

The Mail Bag

WHY COLLECTIONS ARE SLOW

Editor, Guide:—As I see a great deal about the commission investigating the sale of agricultural machinery to farmers, I think some improvement can be made. For instance; some salesmen and dealers take beer and whisky along and fill up the farmer in order to make a sale, or take him into the barroom, and treat him, so that he does not know what he is doing. Such sales should be void. As for collections, why, they are harder on us farmers now than they were ten or fifteen years ago. I do not know why, but very little can be done, as they must have their money and laws that would hamper them in getting it would no doubt be to the detriment of the farmer, as companies would be harder to deal with. The real trouble is the price, it is too high—at least 20 per cent. higher than the Dakota farmers have to pay—and as we also receive about five cents less for wheat and twenty cents less for flax per bushel, it makes it difficult for many farmers to pay promptly, and this can only be remedied by free trade, which seems to be a long way off. We will have to do the best we can until we do get it, and as the manufacturers are combined against us, they have themselves to blame for a great deal of the slow collections, and it would be better for us all if we had fair play.

GUST. A. JOHNSON.

CO-OPERATION IN LAND SALES

Editor, Guide:—In this Manitoba of ours, where real estate agents are so numerous, charging such exorbitant commissions for putting land deals thru, they and the local implement agents are about on a par for fleecing their victims, charging exorbitant profits on all their deals with farmers. Real estate agents and implement men may be regarded as a kind of a necessary nuisance most surely, but in regard to real estate men it seems to me that some simple and sensible plan could be devised by which sellers of land and prospective buyers might be brought into touch with one another without having to pay a commission of 5 per cent., as is generally done. In cases where an exchange is effected the agent usually gets a double commission, one from the seller and one from the buyer. Not many years ago the land agent did his best to get an option on the lands listed with him for three or six months, as the case might be, and then if the owner of the land happened to dispose of it himself privately the commission was demanded just the same as if the agent had disposed of it. I have heard of actions entered in law courts where the agent recovered his commission in such cases as these.

Now to obviate some of the difficulty, would it not be possible for the Grain Growers in each municipality to devise some scheme by which the owners of lands for sale could list a description and the price with the clerk of each municipality? And then prospective buyers might do the same thing, setting forth their wants as to the kind of a farm they wanted as near as practicable. A book for the purpose might be kept in the clerk's office that would be open for inspection by either sellers or buyers. The clerk might be allowed a small fee—say 25 cents—from either the seller or the man who wanted to buy. There may reside in the very same municipality oftentimes persons who could be suited identically if they only knew one another's wants and intentions.

If the scheme, after testing, was found to work satisfactorily, then it might be deemed advisable for each municipality to publish quarterly or half-yearly a revised list of sellers and prospective buyers in sheet form that could be mailed to any person applying for it. Or in connection with our agricultural fairs might there not be some plan devised whereby sellers and buyers might meet and try to accommodate one another. To get in touch on the matter seems to be the one great difficulty.

I just throw out these suggestions feeling satisfied in my own mind that a forward step would be taken by adopting them, that buyers and sellers would be better accommodated and above all that a great saving by way of paying exorbitant commission would be effected. The Grain Growers of Manitoba, even in disposing

and purchasing, should try and work in harmony so as to prevent every shark that chooses to fleece them from getting too big a slice. Co-operation in disposing of farm lands is surely a matter that is worth being carefully considered.

A GRAIN GROWER.

Elm Creek.

WAR PRICES

Editor, Guide:—I see by the London Times that the government has regulated the price of foods during the war, and Canadian cheese may not be sold for more than 19 cents, and it is sold in London at ordinary times for 18 cents. This means that I can get it out by parcel post, the most expensive way, and get it for less than I paid for it in Cowley this past summer. In the same way a neighbor got a special kind of flour from England in a small quantity and found that it cost only about the same as local prices. There is "something rotten in this Dominion of Canada."

F. W. GODSAL.

Cowley, Alta.

WAR PRICES FOR FOOD

Editor, Guide:—I write to you to give voice to my indignation at the unwarrantable rise in food stuffs since the declaration of war, and I should like to know from others of your readers whether they, in their district, are being "bled" in a similar way.

Before the declaration of war we were paying our local miller \$3.00 per hundred for his flour, and he said it would remain the same for a month anyway. The dealers assured us that there was no good in laying in a supply for a while yet, when, all at once, without notice, it was put up forty cents and later to \$3.60. The superior makes of flour—Lake of the Woods, etc.—are being bought by the government for \$2.80 to send to England. I wish they would get it for us that cheap and as good.

Before the war we were paying \$6.00 a hundred for sugar (enough, in all conscience). Market reports show that sugar has advanced 60 cents a hundred. We are now paying \$7.75—an advance of \$1.75. If this was going to help the home land or the men at the front, we would not care, but it is to fatten the pockets of ghouls, as bad as those that rifle the bodies of the dead on the battlefield.

Alberta is sending 500,000 bushels of oats as a contribution to the war, and I am glad and proud that she is. But still, unscrupulous characters are compelling us to pay from \$10.00 a hundred for rolled oats—and oats at 35 cents a bushel. Such a tiny little sack was 35 cents before the war and it is now 50 cents. Tea has been raised 12½ per cent.

