



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 desires 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 necessarily 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' PARTY NEEDLESS.

Editor, Guide:—Sir, in your issue of the 26th, Mr. Kirkham, of Saltcoats, relieves his mind by a philippic against the wickedness of the political parties, and urges the necessity of organizing a new party. He does not quite put it that way, but his mind is surely sufficiently logical to see that if you get a number of men to band together you have to that extent got a party. For instance the Grain Growers' Association is a party, not a political but an industrial party, and as such it has made for itself a record both of purpose and achievement. This being so, one is led to ask why should the farmers form a new political party and what is likely to be the future of such a party? Mr. Kirkham's reason is that the present parties are so wicked. This may be true, but if it is, it is indeed a sad truth because only a little more than a year ago there was both a provincial and a federal election and a very large percentage of our adult manhood supported one or other of the two parties. Those who hold this opinion set forth by Mr. Kirkham invariably except themselves from the wickedness they denounce. It must, I should imagine, be very comforting to regard the great mass of men around you as degraded while you are able to pat yourself upon the back with the proud satisfaction of knowing you are not running with the giddy multitude to do evil. And then Mr. Kirkham supplies a further reason for the general political depravity. He says they are looking out for jobs. My experience of politics and elections is that not one in a hundred voters expect anything in the way of a job. A further reason is that the hero party would only support a pure patriot. By what special mark this angelic creature is to be known, Mr. Kirkham does not state.

Now suppose Mr. Kirkham's letter should fire the enthusiasm of the farmer community, and the new party made a start, what is likely to be the future of such a party? Is it likely to be anyway different from other parties? We are not without some guidance furnished by past experience. We had the Patrons of Industry in Canada, and the Populist Party of the States. These parties had the compelling motive of the worthiest purposes, and they contained men of the most marked ability in each, and yet they both ended in signal failure. And why? Because in a very short time they disclosed the very same faults that were in the other parties, against which they were a protest. It was not found that the ablest men were given control, but in many cases the best workers were pushed aside and men who failed to win decent respect became leaders and then the end came.

Mr. Kirkham's whole idea of politics is wrong. He seems incapable of grasping what is nevertheless true, that the idea of party government is too deep seated in the minds and affection of our people to be superseded by a non-party scheme. He might organize his little band of stand-offers, but as soon as the election is called he would see five out of six of them with their coats off right in the heat of the fray. They might persuade themselves they were independent, but they would certainly not persuade anyone else. We had a curious illustration of this in December, 1908. No single man possesses, and I will say deservedly possesses, more influence with the farmers of the west from an industrial standpoint than our good friend, Mr.

Partridge. Two elections were to take place, one in Saltcoats and the other in Humboldt for what he, no doubt, thought sufficient reasons, Mr. Partridge gave the farmers in the two constituencies his advice in a vigorous pamphlet, and the result was nearly four voted against his advice to one who voted as he wished. The party feeling men, being so strong that it is not amendable to influence from without. It seems to me the duty of any man who feels he has a light which can aid his fellows is to become a member of that party which most nearly meets his approval and let his light shine there. To refuse to do this is to deny to your fellows the help they are sorely in need of. I have heard (doubtless Mr. Kirkham has) of people so over good and so super-righteous they won't go to church because the regular church-goer is such a poor specimen. Self praising politicians are just such a variety. I have now been for forty years a member of a political organization and I am perfectly satisfied. I can do infinitely more good from within than I could from without. And more, while at times the make-belief of the party game is pretty coarse, on the whole the men inside the political party are just about the same as the men outside—neither



better nor worse. If all this is so, why have the interests of the farmer not been attended to? The answer is very simple. The farmers have not insisted on attention. It is useless trying to place upon the political party the blame that properly belongs to ourselves. Suppose the farmers had not supported the Liberal candidate at Birtle, does anyone suppose the Manitoba government would have done what they are now doing? Exactly the same thing is true in Saskatchewan. If the grain growers had contented themselves by only offering criticism from a superior standpoint what effect would that have had on either government? I venture to say not the slightest, because political Phariseism is even less comely than its religious counterpart. On the other hand every new member in the ranks of the Grain Growers Association is an extra lever to compel attention and the history of the last three months should be a convincing proof that we need not invent any new political party to get justice done to the farming industry. If we set to work in the right way we can get all reasonable redress from one or other of the parties we already have.

G. LANGLEY.

Maymont, Sask., Jan. 31.

