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The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, October 15th, 1913

THE NAVY REFERENDUM

In The Guide Referendum, upon which all our readers will be asked to vote on December 3, there appears the following question:

"Do you believe that Canada, instead of spending millions for naval armament (either British or Canadian), should devote her energies and spend millions, if necessary, towards the establishment of universal peace and disarmament and the settlement of international disputes by arbitration?"

A correspondent has inquired as follows:

"Kindly explain just what you mean. How can money be applied towards disarmament?"

Our idea in placing this question in The Guide Referendum was to ascertain whether our readers as a whole favored the creation of naval armament, or whether they favored Canada becoming the leader in the great movement for International Peace which is now spreading with such rapidity throughout all the civilized nations. Our correspondent asked, "How can money be applied towards disarmament." There are a thousand ways in which money might be expended in the cause of International Peace and disarmament. At the present time there is an alliance between church organizations in England and Germany working towards peace and it requires money to conduct their propaganda. This is only one of the scores of both national and international peace societies now actually engaged in this most necessary cause. Canada has an opportunity open to no other nation today. Our population is representative of the leading peoples of the earth. One-third of our people speak the French language; about 600,000 of our people are of Teutonic origin; probably a million of our population today were born in the British Isles, and more than half that number in the United States. No other nation on earth is so well qualified to assist in bringing about a mutual understanding between Great Britain, the United States, France and Germany. There are strong race ties between Canada and each of these countries, and if all four could be induced to agree to arbitrate all questions of difference, and on no occasion to war with each other, world peace would then be an accomplished fact. These four great nations are the leaders in civilization, in industry, in commerce, in science, in art. Not one of them has the slightest thing to gain by warring with the other. And we do not believe that any one of them has any desire to war with another. But there are feelings of mistrust, and there are nefarious influences at work which cause them to continue to burden their people with taxation for naval armament. Christopher West, in his splendid book "Canada and Sea Power," outlines a grand opportunity for Canada to be the real leader in the greatest work of modern times by sending missions of good will to the various nations mentioned. Canada has never been at war with any of these nations, save the war of 1812 with our southern neighbor. Canada, though one of the British Dominions, is absolutely free and independent to take any action deemed advisable towards all nations. We might spend say one per cent. per year of the \$35,000,000 proposed for a navy in sending delegations of good will to meet not only the leaders, but the rank and file of these nations as well. In this way the movement for peace would gain strength and Canada could become a real leader in the greatest need of modern civilization. It would be of far greater benefit to Canada than \$50,000,000 annually wasted on naval armament.

By placing sheep's wool on the free list the American Congress has opened up for the sheep growers of Alberta and Saskatchewan a better market for their wool.

LOWER FREIGHT AND CHEAPER STEEL

The question of ocean freight rates on wheat, flour and other Canadian exports to Great Britain is certain to be one of the most important subjects to be considered at the next session of Parliament. The facts regarding the increase of charges and the existence of a combination among the shipping interests killed before the House of Commons last session by Hon. Arthur Meighen, were so serious that the government felt bound to act and recently despatched H. F. Drayton, K.C., chairman of the railway commission, to England to investigate. The idea of the government seems to have been that by joint action with the British authorities government control of rates might be instituted. After the experience which we have had of the control of railway rates by the railway commission we must confess we have not much faith in such a plan, although it would be unfair to condemn it until Mr. Drayton's report is made public. Meanwhile, however, some valuable information, pointing to a remedy along another line, has come from London. The steamships which carry the freight are almost entirely owned in England and it is only natural, therefore, that information on the subject should come from that source. We are told, and it seems perfectly reasonable, that in order to secure cheap east bound freights, cargoes must be provided for vessels on the westward route. At present, as is well known, Canadian exports to Great Britain greatly exceed our imports from that country, and as a result ships must either come out partially loaded or reach Canada by a round-about route. The only thing which prevents full cargoes being carried by westbound ships is the high duty levied by Canada upon imports from Great Britain, and in order to restore the balance of trade and ensure cargoes both ways all Canada needs to do is to abolish duties on British goods. Benjamin H. Morgan, a former British trade commissioner in Canada, in a letter to the Financial News, of London, points this out very forcibly, and suggests that a great improvement in conditions would be effected by Canada reducing or abolishing the duties on machinery, iron and steel beams and other heavy goods of the same class. By following this course the Dominion Government can kill two birds with one stone. It can reduce ocean freight rates on wheat, flour and other Canadian exports, which would be a great gain to the country in general and to the farmers, millers and manufacturers in particular, and at the same time it can bring about a reduction in the cost of iron and steel, machinery and other iron products, which would cheapen the cost of railway construction, buildings, bridges and manufacturing plants. The boon which these things would be to this country is too evident to need emphasis. The only opposition that is likely to be offered will come from the iron and steel interests of this country. These interests have been bonused from the public treasury to the extent of nearly \$20,000,000, they have been protected by the tariff at an even greater cost to the people. They have access to great coal and iron beds, they have highly organized plants and enormous capital at their disposal, and they have a market which they cannot supply. The question is now squarely up to the Dominion Government. Will they secure for this country cheaper ocean freights, cheaper iron and steel and cheaper machinery, or will they deny us these advantages in order that a few millionaire steel magnates may continue to exploit the people?

