

The Brain Growers' Guide

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THE GUIDE REFERENDUM

The result of the second Guide Referendum will be found on page 7 of this issue, and will no doubt be perused with interest by every reader of The Guide. The number taking part in the Referendum was 6,798, of whom 2,603 were women and 4,195 men, and it is gratifying to be able to record that to every one of the eleven questions our readers answered "yes" by a large majority. The proposal which received the largest contrary vote was that of placing a surtax of \$25 per quarter section upon the land held by one individual or corporation above four quarter sections, and even this was carried by 5,249 votes to 1,202. Direct Legislation has the distinction of receiving the heaviest endorsement of the eleven questions, the vote in favor of this reform being 6,482 to 58. A year ago, when Direct Legislation was voted upon by Guide readers it was carried by 3,982 votes to 63, so that the affirmative vote has increased considerably, while the negative shows a slight decline. Woman Suffrage, however, if the Referendum is to be relied upon, has made the greatest advance in popularity among our readers during the past year. In the previous Referendum Woman Suffrage carried by 2,957 votes to 965. This time 6,121 votes were cast in its favor and 553 against. Last year suffrage carried by 3 to 1, this year by 11 to 1. The questions on Free Trade were somewhat different this year from last. In the Referendum a year ago the proposals were that the duties on British goods should be wiped out gradually in a period of five years, and that the tariff should be abolished entirely in ten years. These proposals were endorsed by 4,027 to 44, and 3,810 to 190 respectively. This time the proposals were for Free Trade with Great Britain and for the complete abolition of the Canadian Customs tariff, and both questions received a large affirmative majority, the vote on the former being 6,614 to 130, and on the latter 5,968 to 511.

The vote on the Navy question was particularly gratifying, and showed that the stand taken by The Guide against the policies of both political parties, is supported by our readers. In a total vote on this question of 6,543, only 493 were in favor of spending money on naval armament, and 6,050 declared their belief that Canada should devote her energies and her money if necessary, towards the establishment of universal peace and disarmament and the settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

What is the significance of the vote which has been given by the readers of The Guide? Does it mean that the farmers of Western Canada as a whole believe in these reforms and would support them at the polls in Dominion and Provincial elections? We believe that it does. But not by the overwhelming majorities recorded in this Referendum. The men and women who read The Guide, and who have marked their ballots in this Referendum, are a select constituency. They comprise the cream of the agricultural community of Western Canada. They are better informed on public questions, they are more progressive in their ideas, and they have less regard for political partizanship than the average man and woman in the West. We say this, not in order to flatter our readers or ourselves, but because it is a plain statement of fact. Consequently, the readers of The Guide have more decided views and take a more advanced stand on public questions than the rest of the community. It must be remembered, however, that public opinion is formed by those who are most intelligent and most active in educating the people to

their views. The organized farmers and their wives who read The Guide may be a little ahead of the bulk of the people, but the time is not far distant when the people as a whole will reach the stage in political and economic thought which our readers have now attained to, and will be ready to adopt by overwhelming majorities all the reforms for which the organized farmers and The Guide stand.

THE SEED GRAIN RATE

In declining to allow the usual half freight rate on seed wheat this winter the railway companies will seriously injure the prospects of a good wheat crop next fall. A great many farmers have sold all their wheat as they consider it advisable to have a change of seed. Now they must pay the full rate, which is most unfair. If the railway companies had any intention of making such a drastic change in their policy they should have announced it early in the season in order that the farmers might prepare themselves. It appears that the half rate on seed oats has been abused very much, chiefly by liverymen and dealers who have shipped in immense quantities of feed oats at the seed rates. Some farmers have been guilty of the same practice. Such abuses the railways should certainly bring to an end, and every safeguard they can establish will be approved of by farmers generally. But in the case of wheat and other grains the same abuse does not prevail, for obvious reasons. Whatever the railways decide regarding other grains, they should at least continue the half rate on seed wheat. Unless they do so they will have to accept the responsibility of compelling many farmers to use inferior seed and, in some cases, to leave their land unseeded.

