

The Mail Bag

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cents, labor 25 cents, other expenses 20 cents, total \$1.15. The same argument applies to other clothing.

Now I will call your attention to two articles of food, that is, oatmeal and flour. I have taken, as a boy, ten bushels of oats or wheat to the old fashioned water mill and would get back all there was in it. Now, the big milling companies will not grind small grists, but the mill will buy your oats and wheat and sell you the flour and oatmeal with the following results. They will pay on an average 25 cents per bushel for oats, one bushel making 22 lbs. of oatmeal; so you see the farmer only gets oatmeal out of 3 1/4 bushels of oats, no tailings or dairy chop, while the milling combine takes as toll 6 3/4 bushels out of ten for making the oatmeal instead of one. You see, 3 1/4 bushels will make 71 lbs. of oatmeal. At 3 1/2 c. a lb., it would pay for the ten with no duty, no freight, yet it cost enough to pay both duty and freight to China and back. Same would apply to breakfast cereals made out of wheat and other articles of food. The tomatoes in the can, that we pay 20 cents for, bring the farmer about two cents. For a can of salmon that cost the consumer 25 cents, weighing 1/2 lb., the canning combine pay 1 cent a lb. for the fish.

My grocer man tells me there is a canning combine in Canada and prices are the same from any factory; but all fair minded people will admit that the power to fix the price of the necessities and comforts of life never ought to be in the hands of the few. Let us consider what are the necessities of life. When a newborn babe comes into the world it must have air to breathe, and a right to land as it grows, necessary for its comfort and physical welfare. It is admitted for every person that comes to Alberta, man, woman or child, bring increase land values of \$1000.00. I know land was bought for \$4.00 an acre selling today from \$400.00 to \$1000.00 an acre, all because of increased population. It is the people who make land values, and to the people it belongs. We read in the Good Book that "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof," and that it should not be sold for ever, and that if a man did not want to use land he has no right to own it. The title should always remain with the government, those who occupy and use it paying a small tax to the government, everyone allowed for the improvements they put upon the land. How much better to pay a small tax to keep up highways, schools, etc., than to have a mortgage upon it, paying from 8 to 11% interest, besides paying all taxes to run the government? Why do people want to buy land that they cannot use? For no other purpose than to take the advantage of someone who wants it, and make him pay something for nothing. Premier Seddon declared that New Zealand would never enjoy perfect prosperity until every foot of the land was nationalized, and now it is a live question in that country.

Second, the newborn babe must have shelter. The lumber that grows upon government land belongs to all the people and they should have it at cost. I could go into the details and show you that lumber is sold from 100 to 200% above the cost of production.

Third, the babe must have warmth. The Province of Alberta mines about 2,000,000 tons of coal a year, costing the people about \$2.50 a ton at pit mouth. Calgary has estimated it can mine its own coal for 70 cents a ton. The New Zealand government went into the coal business and cut the prices in two.

Fourth, the babe must have food, which I have dealt with.

Fifth, the clothing. This I have gone into.

Sixth, all the people have to employ railroads and steamboats because in the most humble home there is some article that has to come a considerable distance. It has been estimated that since confederation, the Dominion Government has paid out for the cause of transportation on water and land \$1,000,000,000, an enormous sum, about \$1400.00 for each person in Canada. If there is anything the people ought to own it is the railroads. It is just as important as the public highways.

Seventh, the people must have money. There was a statement in the Monetary Times that there is now in use by the

different loan companies \$200,000,000 in the three Prairie Provinces. Remember, that on nearly all farm loans of \$500 and under, the interest is 10% and a large share is of that class. Then the fees, average \$25.00, making the people pay an average of 9% on that \$200,000,000, and \$30,000,000 of that was placed last year. A large percentage of farm and city property is mortgaged from three to ten times what it would sell for seven or eight years ago. Is this proof of prosperity? If the people could borrow that money from the government, as they do in New Zealand, it would save about 5% to the wealth producing classes, or \$10,000,000.

Or put it in this way. The difference in interest we have to pay the loan companies and what we would have to pay the government would buy out all the railroads in the Western provinces and build what additional roads are required by paying 6% interest, spread over a term of 36 years, paying principal and interest in that time.

