



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. Each correspondent should remember that there are hundreds who wish to discuss a problem or offer suggestions. We cannot publish all the immense number of letters received and ask that each correspondent will keep his letter as short as possible. 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. The aim is to make this department of great value to readers and no letters not of public interest will be published.

FARMERS IN POLITICS

Editor, GUIDE:—When one sees a big grizzly bear confined in his iron-railed den in a park, he has before him a fine figure, illustrative of labor and capital. The bear is labor—uneasy, confined, tramping forth and back, back and forth, conscious of a restraint, irksome and unjust, but unable to free itself. Like the bear, labor beats the bars of its restraining environment, bruising itself in the effort; then tries to climb over; then subsides and rests awhile; then renews the effort in much the same way, only to fail as before. Capital is the park commissioner, whose brains master the mighty grizzly, and, conscious of their power, back in the shade of the park pavilion, while their children play about the big bear, in the utmost security, tantalizing him with peanuts and crumbs of cake and crusts of pie.

History records many instances of this great human grizzly's efforts, some quite successful, some quite frenzied, convulsions of unintelligent anger in trying to free itself. "Magna Charter," "The French Revolution," "The Declaration of Independence," which culminated in the founding of the United States of America, are among the most noted of the successful efforts, and what glorious progress has been made in these intelligent and united movements!

Interspersed with these, and trailing their wreckage all along the path of social progress, are the ill-timed and frenzied outbreaks of unrest, quite often precipitated by some fanatic but master mind, which have left the great bear badly bruised and bleeding, and caused him to lay quiet for a season, and, though the ends gained may not have been quite commensurate with the sacrifice made, they have had a bearing for good in the onward march of freedom. Like the smoke issuing through the chinks in the house roof, they show to outsiders that there is something wrong within, and this leads up to the thought in my mind. This unrest of the farmers is notice to the world that there is something wrong in the social construction in our edifice. It is specific notice to our general and local governments that there is great injustice being done and that a remedy must, and will, be found. But can we look to the governments as at present constituted, dominated by the bread-and-butter politicians, to give us relief? For answer, go to Manitoba. The farmers asked for bread and got a stone. The elevator bill is but a makeshift which takes the place of an effective and workable one, and has the shadow of failure hovering over it at its birth. If the interpretation of the sixty per cent. petition as a prerequisite to the requiring or building of government elevators, is placed upon the law and it bears this construction on its face, I very seriously doubt if a community can be found to initiate the system. The government is thus very adroitly, but nevertheless playing our interests into the hands of our enemies—the Elevator Combine. With the way blocked by this cripple, it will be quite a while before we can get another opportunity to re-adjust the matter in hand. It has always been the way with this class of politician law makers. Whenever a sufficient pressure is brought to bear upon them for a given piece of legislation they submit to that demand, taking care that while it occupies the place of the thing demanded it does not do the interests any harm for these political statesmen are always in the service

of others than their constituents. What, then, is our remedy? Help yourselves. How? By laying aside all partisan bias and uniting and co-operating to get control of your legislature and your government and then make your own elevator bill. F. W. Green, that two-pointed tack from Moose Jaw, has pointed the way repeatedly in his well timed and far-seeing articles. He says: "No need of much noise about it. The franchise is the little machine that will do the business," and to all of which I say, "Amen." But we must have some plan of action. "Non-partisanship" does not mean that the farmers are to be a "nonentity," but rather that he become an entity of a very decided character—courageous, intelligent and very active. This butter-milk, balderdash, that farmers must keep out of politics, is an aphorism that has served our enemies already far too long. As an organization, we must get into politics and get into them deep and strong. Not along party lines, as Grit and Tory, not into a third party, as farmers. Then how? Simply by laying aside all our party affiliations and voting for the man, whether Grit or Tory, who gives the best promise—not



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by word of mouth, but by his antecedents—of a fitness and willingness to serve the interests we entrust to him. In one district the man nominated as a Liberal—George Langley, for instance—may be a man whose every interest is with us and whose every public act has committed him to our cause, and who, though a politician, has executed sacred trusts and not found wanting. Such a man gives promise by his antecedents of a fitness we need, and should be supported by every farmer without question. In another district the Conservative nominee may give the same promise and may be entitled to the farmers' votes. Such a course will be an intelligent non-partisanship. Such a course will free us from the thrall of the bread-and-butter politicians. Into such politics the Grain Growers' Association should go up to their eyes, and this is my plan. Let us attend the nominating conventions en masse, and see that good men are nominated. Very often our conventions are mere ratification meetings, carrying out a star-chamber slate arrangement with a candidate bound hand and foot to some pet scheme in which the average voter has little or no interest or information. All such ready prepared candidates should be unceremoniously rejected. Then let a committee be appointed from the executive of the Grain Growers' Association to pass on the fitness of candidates as per the specification set forth above, and I'll guarantee the political pot will go a-boiling to the "Queen's taste." See how this would work out. Statistics show that about four-sevenths of the

voters of Canada are farmers. In these western provinces, the ratio is four-fifths. Now, under all fair circumstances, we are the government. But the circumstances are unfair and where are we? Get your answer from Manitoba. There is claimed for Saskatchewan 100,000 farmers. Suppose we get seventy-five per cent. of these into our association, voting non-partisan as outlined above, under the directions of a committee competent to scrutinize their qualifications what would hinder us from controlling the legislature and the government? If this is a country of majority rule, this is our due.

