the best advantage. Then it makes a further difference whether he is a bachelor or a married man. Whether he is a fine healthy specimen who likes hard work on the land like Mr. McCurdy, or whether he got it at a comparatively low price like Mr. McCurdy, or whether he purchased it at an abnormally high price and high rate of interest from some man like Mr. McCurdy.

Perhaps no one will doubt Mr. McCurdy's statement that he made money every year farming. I didn't say Mr. McCurdy didn't make money farming. My contention was that a man like Mr. McCurdy could make more money selling his farm at current prices for land and putting the proceeds out at interest at current rates and going into the city and putting his skill and energy into selling stock in some company or going into real estate, and the ac-

tions and statements of Mr. McCurdy, it seems to me, would verify my contention to the full. I would rather, if wanting to know the truth, go to the man who purchased Mr. McCurdy's land and get from him a statement showing exactly what he has made each year, or if Mr. McCurdy would have shown us his figures, the state of the land when he got it and how many bushels of wheat he took off it and how much labor it took to produce it, and really whether it was the wheat production that made his land increase in value; whether an acre of Mr. McCurdy's farm had more productive ability at the end of Mr. McCurdy's operations than it had when he began. Does Mr. McCurdy contend that he is an average specimen of the Saskatchewan farmer? What does he really know about producing wheat in Saskatchewan?

Let Mr. McCurdy figure out what he could get for his own services and for the interest on the price for which he sold his land. What he could get for the services of the plant if hired out at current rates for horses and men in the city (by plant I mean horses and men used on farm), and compare that with the earnings of the man to whom he sold his land. This would be an interesting statement for the Mail Bag readers of The Guide and doubtless many would receive considerable enlightenment therefrom.

F. W. GREEN.

## A CALL TO ARMS

Editor, Guide:—In renewing my subscription I would like to impress upon the minds of some people the necessity of reading The Guide and following its teachings. Farmers should break away from narrow-minded party politics, spend a dollar on the Guide and another one once a year on the Direct Legislation League, and help to swell the number of supporters of this form of government. Let us come out of our old selves and be men alive to the emergency call to arms to fight the battles of fair play, and combine as a body of intelligent men, as all other industries have done. This I request of the farmers. Do not let us be as the dumb brute creation.

A FARMER.

## FREIGHT RATES AND BARLEY GROWING

Editor, Guide:—As you are ever ready to bring before the public, through The Grain Growers' Guide—the only paper I know that is willing to take up the farmers' cause and fight for it—I wish to call your attention to what we farmers are up against in raising barley. I presume you are aware that we have a splendid country to raise barley, but on account of freight rates it is almost impossible to make it pay. If I ship a carload of wheat or barley from Lenexa on the G.T.P. to Fort William, I am charged 23 cents per 100 lbs. If I ship to Winnipeg I must pay 30 cents per 100 lbs. The latter is some 400 miles the shorter haul, yet the rate is 7 cents per hundred higher. I am told by a firm in Winnipeg they were unable to get all the barley they wanted in the fall of 1912 at 58 and 60 cents per bushel. If we had an equitable freight rate, we could do better than raising all wheat.

There is a great cry for cheap money for the farmers, which is in the right direction, and I would be glad if we could procure money at a cheaper rate, but as far as I can figure, if we had fair and equitable freight rates, it would be a greater benefit to the farmers than cheap money. It seems to me this would be a good thing for the boards of trade in Winnipeg and other Western towns and cities to bring before the railway commission and urge on them the necessity of more equitable rates.

J. F. GAMBLE.  
Normanton, Sask.

## THE NAVY QUESTION

Editor, Guide:—A close study of the letters appearing in The Guide de-

nouncing the idea of any navy at all leads the writer to the following conclusion: That a number of those "kickers" are foreign in their origin and socialistic in their tendencies. Now, while the native-born may welcome to these shores the wanderers of many lands, he may be excused if he fails to see the necessity of accepting their views as to whether he shall defend his country or not. There are individuals in our large cities who very strongly object to the employment of our stalwart keepers of the peace, but that is hardly a reason for our civic authority to hand over the city in their charge to anarchy and crime. The dreadnoughts of Britain are but the "Constables of the Deep." The cost of these dreadnoughts is but the premium paid for insurance of the immense commerce of the British Empire, of which Canada has no mean portion. I am enclosing a cutting from "The Dauphin Press" that gives more fully the views of the writer. I shall be glad if you will lay it before your readers.

THOMAS C. ROBSON.

Dauphin, Man.