I think I have plainly shown the people that the combines and trusts are upon their backs. I will try and show the people how I believe they can cut the straps and let them drop. For the remedy of the high cost of living, before we can accomplish this, there are three things we must have. First, a new party; second, public ownership; third, free trade.

The reasons a new party is wanted are, both the old parties are in the mighty iron grasp of the big interests, or the combines and trusts, and, to my mind, it would be a hopeless task for the reform element in either of the old parties to wrench the power from the privileged classes.

The farmers of this district have unanimously passed in favor of a new party and the calling of a convention of farmers, labor organizations and all others who are not satisfied with the old parties. I would not favor a farmers' or a labor party; they both would be too narrow. We must have a representative government where the interests of all classes and condition of people will be protected.

We must have public ownership, especially of the large industries. We have shown what it would do. Now, let us consider how we can secure it. Public ownership of the land is a new question in Canada. If the land to build on could be secured direct from the government, the cost of a lot to build on would be reduced at least 100%. The graduated land tax would force

the large holders to sell the land and the government could be the purchasers, the small holder to be exempt to the extent of \$250.00 and for every additional \$1000.00 of real estate, held by any one person or company, the taxes to be raised. That put land monopoly in New Zealand out of business. Next, public ownership of the lumber would cut the price of lumber that goes into a house in half, so you see, public ownership of the land and lumber would reduce the cost of building a home 50%, and government loans to settlers would reduce the interest on borrowed money by one half, then public ownership of the great industries that supply our food, as we have shown, would at least reduce the price 50%. Now it is safe to say that 1% of the people own these industries and there is not one person in ten thousand of the population of Canada who owns stock in a railroad, yet that one stock holder has more power in making the laws in Canada that govern the railroad than the other nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine, which shows the power of concentrated wealth.

We want free trade, on this I will offer no comments; I do not suppose we could form a new party that would give all I am asking for, but it will all come in the near future. Don't get discouraged because you have the monied element to fight against. Remember that money is not the strongest motive power of the human heart; money has martyrs, but men and women have laid their necks by the thousand upon the block for the sake of liberty, love, religion, patriotism, fame, science and art.

WM. R. BALL.

Deer Mount, Alta.

A LETTER FROM PEACE RIVER

Editor, Guide:—In one of your recent issues I noticed mention of internal elevators and mills advocated and I should like to see the subject fully discussed by someone conversant with same as I am of the opinion that in a new country like we have here at Peace River it would be far better to build flour, flax and oat mills right at the start. At the present time we do not know in which direction our products of the farm will go and the freight rates will be high in any case, hence the advisability of shipping the finished product and keeping the by product in the country. We here are just far enough removed from any commercial or manufacturing centre to become one ourselves. This is my second year in the country and I am satisfied that it is equal to Manitoba or Saskatchewan for grain growing. We have some fine sam-

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ples of wheat, oats and flax, but of course there is no railroad here yet so we can't go in very heavy and that is the reason I should like to hear something more on the government owned mills. Thanking you in anticipation and wishing you every success.

ALEX. BENNETT.

Waterhole P.O., Alta.

This is not a world of strict logic, but of constantly-shifting compromise.—Earl Russell.

Clothes Make The Man

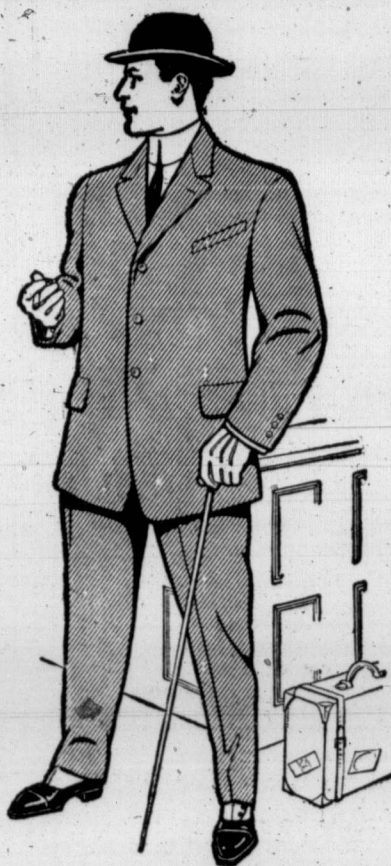
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