"For forms of government let fools contest;

What's best administered is best."

Maymont, Sask. F. GIFFARD.

TO GRAIN GROWERS

Editor, GUIDE:—I would like to draw the attention of farmers to the fact that if we would do what was right with the Grain Growers' Grain Company, it would not be long before we would control the market. A great many farmers who are members of the Grain Growers' Association sell their wheat to the elevator combine. We have heard of a man joining one army and then fighting for the other side. He was called a traitor. If the Grain Growers were not organized we would not get the price we now do for our wheat. We would be getting from 60 cents to 75 cents, instead of as now, from 90 cents to \$1 per bushel. I sold wheat to the Grain Growers last year, and at the time the elevators offered one-half cent more than the Grain Growers' Grain Company. "Well," I said, "if it wasn't for the Grain Growers you would be giving me from 15 cents to 20 cents less. You are just offering that one-half cent more to try and put the Grain Growers out of business." If the farmers club together in the right way that will never be. The Grain Growers are becoming stronger day by day and it won't be long before all farmers are Grain Growers.

Arden, Man. A. W. MASON, JR.

the hunting ground, the site of the camp and the trail, the hunter would have had to give up to them a part of his catch for the use of the hunting ground, the wigwam site and the trail. If, in addition, they had imposed a tariff upon all food coming into camp, his load of provisions would have been again lightened; but we can easily imagine that his mind would have been burdened and his heart heavy because of the increased cost of living. The high cost of living among the hare-catchers of today, i.e., all those who perform useful work, is due to the fact that some people eat a great many hares and catch none. These hare-eaters, clad in costly legal robes which are daily growing more and more transparent and can no longer conceal an ever-increasing multitude of sins, levy tribute upon the hare-catchers.

Normally the price of a commodity would be governed by its cost of production. Tariffs, trusts and combines undoubtedly raise prices. Augustus P. Gardiner notwithstanding. But it seems clear to me that the principle cause of the high price of living is the high price of land. We rend the air with our cries against those who corner wheat, sugar, cotton, etc., the necessities of life; but what of those who corner the land, the source of all the necessities of life? Is not the rent of land a factor in the cost of production? Do not high rents mean high prices? Truly as Henry George says "The reason why, in spite of the increase in productive power, wages constantly tend to a minimum which will give but a bare living, thus producing a constant tendency to the forcing down of wages." The remedy for the high cost of living is to abolish all taxes upon commodities which artificially increase prices, and to raise all public revenues by the taxation of land values.

This would break the corner in land and bring about a social condition in which the hare eaters would also be hare catchers.

Yours for justice,
F. J. DIXON.

Winnipeg.

A DAVID TO THE FRONT

Editor, GUIDE:—Enclosed find \$1 for THE GUIDE, which you will please mail to J. B. Root, Omaha, Neb., for one year. After reading your excellent resume of the paper, its fearless attitude and broad-gauged policy, I can fancy I see a David coming to the fore front of the battle to do valiant service for the Grain Growers, and I feel like helping all I can.

F. GIFFARD.

Maymont, Sask.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

Editor, GUIDE:—Before the last Dominion election our members promised to help the farmers by getting a reduction in the tariff. The chance came. Uncle Sam knocked at the door of the Dominion house, but the members were dumb. The chance went by and they never said one word in favor of a reduction in the tariff. They were held back by the party. While I am a Liberal, I cannot swallow them any longer.

W. H. J.

Saskatoon, Sask.

TAX THE IDLE LAND

Editor, GUIDE:—Is it not time for some form of land value taxation to be introduced into this country. Here we see people going out 20, 50 and in some cases 200 miles from railways and civilization to get land to cultivate and make homes on. The majority of these people would sooner be where they could have the advantage of schools, churches, post offices, railways and the rural telephone line. We have enough vacant land close to existing railways for all the immigration we shall have for some years to come, but much of it is held at a prohibitive figure. The settlement of these lands would benefit both existing settlers and newcomers.

Why not follow the example of Australia and penalise the holding of land idle? British Columbia has given us the lead by taxing wild land four per cent. as against three-fifths of one per cent. on improved property. There is wild land 2½ miles from Drinkwater, Sask., worth, in 1902, \$4 per acre, now held at \$35. If we had a four per cent. tax here this absentee landowner would get such a reminder from the tax collector every