Another Balkan war is reported. A few more years of this "ennobling" occupation and the Balkan people should be the best

in the world—if they are not all killed off in the meantime.

LIVE STOCK AND THE TARIFF

Reports are coming in from all directions that Canadian cattle are going into the United States in immense numbers, since the removal of the American duty on October 3. The Chicago market for beef animals has been from \$2 to \$3 per hundredweight over Winnipeg, and naturally the shipments go towards the higher prices. The result is bound to be that the Canadian packing companies will have to pay higher prices to Canadian farmers, and this will certainly stimulate the livestock industry in this country. The very circumstances, however, which are proving of such benefit to Canadian stockraisers at the present time have in them a source of danger. The higher prices now available will induce many farmers to sell out their breeding stock, which is most unfortunate. Since the American cattle market was opened over 70 carloads of Western Canadian cattle have gone south, 17 of them going out of Winnipeg. American buyers are going throughout the Canadian West cleaning up beef cattle and feeders. Pure bred stock is also being purchased by American buyers and taken south. It can easily be seen that the Western Canadian herds, which are already too small, will be seriously depleted. J. C. Smith, livestock commissioner for Saskatchewan, recently pointed out that the new American tariff will prevent Western Canadian farmers from securing their usual supply of stockers from Ontario for feeding purposes, as they will now go south where the market is better. It is of course rather early to appreciate just what the result of opening up the American market will be, but it seems now fairly certain that it will be a problem to secure the necessary young stock for feeding purposes from Eastern Canada. The 25 per cent. duty prohibits them from being brought in from the Western States. It looks very much as though the only solution in sight is to take the duty off cattle coming into Canada and allow our Western farmers to purchase their feeders from the nearest market. The matter is a serious one and demands attention. We should be glad to hear from any Western stock raiser upon this subject.

REFERENDUM IN SASKATCHEWAN

It is officially announced that the referendum to decide whether or not the Direct Legislation Act shall go into force in the province of Saskatchewan will be held on November 27. As The Guide stated at the time the act was passed, the Saskatchewan Direct Legislation Act is not entirely satisfactory, inasmuch as it does not give the people the right to control the expenditure of the public funds. It does, however, establish the principle of Direct Legislation and will possibly enable the people to initiate much useful legislation and to veto bills, other than money bills, which the majority do not regard as being in the public interest. On the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, we believe that the Direct Legislation Act should be made effective, and that all believers in the rule of the people should make every effort to secure a large affirmative vote when the referendum is taken next month. After the bill has become law attempts may be made to improve and perfect it. An energetic campaign will be necessary to secure the required vote, for under the act a simple majority is not sufficient. To secure a majority would be a comparatively easy matter, for with both political parties officially supporting Direct Legislation there is not likely to be a large opposing vote. It is stipulated, however, that in order to put