

The Mail Bag

CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE AUTHORITY NEEDED

Editor, Guide:—The special committee on "Co-operation" of Alberta, on page 142 of The Guide, have come to a very valuable conclusion when they advocate "Standard co-operation of stores," and, having worked for and advocated co-operation for nearly forty years at home and in Canada, I can fully agree with them.

The joint stock Grange and Patrons of Industry all seem to lack the accumulation of capital which make them the power that co-operation in other countries possess, both commercially and politically, where they hold the balance of power, as they are more firmly held together by their struggles and growing capital.

Mr. Campbell, of Lloydminster, utters a note of warning which should be heeded now that co-operation is starting to be a live subject, as unless the foundation is well laid on true principles, we will see the country full of capitalist concerns, under the co-operative name, and on account of independent co-operative ventures without a standard central body of skilled co-operators at the helm, I am afraid we shall see a lot of co-operative wrecks.

The seriousness of the matter compels me to draw your attention to the above.
N. J. KERSWELL, J.P.
Makaroff, Man.

TIME FOR CO-OPERATIVE STORES

Editor, Guide:—Your article under the heading "The Grain Co. and Co-operation," in The Guide of December 10, and the letter by J. Georges-Figaro, which appears in your issue of December 17, are worthy of the attention of every farmer in Canada—East and West. I believe that co-operation is the only practical solution of the many grievances under which the agricultural population of the whole Dominion labors today. We are all too much taken up with politics; we should give politics a rest and get into business. The buying, selling and making of commodities are what really count. As individuals, the farmers are out in the cold. They have to pay the price asked for everything they have to buy, and take the price offered for everything they have to sell. And the farmer is crushed between the upper and nether millstones. As a rule he pays too dear for what he had to buy, and has to sell too cheap the commodities he has to sell. Co-operation is the remedy. It has been tried and proved. Collective buying is good so far as it goes, but it is not permanent, and only helps the man who is able to buy in considerable quantities. There are poor people living in the Prairie Provinces who can only manage to get one sack of flour at a time. They need other things. But if 28 poor weavers with £28 could start a co-operative store in Rochdale, Lancashire, England, 69 years ago, and succeed so well that in 1905 the membership had increased to 12,800; the original stock of "flour, sugar, butter and oatmeal" had expanded into departments for grocery, drapery, butchering, tailoring, shoemaking, building, etc., and at their central premises are a hall capable of seating 2,000 people and a library of 12,000 volumes, surely the poorest communities in this great West could subscribe sufficient capital to start a small store to supply the most necessary commodities, and this will grow, as similar ventures have. The principles adopted and practiced by the Rochdale pioneers were: No credit, a small fixed interest on share capital, dividend on purchases, a good article at a fair price, upright, honest dealing. Their example is good for us to follow, the success that has attended their efforts may be ours. And if The Grain Growers' Grain Company can be formed into a Co-operative Wholesale Society to supply Co-operative Retail Societies, then the movement will have gained a great impetus, and the directors of the G. G. G. Co. will have done more for

the farmers of the West than many acts of Parliament will be able to accomplish. When there is the necessity (we all feel the necessity) for co-operative action, and true co-operative principles are the basis of action, success has always been obtained. In the letter of December 17 already referred to, the writer says, "It seems evident to me that the various stores so bound with you would constitute the strongest and most democratic organization one can dream of." And the dream may and can be realized when the farmers of the West, with their united capital, will do all their own business of buying, selling, manufacturing, banking and transportation. Then the question of cheap money will have been solved, the farmer will get a fair price for what he has to sell and pay a fair price for what he buys, honest labor will get its due reward, and the farmer will not be under the necessity of going "hat in hand" to borrow a few hundred dollars to tide him over a pinch, because the chronic hard-up-ness which afflicts him now will have been remedied. Co-operation is the remedy.

UNITAS.

WEAKNESS OF CARLOT BUYING

Editor, Guide:—In your Co-operative Number there is one phase of co-operation I wish to talk about, viz., buying in carload lots. Co-operation is especially

easily done here, for so many people were conversant with co-operation before they left the European shores. We need not grope in the dark, for all the information needed and methods successfully adapted can be secured from the Right Relationship League. The conditions there and here are practically the same, because in both cases the shareholders are there, and will be here, farmers, while in England they are nearly all laboring men. Let us use The Grain Growers' Company to purchase just as many goods as possible in carload lots, but keep up the agitation for co-operative stores. May The Guide continue to promote the idea, as well as all officers of the Grain Growers' Association.

J. R. LOWE.

Chaplin, Sask.

MINORITY RULE IN SASKATCHEWAN

Editor, Guide:—Your leading article on the above encourages me to add my experience of the direct legislation election as deputy returning officer. The voters at my poll were mostly foreigners and the questions that were asked were varied and numerous. Some thought it was for cheap money for the farmers, others thirty-five millions for the navy, and various other ideas. After the election was over I was approached by one man and told that he had voted the

different vote. I may say that our Association (Sandford Dene), numbering over fifty members, is unanimously in favor of helping Great Britain in some form or other. I believe there are many other locals with the same feeling.

CHAS. W. HAYDEN.