IN DEFENSE OF A CANADIAN NAVY

Editor, Guide:—I read with considerable surprise in your issue of the 26 inst., a letter over the signature of H. G. Ahern, opposing a Canadian Navy or even a contribution towards the building of one or more battleships to help in the defense of the Empire. Does H. G. Ahern not know that all the great nations of the world are armed to the teeth in self-defense and that the powerful British Navy is for ever alert day and night and prepared for any emergency that may suddenly spring upon us.

Without our navy where would we be? Certainly not in Canada, farming peacefully under good government and under the protection of that same navy which H. G. Ahern condemns. The British Navy cost millions of money, but a war would cost billions, the result of which no man can tell.

The stronger a nation is, the less fear of war. Does H. G. Ahern think that if Germany defeated Great Britain, that Canada would escape? Why, Canada is just the country for Germany's excess of population, and then H. G. Ahern would be under the German flag. Perhaps he would not mind this except for the taxes he would be forced to pay, and the time he would be forced to devote to his military training.

It is strange Mr. Ahern did not propose doing away with those murderous revolvers carried by our Mounted Police, or with that splendid body of men themselves.

JOHN ROBERTSON

Bradwell, Sask.

FARM FINANCING

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of January 19, there is an article on "Planning Next Season's Business." While agreeing with you in some things, I don't see eye to eye with you. You claim it would be an advantage to the farmers to borrow money from the bank to buy his supplies until he realizes on his crop. In the first place, in this district the bank charges 10% to farmers. In the next place, the merchants of Maymont closed their books to credit and demanded cash, but they forgot to lower their prices

with equal parts of water for bread. A great deal more could be said along these lines, but I will conclude with this friendly warning: "To tell a man to go to the banks, is only another way of telling him to go to the devil."

"GRAIN GROWER"

Maymont, Sask.

CONSIDER YOUR OPINIONS.

Editor, Guide:—There has been of late a tendency for close criticism of the economical and political sphere, and not a little of this prevailing mood has fallen on the broad field of Socialism. It would seem as though Socialism is a very worthy subject for both criticism and discussion as it has to do with every member of Society.

In forming our opinions in such important matters let us see that we do not abuse our influence. Let us have, to begin with, a clear, balanced and impartial mind, with which to weigh the evidence. The feasibility of any movement will be determined by the strength of its foundation.

Before we form opinions on the great questions of Socialism it would be a splendid idea to write to the Provincial Secretary of the Socialist Party of Canada, W. C. Stebbing, Comptroller's Office, City Hall, Winnipeg. He should be able to lay the facts of the situation before us in a more reliable form, than might be obtained elsewhere. If we feel the Socialist movement is not right, then in order to safeguard ourselves in fair discussion we would be much better equipped had we a true view of the subject brought down from those in authority. We cannot do ourselves justice in thought, or discuss intelligently or successfully any subject on which we are not informed.

If we are inclined to oppose Socialism, then we are bettering our position in studying first our opponents strength. The proof of the strength of our position lies in our knowledge of the strength of the adversary.

Let us get clear on this point. Those of us who have, or had, strong leanings to either of the political parties, would do well (unless entirely satisfied with our party) to give a careful hearing or study to the principles of Socialism. The movement is a growing one. One of the principle features is direct legislation, which is admittedly the key to representative government in its true sense.

There are many other measures laid down by socialists claiming equal merit with direct legislation. Consider yourself in the capacity of a judge and come to no decision until you are in possession of the true evidence relating to the question.

A. J. BOUGHEN.

Dauphin.

SAMPLE MARKET GIVES HIGHER PRICES.

Editor, Guide:—I am greatly taken up with an article in THE GUIDE of January 19, headed, "A Few Sample Market Advantages," and signed by "Grain Grower." Now, this man, "Grain Grower," quotes Minneapolis sample market for selling wheat, being a much better one than the system we have in western Canada. Now, as I have lived in the state of Minnesota and know all about their sample market, I can certify that the grain grower that wrote that explanation of the sample market of Minneapolis on wheat is correct in all his details. It gives to the farmer a much better price for his wheat than we get on the grade system and especially on the lower grades of wheat. I wish to state from my own experience and other farmers' experiences who have grown wheat in the state of Minnesota and in western Canada, that the Winnipeg wheat inspection is over one grade higher, taking all grades of wheat into consideration, than the state of Minnesota grades was when I was there. Now any person that is posted in the milling industry knows that Minneapolis has the greatest mills of the world, and we all know that there those mills are not kept running all these years at a loss, or they would have been closed up. Now, those Minneapolis millers have told me and others that western Canada grows a much better grade of wheat than the state of Minnesota, and those millers have been buying the Canadian wheat to mill with their wheat to make a better grade of flour. So you can see how our western