

The Mail Bag

A CANADIAN PROBLEM

Editor, Guide:—Under the above caption the conductor of the Saskatchewan section, F. W. Green, in the issue of August 28, writes nearly three columns of copy, which is one of the most curious compilations of assertions and insinuations that has ever appeared in The Guide. He starts off by stating a truth and using it to suggest what is untrue. Beyond doubt the purchasing power of the dollar has grown less, but this does not mean that the Western farmer is worse off today than he used to be. On the contrary he is better off, the price of his products having risen very considerably, while the increase of settlement and general facilities have added both to his wealth and comfort, and no good purpose is served by advertising a poverty that does not exist. Even more deplorable is the endeavor to represent our farmers' movement as antagonistic to our towns and cities. There is proportionately as much to be complained of in our city as in our rural life. I venture the opinion that no good but a great deal of harm will be done to the organized farmers' movement by representing our city dwellers as rolling in riches at the expense of impoverished farmers. Indeed we lay ourselves open to the retort that a part at least of the city luxury is the luxury of retired farmers, for it is a fact that Mr. Green, while he may not appear in purple and fine linen nor fare sumptuously every day, does own and occupy a splendid residence in Moose Jaw city and doubtless sits at a well laden table. Then we are treated to a characteristic flag-flapping paragraph in which stones are hurled at an imaginary foe who is advised to have a flag himself or get out of the country, winding up with rhapsodical devotion. What would be thought of a grown up man, who, walking along the street with his mother, should throw his arms around her neck every few paces and invite the attention of the passersby to note how he loved her and what a model he was of filial devotion? Why, every sane person would vote him a booby or a lunatic, and yet this is exactly what Mr. Green and men like him are constantly doing in their remarks on our relation to the Motherland. What follows is an equally remarkable exhibition of jumbled thought and statement. It is assumed that those who support free trade are plotting to destroy the Canadian nationality and secure the annexation of the Dominion to the United States, and some very silly things are said about our neighbors to the South, and the impression is forced upon one that Mr. Green, who writes at times as though he wanted to love everyone, especially if they live a long way off, has nothing but contempt for Americans, perhaps because they happen to live so close to us. He gloats over the color difficulty and other grave national problems that may confront our neighbors, and all this nonsense in face of the fact that we keep large agencies down among them to persuade them to come up here and live among us and become our fellow citizens, in spite of the fact that thousands have come and have settled among us, and by doing so have shown themselves to be sober, industrious, intelligent and law-abiding. If Mr. Green had been wishful to discuss a problem instead of rant about it, he might have remembered that previous to last September you could not have got one person in a hundred to mention disloyalty or secession or any

other of these dreadful things which so stir his patriotic wrath. What he sees—sees by the way through magnifying glasses—is not a voluntary growth from original wickedness, as Mr. Green seems to think, but the outcome of definite causes. What are these causes? Why, this in the first place, to maintain connection with the Motherland the farmers of Saskatchewan must be prepared to forego all the additional advantage of a competitive market which many of the most thoughtful farmers believe will amount to millions of dollars a year, even in normal times, while in abnormal seasons its result will be even more unfortunate. Again, in the matter of transportation—a most material consideration for our farmers—they are to be left to the tender mercies, which experience has shown us are cruel enough, of our trunk lines running east and west. What does it mean but this that for the first time it has been publicly declared that our Imperial connection is not a good but an evil, not a benefit but a disaster. Mr. Green, while losing several hundred dollars a year may find consolation in being able to recite "The Death of Nelson," or Mr.

not take a holiday after his somewhat recent experience; a term of rest would most certainly have prevented him airing himself as he has done in this article, which cannot by any stretch of charity be called an attempt even to discuss anything. If any one thing is more necessary than another at the present time it is this, that those who speak or write for our Grain Growers' organization should do so with no uncertainty, and it is little short of insulting to the intelligence of the readers of The Guide to find the page to which we turn for information about the progress of our great organization filled up with the stuff I have been criticising. Nothing is more hurtful to the farmers' cause than for its leading men to fill up our official organ with a medley of words which may mean one thing, or its opposite, or nothing at all. It certainly is difficult for a plain man like myself to know what to make out of these fitful ravings of a twisted genius.

GEO. LANGLEY.

Regina, Sask.

THE NAVAL PROPOSAL

Editor, Guide:—I should like to say a

goal. And now that you've tacked it onto the navy question it may get wet and collapse altogether.

