

# The Mail Bag

## GERMANY WELL PROTECTED

Editor, Guide:—Protection today is on trial as it never has been before. Look at the protection Germany has at the present time. Willy-nilly Germany is surrounded by the greatest protective wall that was ever built. The armies and navies of Great Britain, France, Russia, Japan, Serbia, Montenegro, Australia, India, New Zealand and Canada are all trying to make Germany prosperous by compelling her to buy "made in Germany" goods only. The governments of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy, Roumania, etc., etc., all have sworn they will not export to Germany. With all these nations straining every nerve to keep Germany from smuggling and compel her to buy "made in Germany" goods only, if the theory of Protection is correct, then Germany will soon be swimming in wealth. Let us wait and see!

F. J. SANDMEYER.

Coblenz, Sask., Feb. 23.

## OFFICERS AND "SPOILS"

Editor, Guide:—General U. S. Grant, U.S.A., is credited with originating the maxim, "To the victor belongs the spoils," in the sense of the election of public officers, but it is a pernicious phrase and should be counteracted. I should like thru The Guide to ask the Grain Growers' Associations to discuss and report their conclusions on the following ways of doing so, viz.: 1st, that all officers, including those of treasurers and secretaries or secretary-treasurers, should be filled by direct vote of electors; 2nd, that all candidates should, to get on the ballot, present a certificate from a proper "examining board" that they are fitted for the office they seek; 3rd, that they should, subject to recall by a majority of their electors or their resignation, be elected for a term covering their useful lifetime; 4th, that their salaries should not exceed that for similar services and risks in private life; 5th, that all officers should be subject to impeachment and on conviction a recall election should be held, but one should also be held on petition of not less than 5% of its electors, but to guard against spiteful, vicious petitions, half the expenses of any recall election had without such impeachment conviction, that failed to "recall," should be borne by the signers of said petition; 6th, present salaries and fees should be subject to change by direct vote of the taxpayers, and long and useful service should be rewarded by a pension.

In private life we try to get service from the one best fitted and make inquiry as to fitness before hiring and discharge or continue as we find worthy. There is no good reason why the same should not hold good in public matters. If good service is to be had the tenure should be long, and a life one would encourage many to fit themselves for certain positions, which they would need to fill acceptably to get returns for such fitting. The salary of office should not be a "spoil" for party service.

Also, I think we should ask our Parliaments, at least the Saskatchewan one, to submit another direct legislation measure to the voters, which should embody these features, viz.: That it should be held at the regular municipal voting places, and all municipal voters have a right to vote upon it; that it should be held at the same time as municipal elections and declared carried if 30% of those voters favored it, unless more voted against it, in which case a majority of the votes should be required; that the secretaries of all the municipalities should be required to send a voters' list to the proper officer at Regina (or other province's capital), who should be required to send to each voter, printed in either the English, French or German language as the voter may (and if they so do) request, a synopsis of the argument for and against any measure to be voted upon, including that of direct legislation; that the municipal secretaries should keep on file the "business signatures" of its voters, and "O.K." all petitions asking the calling of an election, and the reeve should secure the punishment of a forgery thereto.

Also I should like to have five or six

## AN OPEN FORUM

This page is maintained to allow free discussion of all questions vital to western farmers. Up to the limit of space letters will be published giving both sides of all such questions. It is not possible to publish all letters received, but an effort will be made to select those most fairly representing different views. Short letters will be given preference. All letters must be accompanied by name and address of writer, tho not necessarily for publication. Unused letters will be returned if accompanied by postage.

terse planks from each party's platform placed upon the ballot in Dominion and provincial elections and the candidate elected be bound by law, subject to recall if he failed, to try to get such as received a majority of the votes cast embodied into law, regardless of what party had it placed there. That would be a kind of pre-election "referendum." If many branches of the Grain Growers' Associations will take these matters up I will try to find people to circulate needed petitions, such as they may propose, in this municipality. Hoping they may do so and that we may have them ready when the next provincial Parliaments meet.

W. B. HULL.

Ambles, Sask.

## UNITED FARMERS' HOME GUARD

Rice Sheppard, of Edmonton, third vice-president of the U. F. A., writes to The Guide as follows:

I enclose photo of myself and four of my sons, showing what could be done to help the Mother Country or the Dominion in war time by the farmers of the West. This picture was taken in front of my house on the farm. One of my daughters is a member of the Red Cross Society, making six of one family ready to take the field if needed. Two

I am giving the boys a lesson in skirmishing on my farm. I can assure you the boys take great interest and altho I have no use for war, yet I think it best to be prepared at least for defence. If you can find room in The Guide for the cut and this letter, it will perhaps draw out the feeling of our members on the matter and I shall be glad to hear from any who are interested in the movement.

## ENGLAND AND CANADA

Editor, Guide:—I have been asked to write a letter on conditions in England as compared with the situation in Canada, but comparisons are proverbially odious, and how can one compare small things with great? In Great Britain there is a struggle going on such as has never been experienced before, a struggle of right against the greatest wrong, and all the energies of the nation are being concentrated to this end and the best that is in man is being drawn out and the evil burnt out, purified by fire. It did one good to be in old England and realize it, but when I reached Toronto on my return and took up a paper and learned of our best scandals, old horse iniquities, dishonest medical supplies, etc., I longed to have been in a position to return at once to England again, it was sickening.