The following is Mr. Robson's poem mentioned in his letter:

## THE CONSTABLES OF THE DEEP

What men are these you may descry  
On all the Seven seas?  
What flag is that, that braves alike  
The battle and the breeze?  
The cold North holds their brethren's bones,  
By Southern Seas some sleep  
For they are Britain's loyal sons  
The Constables of the Deep.

No tyrant fierce calls them to war,  
They arm indeed for peace,  
Their flag is still the slave's stronghold  
That bids his fear to cease.  
No ravished town is their grim prey,  
Through them no widows weep,  
To shield the weak, their guns speak out  
The Constables of the Deep.

And when the muster roll is called  
New Zealand's first to sign,  
Australia calls on all her sons  
To promptly fall in line.  
What shall we say of thee? Wilt join  
The Shamrock, Thistle, Rose,  
Hast thou no sons to take their place  
Fair "Lady of the Snows"?

Shall Africa join her willing sons  
To India's eager clan,  
Shall Boer and Briton here unite  
And we not send a man?  
In storm and stress they sleepless watch  
That we in peace may sleep  
And shall we still refuse to aid  
The Constables of the Deep?

—T. C. ROBSON.

Note.—Mr. Robson is in error in considering the opposition to expenditure for naval armament to emanate from foreign immigrants. He should consider the resolutions at Brandon and Calgary, endorsed by eleven hundred delegates. It is the native-born Canadian and the Britisher who is in revolt against the unnecessary burden. If Mr. Robson would read Norman Angell's "The Great Illusion," he would gather a vast amount of useful information on this subject.—Editor.

## WEED INSPECTORS

Editor, Guide:—I notice a complaint respecting weed inspectors, that the money spent on them is wasted. The writer of the letter has voiced a common complaint, due to false economy on the part of rural councillors. It has been the practice to appoint anyone who would take so thankless a task, and to pay him less wages than a mechanic. Consequently such an inspector makes his office stink in the nostrils of every farmer. He causes useless expenditure and annoyance by having weeds cut just when they are ripe and ready to blow, he measures inaccurately, plows illegally, and when he lays information the magistrate pooh-poohs him and will not serve the summons. The remedy is to get a capable man, pay him a reasonable wage, and be sure that he is sober. Better pay high and

get value than pay low and not only waste your money but incur further liability with no return.

FRED WM. GAMMAN, Sec.-Treas.,  
Rural Municipality of Swift Current.

## THE THIRD PARTY IDEA

Editor, Guide:—There seems to exist among the organized farmers of Saskatchewan a considerable feeling of disappointment and even of irritation, because the resolution brought before the Convention at Saskatoon favoring the drawing up of a constitution for the formation of a farmers' independent political party was turned down.

In the first place I would point out one very important feature in the consideration of this subject, that is, we who were present at that convention can be counted on as the most enthusiastic of the enthusiasts, or we would not have been there; and while we may be ever so anxious to see such a movement started in this province, how far can we count on the support of our fellow-farmers even of our fellow-members of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, in the matter?

We would be obliged in the first place to present our constitution to an electorate of whom probably ninety per cent. are so imbued with the prejudice of partyism that their present party leanings would out-weigh any hope of benefit to be gained by their political independence.

Success of a third party under present circumstances could only be achieved by political revolution and all through the political history of civilization the best and most lasting reforms have not been brought about by revolution. It seems in many cases to be the only remedy at hand, but too often, when the power and liberty of which the people dreamed have been gained by revolution, they immediately set about to abuse the power and turn the liberty to license, and they then find themselves under as unreasonable conditions as those which existed before their revolution.

To try to force reform upon an unwilling or indifferent people would be to court disaster; better far to work quietly by organization and through reforms only when the people have been educated to receive and to assimilate them; and meanwhile let us keep our Grain Growers' Association common ground on which followers of all political creeds may meet and discuss the economic questions of the day for their common good, and try to build it into so strong an institution, in numbers and in influence, not in support of any political party, but so that all political parties will be obliged to support us and so that when we have gained any reform we will be strong enough to safeguard it.

We want many changes in the present order of things, and want them badly, and they seem to come to us very slowly, and of all the conditions of life we are called upon to bear, uncertainty is the hardest. Still, when we get the changes we are fighting for, if they are to be lasting they must be brought about, not by revolution but by evolution; not by agitation but by organization and education; not by tearing down but by building up, until we can bring about that true democracy, the brotherhood of man, in which the people will truly constitute the state, and then there will be no need of any political party, for their usefulness, if they ever had any, will be a thing of the past.

JOHN NEWTON BURRILL.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

This Department of The Guide is maintained especially for the purpose of providing a discussion ground for the readers where they may freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, though not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.

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