The fact is that we farmers are the biggest interest of all, and unfortunately we have let so many of the smaller interests combine for their own advantage and incidentally to our disadvantage. Well, they are only human; the remedy lies with ourselves. Let us go for one thing at a time, free trade first and then gradually clearing the ground by carefully considered legislation, encourage industrial enterprise right here in our midst, bring the management of the financial concerns into our own province and prepare the way for the fuller life of our agricultural and industrial community with prosperity and contentment for all. We don't want to see G.G.G. accusing other big interests than farming "noisily" advocating a policy involving a large expenditure; not because the security of their homes and the permanency of their work demands a revision of the existing means of defence, but because it will "bring money into their pockets without costing them a cent." We farmers want free trade, and all that good we hope

from it. But if there is one class of Canadian that looks to the seas as a highway to all markets for his produce it is the farmer, and he doesn't like to linger long over the thought of his cattle and grain being bottled up in our seaports through political jealousies being kept fanned into flame when parties should be one on the great national need, defence. But I take it that all interests, big and little, mean that it shall be no palsied hand that shall drop on those who would violate our glorious heritage of freedom. And I am sure that most of your readers would like to feel that the paper they are anxious should become in reality their representative organ would approach such questions as this in a manner untingered by party bias which, whether or not intentional, cannot fail to be so construed.

F. T. PALMER.

West Eagle Hills G. G. Assn.

NOTE.—Mr. Palmer writes with sincerity on a most important subject. We, however, consider that the word "rhodomontade" is not correctly applied to our article on the naval question. There was nothing boastful in that article. It was published to cause thought on a great subject. No one familiar with The Guide can honestly think that we have other than the farmers' interests at heart. There was nothing in our naval article of August 21 that showed the slightest favor to either political party. We feel that the farmers, who must pay the burden of any naval appropriation, should be allowed to have all the facts placed before them. As to the "Big Interests," we are prepared to prove that they stand to gain financially through war scares. But we realize that thousands of men honestly and sincerely feel that a big naval appropriation is the best way to secure peace. Don't forget that both Norway and Belgium have greater interests on the high seas than Canada. They are situated in the midst of nations armed to the teeth yet neither has any navy. That their trade is safer than that of the great naval powers is proved by the fact that their credit is better. All we ask is that Mr. Palmer and our other readers consider the facts carefully. We would earnestly urge Mr. Palmer to read

Continued on Page 14



Irrigation in the Province of Alberta—Dam Across the Bow River. This Ensures a Constant Head of Water for One of the Big Irrigation Ditches of Southern Alberta.

Kipling's "What Is the Flag of England," or singing "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," but the average farmer cannot swing himself into blissful ecstasies so easily or so swiftly as Mr. Green can. The good Bishop of London may delude himself into believing that Canadians would rather be poor and British than rich and anything else, but these gentlemen should bear in mind that the average man is moved by average motives, and while most men will make a sacrifice at some time, the world has not yet produced a community that will go on sacrificing themselves all the time, and besides abuse is hardly likely to produce a self-sacrificing spirit anyway. Perhaps the most extraordinary part of the article is the paragraph in which he declaims against economic considerations as exemplifying the spirit of Cain, and this is curious, because in an early part of his article he takes just the opposite ground. Why should he plead in one sentence that we have the right to grow as much wheat as we can and sell it, and in another denounce fiscal gain as likely to endanger Canadian nationalism and cause a disruption of the Empire, and so on, and apparently thinks he has crowned the argument when he pleads to have the bounds of Canada made wider and wider, which sounds very sensible when we know that our Dominion extends in width at present from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I regard as a matter for regret that our good secretary did

few words on your article in The Guide of the 21st inst., and I want you to understand that I am speaking as one who in season and out of season within the limits of my influence as a farmer among farmers has urged that free trade is a fundamental necessity for the full development of the West. We have power and material right here for the greater number of our manufactured necessities, and manufacturers established here in the West could find a profitable outlet with the economies of sales, freights and collections as good as any tariff wall against outsiders. While for the farmer, he must have free trade if he is to successfully cope with the combines where the combines hit him adversely. The disadvantages resulting from a tariff system at the present time are so generally recognized by farmers that you cannot but have the hearty support of a vast majority of them, and your plain and straight duty is to so organize this body of opinion, this Lion Couchant, into one definite impulse, show it when and where to spring, and free trade will not long be denied. But after reading your rhodomontade, with all the theatrical and unconvincing talk about the "big interests," I didn't know whether you held a brief for the Quebec Nationalists, or some of the sitters on the Liberal fence. Anyway, that big interest football has had half the wind kicked out of it by being tacked on to too many questions before, and it won't rise nor go straight to the

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