Rice Sheppard and his family ready for the defence of the Empire

of my boys are now on their way to the front. It seems to me that if our Association would undertake to organize a home guard for the West, it could be done at very little expense. My plan is that each local union should get the young men interested and each man provide his own horse. In many cases I think our farmers would provide the full equipment, say saddle, bridle and rifle. The government should undertake to train the men, say once a month, at all points where a mounted policeman was stationed. One of the police could do the training and the farmers' sons make it a one day outing each month to go to the nearest training centres. In Alberta we have over 700 locals. Supposing we got three men from each local, this would give a force of over 2,000 mounted men, at next to no cost to the country, and if the same applied to the two Grain Growers' Associations of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, no less than 6,000 men would be provided as a home guard. This would permit of all regulars being sent to the front if needed and we would be fairly well protected at home. The training would be good for our boys and they would look upon it as a little holiday and it would be far better for them than hanging around a pool room when in town for the day.

If such things were attempted in England (tho the thought is an impossible one), in the present state of public feeling the lives of those traitors would be demanded, and the country being under military law, death would be the penalty. But this is not all. I also learned that the government of Canada proposes to have a general election soon. This is most improper and unpatriotic and shows that Canadians, some of them, and ones that are supposed to lead the people, are thinking more of their own dirty party politics than of what England and the Empire is suffering just now. It would be impossible in England, and both parties have agreed to have no election till after the war, passing a special act of parliament if necessary to make this legal. When I mentioned to people in England that there had been talk of an election, their comments were not complimentary, nor did it improve the position of Canada in English opinion. One's impulse would be to keep altogether aloof from such an election, but perhaps rather it will be the duty of all, whether Conservative or Liberal, to vote against the government that inflicts this evil thing on us. To look at it from purely a money point of view, I doubt if the tax on letters, with all its excessive daily trouble and inconvenience and hindrance

to business, will pay the cost of such election, and these are hard times when most of us are counting our cents. I cannot help referring to this in a letter about conditions in England because this is all so utterly contrary to the noble spirit the war has stirred in the people there. Owing to so many men having enlisted, labor is scarce in England, and women and boys are being employed as much as possible in their place; women are seen in unusual places, selling tickets at railway stations, acting as waiters in clubs, behind the counters in the army and navy stores, etc. Efforts are also being made to get them to work on the land as they used to do. I heard of one farmer with 80 cows and unable to get a man or woman to help him. Some of the unemployed in Canada might return to England, or, better still, let England's recruiting officers be allowed to enlist men in Canada and take them to England to be trained. It would be a shame to enforce conscription in England, where so many have enlisted and men are too few for the needs of the country, to grow food and to manufacture munitions of war, while there is an idle man left in Canada who wishes to enlist. England's struggle is ours. Germans would land on our shores if it were not for England. In addition, let it be remembered that old England is crowded up with Belgians, who have lost all they had on our behalf. Then again she has large numbers of wounded to care for, not our own men only, but Germans, too; also German prisoners to care for and interned aliens. Hospitals were being prepared on a large scale all over the country when I left preparatory to a great struggle this spring. Very little is allowed to be known in England about what is going on, but as it is supposed that we only have about 750,000 men across the Channel, and over 2,000,000 in khaki in England, something will be doing soon. Large military camps have been, or are being built all over England. Train service is good, but apt to be irregular without notice, the trains being required for military purposes and for destinations unknown to anyone. Orders for goods, parcels, etc., are liable to be delayed or incorrect somewhat, but on the whole "business goes on as usual." Blinds are drawn down after dark on trains (headlights are not used in England) in order that hostile night hawks may not be able to guide themselves by railway tracks. London is kept fairly dark and no lights are allowed to show in towns on the East coast. Undoubtedly England will be grateful for the men Canada is sending her, and I could not help noticing what a fine lot of men they were I saw in khaki in Toronto and Winnipeg, taller and stronger than the average English soldier, and we know they are as useful as they look. Of one thing I am sure, when they get into the trenches or are on the road towards Berlin, the most unsavory thing that could be offered them would be a vote in an election in Canada. Such a thing would then be judged on its true merits by men in a life and death struggle for liberty, honor and justice; it would insult them.

A few days before leaving England I was much struck by big advertisements in the papers of a new loan Canada is raising in England. Britain is spending 2,000,000 pounds sterling each day on the war, besides other enormous expenses, and yet Protectionist Canada has to borrow from Free Trade England, and England bears taxation better than we do. Her wealth is distributed over very many pockets, while Protection in Canada has made a couple of dozen millionaires at the expense of the rest, but now that money is needed the people are taxed out of all proportion to the millionaires and it is these same men who will not allow British goods a welcome in Canada, and at their command the government raises the duties against them. Truly it is not Canada, but a few men. Yet the majority suffer, not only in pocket, but in our sense of what is right, and also in the opinion England has of us. One almost fears that Canada is too big a country for good government and has grown too fast. There is great truth in a statement by the Rev. James

Continued on Page 19