

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, August 13th, 1913

WHAT WE LOOK FOR

It will seem tiresome reiteration to our readers that from time to time we must declare that there are no people who have greater faith in this western country than have the Grain Growers. And there are no people on earth who know this country so well as do these same Grain Growers. It is necessary to make this seemingly needless statement to meet those critics who have found it impossible to answer the arguments of the Grain Growers and have consequently resorted to misrepresentation and abuse. These critics act upon the advice given to a young lawyer who was beginning his career as counsel: "When your case is weak, it is a wise policy to abuse your opponent." There is probably no group of individuals in the world who have been offered more advice from more or less well-intentioned individuals than the organized Grain Growers, and though couched in different terms the burden of this advice is nearly always the same, viz.: "Stop agitation and learn to do better farming." Those critics who adopt this line of argument do so either out of ignorance or wilful desire to misrepresent the organized farmers. There is no one who realizes the need of mixed farming more than the farmers right out here on these plains, and it is highly probable that they know quite as much about how to go to work at mixed farming as do the gentlemen managing various industries and other institutions throughout Canada. It would seem only natural that the farmer, who has farmed anywhere from 10 to 30 years, everything being equal, should know as much about farming as the man who has never farmed at all or else was brought up on a farm and hustled to the city just as soon as his legs were big enough to carry him. The farmers, like all other people, need education, and it is only as they acquire education that the agricultural profession as a whole will progress. The Western farmers are students and they are devoting a lot of time to studying every question that affects the welfare of this country. "Better farming" is the watchword all over the West and the agricultural colleges' short course classes, "better farming" special trains and all other educational institutions are being patronized better every year, showing the hunger for information. But this information they are seeking is of a practical kind and not of the variety handed out merely to serve selfish ends. "Better Farming" must always be the watchword in this country and a never-ceasing educational work must be to teach the farmers to be better business men, to keep records showing the profit or loss in the various branches of their business and to learn how to buy and sell to the very best advantage. All farmers will admit that it is lack of business methods that causes tremendous loss to the agricultural classes every year. And as "better farming" and "better business" methods develop they must go hand in hand with a better standard of living. Conditions are such today in most of the rural West that farmers and their families are not by any means getting the best out of life. The social and intellectual recreations are not what they should be, and there is not that attraction which stimulates in every boy and girl the affection for rural life. "Better farming, better business, better living" is the present watchword of the great co-operative movement in Ireland which has practically remodeled the rural life of that country, and there can be no better watchword for the great progressive movement which is sweeping over the Western Prairies.

THE MALAY "GIFT" BATTLESHIP

Some super-sensitive Jingoos have been telling us how humiliated they feel and how humiliated all true Canadians should feel because the comparatively weak Malay States have given a battleship costing £2,250,000, or \$11,250,000, whereas big and wealthy Canada has not yet sanctioned the Borden proposition of three Dreadnoughts to the British navy. In sight of the superior Imperialism of the Malays, "every patriotic Canadian hangs his head to blush," as one of our Eastern college professors blubbers in the National Review. Whenever we hear Jingoos talk in this hysterical fashion it is a good rule to ask, "What are the facts?" In this matter of the "spontaneous gift" from the Malay States, the truth is such as to call for "blushes" and "hanging the head," not from patriotic Canadians, but from those unbalanced Jingoos whose ideal Empire would be a collection of colonies wholly under the dictation of Downing Street, as the Malay States are.

