

# The Mail Bag

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and a ton paid for. I had recourse to the columns of a daily newspaper and day after day exposed these frauds and insisted on the city council introducing a by-law enforcing honest weights over a public weigh scale system, but the people allowed them to ignore the matter and they are still being swindled. They are paying a council for legislative abilities, but fail to see the wisdom of selecting fearless, courageous, able men to demand their rights, and so the steals continue.

The lumber barons are also robbing the public, who willingly submit. For every foot of dimension or board measure the purchaser gets not more than 9 or 10 inches, therefore, in paying for 1000 feet of material the buyer gets about 750 to 850 feet. He is the sucker that pays for the thousand, yet he seems satisfied to take it and allow his representative to go to Regina or to Ottawa regularly and sit "dumb."

The railway companies have another way of making steals, sanctioned by a railway commission paid for by the people, for it is a steal to pay exorbitant discrimination fees to these corporations for short hauls on our freight. The fact that we of the West have to pay from a 1-3 to 2-3 more for the transportation of our necessities is nothing more or less than a steal, and yet our representatives at Ottawa are allowed to sit without frequent proddings. The merchants, not all of them, but some of them, also have their little graft. It is to give short weights and measures and to pay 15 and 20 cents for butter to the farmers' wives, while selling it direct for cash at 25 and 30 cents. This has been done this summer to my knowledge for months, and yet the farmers' wives must, like the farmer with his wheat and his beef or pork or oats, take the price offered or keep the products.

The miller also enjoys his graft. It is to tax the farmer in the West the same price for the product of his mill as he gets for it in the East and in foreign lands. It matters not whether wheat is \$1.10 a bushel or down to 60 cents per bushel, the farmer and the consumers of the West pay the same price for flour and a price akin to that for the same product after shipped 1500 to 3000 miles distant.

Likewise it is with agricultural machinery. We of the West are paying as much, yea, more, for our machinery and a higher rate of interest on notes, due to mature and overdue, than the people of any other portion of the Dominion or of the empire. And yet thousands of farmers say, "It is well, we would not be loyal if we did not do so, because certain politicians have told us." Nor do the banks give the Western farmer or the Western business man a square deal. To get money for less than 8 and 9 per cent. is impossible, while cases are not unusual in which borrowers are paying from 12 to 20 per cent. for accommodations, and because the West prospers in spite of all these stumbling blocks, these almost insurmountable impediments, the big interests look on and say, "Well, they're good for it, they're easy, we will just keep on a bleeding them." And because we are easy, because we allow our representatives, by their inactivities, by their submission to these outrages, because we are content to submit to them, these conditions will continue to stagnate a development that under favorable conditions would be the most glorious, most marvellous the world has ever gazed upon.

How to obtain redress you say? Simply by organizations. Get together among your neighbors, talk over these steals, talk over your members position. Ask yourselves what he is doing for you. Remember he is your agent, your servant make him do his work. Demand of him a demand on your behalf. Give him no peace till he fulfils his mission in a demand for remedial legislation—legislation that will insure you at least a semblance of a square deal, so that you will not always be paying tribute to the grafters, tribute to dishonest methods, tribute to big interests that are lined up to malign and oppress you and dictate to you the prices you shall receive for your produce and what you shall pay for your commodities.

J. R. LONG.

FOR PEACE, A NAVY AND REFERENDUM

Editor, Guide:—Mr. Scallion says he is strongly opposed to a navy. So am I,

just as strongly. I am also strongly opposed to poverty in any shape or form. I am also strongly opposed to oppression. I believe in freedom and equal chances for all and I shall welcome the day when navies are a thing of the past as well as poverty and injustice in any shape or form and I am sure that Mr. Scallion is working for this end.

The difficulty I see is that under existing conditions navies cannot be dispensed with. Would the Bulgarians, or rather the Balkan Allies ever have got from under the yoke of Turkish oppression without their army? Was any great step in the advancement of mankind achieved without bloodshed? Witness the French Revolution. Of course it can be argued that Militarism keeps Russia in its present deplorable condition, but if the British Empire abolished its army and navy would there not be a very grave danger of some such benighted nation taking away our liberties and enslaving us? I am afraid under existing conditions there would be.

Now, Sir, there are three propositions on this navy, viz.: Borden's policy,

Laurier's policy, and the policy of no navy at all. Let us consider the last policy first. It seems to me if we are going to remain in the British Empire we must help in some form or other the British navy. New Zealand, the most democratic of all the overseas dominions has done so. Australia has done so. Natal has done so. South Africa is evidently going to do so. Can we stay in the Empire and be the only member that does not contribute to the British Navy? Would we want to stay in the Empire and not contribute? I think not, and if we do not stay in the Empire it seems to me we should have to become either an independent nation or a dependent one on our neighbor to the south. Can we escape this navy expense and all the horrors of militarism by becoming independent? I think not. Should we not be at the mercy of any nation who wanted to pick a quarrel with us? We would have to have an army and navy of our own to defend our independence. This, to my mind would be far more expensive than helping the British Navy, and would afford us less protection. I don't think there is any one who would advocate our becoming a dependent of our neighbor to the south of us, and even if we did, should we be able to escape the expense

and horrors of militarism? I think not, as they are building a big navy and I don't think they would do as Britain has done in the past, protect us for nothing. We point with pride, and just pride, to our 100 years of peace with our southern neighbor, but, Sir, was this not due in a great measure to the British navy? Do you consider that Lloyd-George willingly upholds the naval policy? He is Chancellor of the Exchequer and has many reforms very dear to his heart that he would far sooner see the money spent on. You cannot abolish our navy until others abolish theirs, and much as I hate and detest the vile waste of money and men in this mad race of navy building and militarism, I fail to see how it is possible for us, so long as we remain in the British Empire, and even if we do not remain in it, to avoid doing our share to support it. Regarding Borden's and Laurier's policies, I consider Borden's the less of two necessary evils, as it would tend to keep militarism out of Canada the best, and would achieve our object of protecting the British Empire as a whole, in my opinion, the best, but I certainly agree with Mr. Scallion that it should be referred to the people in a clear referendum, not mixed up with a lot of other questions, so that the



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