

The Grain Growers' Guide

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MANUFACTURERS SEE LIGHT

On the front cover of The Guide, in the space in which we endeavor week by week to express the fundamental principles of democracy and the best ideals of the Grain Growers' movement, we have this week reproduced an editorial paragraph from the current issue of Industrial Canada, the organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. And we quote this pronouncement, not to criticize but to commend. The Guide has very frequently pointed out that real estate speculation, by holding land out of use and inflating prices, is the greatest hindrance to progress and prosperity with which Canadian industries, both agricultural and manufacturing, have to contend, and we are glad to find the organ of the manufacturers so clearly recognizing the same evil. The organized farmers of the West feel no enmity towards the manufacturers and they would gladly welcome their co-operation in securing legislation to make it impossible for land monopolists and real estate speculators to stand in the way of the progress and development of the Dominion. C. A. Dunning, general manager of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Co. has accepted an invitation to address the Annual Convention of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association at Montreal this week on 'Western Agricultural Problems, which shows that that Association is beginning to recognize that the farmers' organizations are worthy of consideration, and we do not doubt that Mr. Dunning will be able to open their eyes to a great many things that will cause the manufacturers to adopt a more reasonable attitude towards the West. We do not know whether the evil of land speculation is one of the questions which Mr. Dunning will deal with, but it would certainly be a most appropriate time to discuss the matter. The manufacturers, however, will find themselves confronted by a serious difficulty when they endeavor to devise a scheme to put a stop to the evil of land speculation. The only scheme which is at present before the public which promises to accomplish that object is the Taxation of Land Values, sometimes called the Single Tax. The organized farmers of Western Canada have pronounced in favor of that method of reform, but before the manufacturers can endorse it they will have to abandon the Protective Tariff which they are at present apparently prepared to defend at all costs. This is another example of how Protection stands in the way of progress.

AS TO ELECTION METHODS

One main cause of political corruption is, of course, the need of money for purposes of political organization in the carrying on of elections. There cannot be political organization without ways and means of meeting the inevitable necessary outlays for the rent of premises, for printing, for postage, and so on. Money is needed, and the character of our politics is largely determined by the methods by which the money is raised and the uses to which it is put. Anything that will reduce or do away with any of the expenditure which under existing conditions is inevitable in connection with political organization and elections, will tend to the purification of politics.

If no money had thus to be raised for elections, it would be an immense advance towards clean politics and the realization of democracy as a system in full actual working. With this end in view there is much to be said in support of the proposi-

tion that it would be to the general advantage to have as much as possible of the legitimate expense—indeed it would be well for every dollar of legitimate expense in connection with elections, which now has to be raised by the candidates and their friends—provided for from public funds, in the open daylight of publicity. It is certainly arguable that it would cost the public less in the long run.

And why should not the school districts be made the polling subdivisions of constituencies? What more suitable than that the educational map of the country and its political map should be practically one and the same? There might be need of adjustments in a few cases but there can be no question that for nineteen out of twenty of the school districts this suggestion is entirely practicable. Then, as a logical consequence, the school houses would be the polling places. Why not? Would not this be eminently a fitting and appropriate use to put them to? Then the rent of some house or store or other premises would not have to be provided for. But the main value of making this use of the schoolhouses and the school districts would be that a right and proper permanent foundation would thus be provided for our political structures. It is interesting to note, in this connection that a bill promoted by the People's Institute of New York, a progressive organization devoted to the betterment of conditions of life and the advancement of the general welfare, to provide that schools be used as polling places has been defeated by the influences wielded by Tammany in the legislature of that state. Back of the measure were a dozen social and civic organizations and agencies of progress, but they failed to carry the measure to success against the efforts of corrupt politics to defeat it. The fight has not been given up but will be carried on in the interests of honest voting and the education of the elector. This good effort in the State of New York is mentioned here merely in an incidental way, in connection with the whole matter of the necessity of a revolution in the entire method of carrying on election campaigns and elections.

Rightly considered, an election is one of the most important of the functions exercised by a self-governing people. It may be described, indeed, as the fundamental function of self-government. Why, then, should the conduct of it be so largely left in a haphazard manner to the control of politicians? Why should not it be made a matter which the people collectively, by means of their governmental organization, should attend to the financing of? It is the people's business. It has been allowed to become altogether too much the politicians' business.

PROGRESS EVEN IN RUSSIA

Even in Russia the light of progress is making headway against the darkness by the long established fundamental method of financing the administration in that vast empire with its huge conglomerate of population. It has been the long-established method in Russia to derive public revenues mainly from the sale of alcoholic drinks, chiefly vodka, which is the national drink of the mass of the Russian people. The manufacture of alcohol in all its forms is in Russia a government monopoly. Now the Czar, not acting, of course, entirely of his own initiative, has declared that other sources of public revenue must be found, in place of this, and that the sale of vodka must be restricted. It remains to be seen how far

this will result in actual practical reform in Russia. There has been frequent proof that good intentions at St. Petersburg have before now failed of realization. But that in this case there will be some measure of good result there seems to be every reason to believe. There will be some lessening of the brutalizing of the people by vodka, which debases them morally, mentally and physically. The need of this reform as a national necessity, solely from an economic and utilitarian point of view has impressed itself upon all thinking Russians. The news of this reform movement is altogether the most hopeful note that has come from Russia in many years. To take the place of the vodka shops as social resorts, reading rooms and various community centres for amusement and social recreations are to be established. This tells of expense, not income, and yet it goes but part way.

The Russian's resort to strong drink has had more than the social side; it has meant more than a relief from the dull monotony of a life of plodding labor. It has made the Russian peasant class forget for a time its poverty and misery, the temporary stupor of forgetfulness being purchased at a heavy cost of increased poverty and misery. The government, to make reading rooms attractive, must first grant the ability to read. To make innocent social life attractive it must lighten the burdens of poverty. Alcohol has been but an agency in the dragging down, and the turning to it has been a consequence of conditions rather than the cause of these conditions. What Russia must ultimately do is to remove the causes which have made excessive vodka-drinking so great a factor in its national life. That it will do this is quite certain, since it is not an awakening of its moral sense that has aroused its rulers, but a realization that its people were becoming unfit for labor, for military service and productive enterprises. The one thing stronger than the national moral sense of any government, is a realization of its material welfare. This is always based upon morals, but it is the material needs which bring the awakening and give the sustaining power.

UNSUITED TO PROTECTION

One of the favorite contentions of Protectionists in Canada is that Protection is indispensable to the economic salvation of the Dominion, and that of all the countries in the world she needs it more than any other. The truth is that no country is so unsuited to the operations of protection as Canada. Her territory lies in the same latitude and tho there are some variations, for the most part the climate is identical. The result is that there is no great divergency or wide variety of products. Certain products are grown in great abundance and certain other commodities can never be grown within her bounds. The Dominion is a thinly peopled country extending over huge areas and endowed with great natural resources, but as the fertile groups of territory which constitute her domain lie within the same zone, all need to import many things from abroad; each is separated from the other by great stretches of barren and waste country; each is a competitor rather than a customer of the other and the course of nature would make it prefer to trade with its neighbor to the south or countries across the sea, rather than with the contiguous parts of Canada. In addition, the fact that the population, besides being so scattered is comparatively small, must also make it quite impossible