"A little learning," the poet tells us, "is a dangerous thing." Certainly very little learning in regard to the Malay "gift" is needed in order to puncture that bubble. In the July "Contemporary Review," a leading British magazine, A. MacCallum Scott, M.P., gives enough of the history of the "gift" to enable us to judge whether the free will of the people or the suggestion, if not dictation, of Imperial nominees had most to do with it. The Malay States are not self-governing, like Canada, nor are they a Crown colony. In theory the States are independent. Each has its own Sultan and flies its own flag. The Union Jack flies only from the house of the British Resident, as from any foreign Embassy. But in practice British control over Malayan affairs is absolute. The native rulers are "advised" by officers appointed by the British government, while the domestic legislation and financial affairs are in the hands of a Council nominated also by the British government. From the standpoint of the inhabitants the government is absolute and autocratic. The relation between Great Britain and the Malay States is like that between guardian and ward. When the jingo cables announced that one of the Malay Sultans proposed the gift of a battleship to the Imperial navy, and that the Federal Council unanimously passed the resolution—it all sounded very thrilling, unless one happened to know that the native Sultans have no say in the government, apart from their British advisers, and further that, with the exception of the Sultan, every mother's son of the members of the Council is nominated by the British government. But that is not all. Even the feeble pretence that the much-lauded resolution proposed by the Sultan of Perak was spontaneous is shattered by later disclosures. The British High Commissioner who presides over the Malay Council, described just how the gift came to be made. The Chief Secretary, Mr. Brockman, thought the Malay States should assist in the defence of the Empire, and to this the High Commissioner naturally agreed. "Later on," said the High Commissioner in his speech, "the Chief Secretary interviewed His Highness, the Sultan of Perak, on the subject." As a result of these negotiations the Sultan moved his famous resolution. How are the mighty fallen! His Highness the Sultan of Perak, whose grateful action was press agented far and wide to electrify the world, particularly those "colonies" wrestling with their own naval problems, was really not so much bubbling over with patriotic fervor as he was the humble and obliging rubber stamp for registering the opinions of the British War

Office. They pulled the strings—he obediently made his bow, had his little say, the Council of British nominees fell in line and the British Admiralty feelingly accepted the gift. A "touching" spectacle, indeed, with the accent on "touch." We must not suppose, however, that this action has the approval of the well-informed British public. Strong objections are being expressed that it clashes with the spirit of true Imperialism towards a dependency. No less an authority than Sir Frank Swettenham, a former High Commissioner, in a letter to the London Times, puts the whole episode in one blunt sentence: "That in response to a suggestion from their British advisers, the Malay Rulers and Council of the Federated Malay States—not the people, they have no voice in the matter—had offered to the British Government a vessel of war and that the offer had been accepted." We are not here concerned with the question whether the Malaysians can afford an \$11,250,000 battleship. We know, however, that out of 90,000 Malay children of school age only 22,000 are at school, and yet the Council which lightly votes \$11,250,000 in a few minutes for a single warship, spends less than one per cent. of the total revenue on education. We also know that this lavish grant will come from coolie labor whose wretched pay and deplorably low standard of living produces enormous fortunes for the few. While the rubber companies operating in the Malay peninsula are paying dividends of 300 per cent. per annum the death-rate among the Indian laborers is appalling, no less than one-fifth of the total number in one of the States dying in the year 1911. It would seem, accordingly, as though a better use could be found for \$11,250,000 than to dump it all into a single engine of destruction. But the point is that the Malaysians themselves have had not a word of say in the matter. Nor, under their autocratic government, can they have any part or lot in the matter except to pay the taxes. The Imperial officials and nominees have simply put both hands into the Malayan treasury and helped themselves to the price of a Dreadnought. It is a blessed relief in these stringent times to find such a lump sum with no awkward accounting to the people who foot the bill.

To describe this levy as a "gift" is a hollow mockery. Call it "contribution," "assessment" or plain "tribute," but let us save the term "free gift" for something more voluntary than paying taxes. Whatever part the British Admiralty had in shaping the Borden policy, it was never proposed, thank fortune, to hand themselves a "gift" after the new Malay style. But because the Malaysians have no voice in their own government is no reason why they should bear unnecessary taxes to show their loyalty, and to instance this fake "gift" as an index finger pointing out to Canadians the way they should go is both dishonest and pernicious. What defence do the people of Malay need? Not against any foreign country, but against the rapacity of the rubber barons and other interests exploiting the natural resources of the country. The people of Canada are like the Malaysians in this regard, that they need protection, not against foreign countries, but against the plutocrats of their own land.

Fernie, B.C., has taken the real estate wild cat in its hands and intends to wring its neck. The board of trade and local press have united to turn the spotlight of publicity upon, or, if need be, to prosecute, any unscrupulous speculator who tries to peddle worthless subdivisions among the hard-working men and women. Ten or twenty dollars a month is hard enough to pay for something