THE PARCEL POST

The announcement that a parcel post system will be inaugurated in Canada on February 10 will be welcome news to thousands of readers of The Guide. When the rates and conditions are looked into, however, there is a feeling of great disappointment that the system to be established is to be so limited in its usefulness by restrictions as to weight and by the high rates to be levied. The largest parcel which will be carried by the Canadian parcel post will be eleven pounds in weight and the postage for a distance up to 20 miles will be 22 cents, or to any point within the same province, 50 cents. In the United States the conditions are much more liberal. There, a twenty pound parcel is carried 150 miles for 24 cents, and farmers are making use of the system to sell butter, eggs, poultry, fruits and vegetables direct to consumers in the cities. To send twenty pounds of produce 150 miles in Canada, or 25 miles for that matter, it would be necessary to pack it in two parcels and pay \$1 in postage, a little more than four times as much as the American farmer has to pay. Possibly the Canadian Parcel Post service may be improved and made more useful later. It will no doubt be used to a considerable extent, and will be a great convenience so far as small parcels under 11 pounds in weight are concerned. It is not likely, however, that it will be of much value as a medium between producers and consumers of farm and dairy produce, and it certainly will not be a very serious competitor of the express companies. The railway companies, by a new arrangement, are to get about \$1,000,000 a year for carrying the parcel post, and, considering how little their express business will be inter-

fered with they appear to have made a pretty good bargain with the government.

ROBLIN AND THE PEOPLE'S WILL

Sir Rodmond Roblin, as premier of Manitoba, has, during the past few days, been called upon to pronounce upon two questions of great interest to the people of Manitoba—Direct Legislation and Woman Suffrage. To both of these reforms Sir Rodmond expressed himself as absolutely and unalterably opposed. By so doing he has unquestionably shown himself to be behind the times and out of sympathy with public opinion in the province. The people of Manitoba are in favor of Direct Legislation and Woman Suffrage, and sooner or later they will say so unmistakably at the polls. It is perhaps not difficult to understand why Sir Rodmond dislikes the idea of Direct Legislation being established while he is Premier of Manitoba. For over thirteen years he has been the dictator of that province. Since he became premier in 1900 the legislature has always obeyed his orders, has passed the bills upon which he has placed the seal of his approval and has rejected those which he has opposed. If Sir Rodmond's own personal desires have been over-ruled by his supporters outside the legislative chamber the facts have never been made public. To all intents and purposes he is the autocratic ruler of Manitoba. But if Direct Legislation were adopted, the people, instead of being ruled by Sir Rodmond Roblin would rule themselves. And he objects, just as every autocratic ruler from King John down has objected to giving up the power which he has been accustomed to wield. Sir Rodmond, in refusing to give the people of Manitoba the deciding voice in their own affairs, depends, no doubt, upon the belief that, in spite of his being out of sympathy with the majority of the thinking people of the province on this question, he can still secure sufficient votes at the forthcoming elections to remain in power. He must know that a very considerable number of those who have voted for the candidates of the Conservative party in the past, believe in Direct Legislation, but he anticipates, as a result of past experience, that enough of these will place party before principle to give him another lease of power. Whether or not Sir Rodmond has correctly estimated the strength of political partizanship remains to be seen.

With regard to Woman Suffrage, the circumstances are somewhat different. Those most interested in this question, the women themselves, have no votes and, therefore, cannot enforce their demands. Many men are willing that women should have the vote, but naturally they are not as active in their agitation as the women. The appeal to Premier Roblin to grant Woman Suffrage is, therefore, based on justice but is not backed up by the ability to put him out of power because of its refusal. It is understood that the Liberal party in the Legislature will introduce a resolution in favor of Woman Suffrage, and that it may be made a plank in the Liberal platform at the forthcoming elections. If this proves to be correct it will add considerable interest to the contest. These two progressive measures will become effective just as soon as the people are generally aroused to their need, and are fully aware of the evils of the party system. If public opinion shows itself strong enough Sir Rodmond will change his mind as he has done in the past.

In the next issue of The Guide we will publish a synopsis of the report of the Saskatchewan Grain Commission, which contains valuable information for every grain grower.