Cabri, Sask.

NOTE.—The Guide's report of the vote on the universal peace resolution, at the Moose Jaw convention, was written by The Guide's representative, who was standing by the platform where he could see everything, and we believe it was quite accurate. No record was kept of the vote for and against or of the number who did not vote, so that will always be a matter of opinion. It is unfortunate that the delegates had no opportunity to express their opinion on the question of naval expenditure. Naturally, there will be a difference of opinion, but the Grain Growers have always been agreeable to settling all questions by majority vote. Both Alberta and Manitoba conventions declared overwhelmingly against naval expenditure, but the Moose Jaw resolution cannot be regarded as expressing a definite opinion either way on the naval question.—Ed.

A LAWYER AND PERJURY

Editor, Guide:—In a Regina paper is a writeup, under the heading "Perjury in Saskatchewan Courts," of the all too common practice of perjury by alleged respectable witnesses. While this is the case, I think if it were investigated it might be found in some cases, that a lawyer might be at the bottom of it. To substantiate this, and for the benefit of the public who might think that all they have to do to get justice is to merely go to court, I will relate my own experience. Last summer I sued a thrasher for breach of contract in the same courts. One of my witnesses, a neighbor, who has been as high up as principal in a school, urged me to enter suit against the thrasher. During the trial we roomed together, and he, being subpoenaed on both sides, kept me posted on what was going on. The second last night we roomed together he told me of being up in the defendant's lawyer's office, and how the lawyer was an awful man to swear. I said to him, "How is that?" "Well," he said, "he was putting some of them thru their little speech, and if they did not answer him to suit, he would cuss them." The last night we roomed together he was not in humor to talk. I supposed he had got his cussing, which proved to be the case. Next day, in the witness box for the defendant, he made incorrect statements. One I proved right there to the satisfaction of the judge, but not so with the defendant's lawyer, who seemed uncomfortable at that particular time. After it was all over and we were driving home he could not look me in the face, but sat with his back to me, and being accused of turning against me and stating untruths, he owned up that it was the lawyer that drew him into it. Now, where does the blame rest?

A READER.

JOHN KENNEDY'S PLAN

Editor, Guide:—In your Mail Bag of March 4, John Kennedy submits a plan for political action. I hope I am such a Progressive as he means, and see much to commend in his plan, but it is not clear to me. We certainly need to be able to support one measure, or

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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. 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.



Above is shown a load of Grimm's Alfalfa seed which was sold for \$2,592. It was grown on 22 acres in Blaine Co., Montana. There are 27 sacks weighing 160 pounds each—a total of 4,320 pounds. Eight hundred pounds of seed from this lot was shipped to Guelph, Ont. The threshed straw sold for enough to pay all expenses of cutting and threshing the seed.

intended to help the poor. The English co-operator is largely made up from the class who buy in small amounts, some of their best stores securing the bulk of their members from the slum districts. Carload buying requires too much capital—ready money—to make it of much use to the poorer class of farmers. Today one man may be ready with his cash to put in on a load, others are not ready. For instance, I am ready to buy 3,000 feet of lumber and 400 fence posts, but I am forced to pay high retail prices because my neighbors are not ready to go in with me. Last fall, after crop was harvested, I bought 3,000 feet of lumber to put up a building which I must have before winter. I could have got that with neighbors if I could have waited, but I couldn't. Carload buying is all right for men who have ready cash and those who put up large houses and barns, but these are not the men I would like to see helped by our co-operative effort. To help those who are able to help themselves is commendable; to help those who are in a pinch is to do them a royal service. Until you can establish co-operative stores you can save but little to the ordinary farmer, and then not to exceed 10 per cent. on purchases and six per cent. on paid up stock until you have reached the wholesale and manufacturing end of the business, which if we can do as well as the Motherland will be 15 per cent.

Two hundred stores have been established by the Right Relationship League of Minneapolis, nearly all very successful, and a good part of the working capital has been furnished by the original owners of the stores. If it can be done in the United States it can be done

wrong way, that was against, as he didn't understand, and a lot more had done the same. They asked if they could vote over again, and as that was out of the question they were disappointed, and said someone should have been sent to tell them about it. I am sorry to say that those who should have known better did not seem to be very much wiser as to what it meant. The whole thing was a miserable farce.

D. R. O.

THE NAVY QUESTION

Editor, Guide:—With reference to your report of the resolution re armaments at the convention, may I, as seconder of the amendment, point out that you have not given a very accurate account of the proceedings. The amendment was moved by a delegate with the explanation, that until universal disarmament takes place, we must have a navy. This was repeated to the meeting by Mr. Dunning very clearly, so, in my opinion, every delegate knew exactly what he was voting for. Then, again, you say, "the amendment was carried by a very narrow majority." Altho I did not try to form any really close estimate of the vote, I should say it was at least two to one in favor of the amendment. Further, your statement that a large number did not vote is an exaggeration, 80 to 90 per cent. at least voted. It is all very well to utter pious platitudes about international disarmament, and to point with pride to the vote on your round-about question in your Referendum, but put a plain question—"Do you favor giving naval aid to the British Empire?"—and I think you will get a slightly