Now as leading newspapers point out: "At present the public has it in its own hands to say whether there will be war prices right away in Canada or not."

Any complaints of undue prices will be investigated. It is evident that the Canadian Government is prepared to deal with a strong hand against any and every person or firm that attempts to put the necessities of life on a war price standard to the benefit of their own pocket-books. The element of supply and demand alone should govern the fuel and food prices of Canada in these days, and the evidence is that the Dominion's store of food staples, together with what is being produced, is ample to keep exaggerated war prices from adding to the seriousness of the situation.—(Toronto Saturday Night.)

So let us remember that we do not have to be imposed upon in this way. The food supply in the Dominion is practically in the government's hands and they can control it.

I have laid my complaints before Sir R. L. Borden and he has, in a very nice letter, promised to see that the proper authorities investigate the matter. I advise others who are in the same position to make similar complaints.

Any day Canada may levy a direct war tax on all her citizens for the reason that the customs and other dues accruing usually have been cut to next to nothing. We know that this tax will go for the benefit of the Empire, but let us not, in the meantime, pay enormous taxes unnecessarily to a lot of pillagers. I do not say that the local dealers are to blame; it is most probably their wholesalers.

But whoever it is, let us complain and have the unjust.

MRS. J. J. ARMSTRONG.
Wainwright, Alta.

FOR GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

Editor, Guide:—Every week when I am reading The Guide I find page after page of discussion on high tariffs, protection and free trade. It seems to me we are wasting too much valuable time and effort on these questions and forget to get to the very root of the evil of which the farmer and every other producer is suffering. Tariffs are not our drawback; in England, with its partly free trade policy, the farmer and other producers are just as bad off as in any other country.

If the harvester trust and all other trusts and banking institutions are producing millionaires at the expense of the producers, why not advocate the manufacture of farming machinery and other necessities by the people themselves, by responsible governments if you please, and sell these necessities at cost.

We would not let some private individual run our post office, would we? neither the public school or the fire departments. With the millions of money left we could have our country doctors for human beings, as we now have them for pigs and cattle. We could have many good things like hail insurance and fishing trips, the latter now being only enjoyed by politicians, with free railway passes, no doubt.

If the governments can run navy yards, why not stockyards? If post office and savings banks, why not general banks? If they can make and run warships, why not railroads, coal mines and oil wells? If they can dig Panama canals without strikes and lockouts, why not able to run the boats and vessels thru them?

Governments are making clothes for the soldiers, why not for the citizens? They pay pensions to people who are willing to die for their country, why not to those who are willing to live for their country, which is often much harder?

We will have to face these questions sooner or later; let us get down to rock bottom now and invite discussions on these problems. As conditions are, it won't be long before all the property and money will be in the hands of a few people who will be able to dictate to the producers the terms under which they may live or get off the earth.

Of course all this seems "Radical," but we must not forget that many things are today conservative to us which once seemed very "Radical."

A. VAN RUYVEN.
Green Court, Alta.

BOYS' STOCK FEEDING COMPETITION

The management of the Brandon Winter Fair, which will be held during the second or third week in March, with its customary initiative is this year offering a steer feeding contest, the prize money to be competed for by farm boys. The Canadian Bankers' Association has contributed one thousand dollars to the Manitoba Winter Fair and fat stock show for the sole purpose of encouraging the boys of the farm and stimulating a greater interest among them in the breeding and caring for livestock and feeding cattle for market. The competition is open to boys, residents of Canada, under seventeen years of age and to grade steers or heifers calved in 1914. The competitor must have fed, cared for and fitted his animal for at least six months immediately previous to the date of the exhibition, and must himself exhibit the animal in the show ring when judged or paraded. One or more entries may be made from one family or farm by different boys eligible, but only one entry may be made by any one boy. The prize money has been divided into twenty amounts, the first prize being one hundred dollars and the remainder ranging down to four prizes of twenty-five dollars each. In addition to these, several special prizes have been provided for, and altogether the competition is one which should be well patronized. Doubtless contests of this nature will do much to improve the livestock industry, and more important still, generate a greater interest in the boys on the farm and in this manner tend to keep the boy on the farm. The Brandon Winter Fair Board deserves great credit for its action in this matter and it is to be hoped that its efforts may be well repaid by a large number of entrants for this competition.



\$500.00 GIVEN AWAY

To Alberta Farmers

A WEALTHY FRIEND of The Guide in Alberta is anxious to have The Guide read by every farmer in his own province. To help towards this end he has donated \$500.00 to be given in Cash Prizes to the agents who secure the largest number of subscriptions to The Guide before December 31st, 1914.

The Prize List

This \$500.00 has been divided into twelve prizes as follows:

- First Prize \$100.00
- Second Prize 90.00
- Third Prize 75.00
- Fourth Prize 60.00
- Fifth Prize 50.00
- Sixth Prize 40.00
- Seventh Prize . . . 30.00
- Eighth Prize 20.00
- Ninth Prize 15.00
- Tenth Prize 10.00
- Eleventh Prize . . . 7.00
- Twelfth Prize . . . 3.00

Worth Working For

These Prizes are worth earning. We pay every agent a liberal commission for collecting subscriptions, but these cash prizes are in addition to the commission. There are no strings on the \$500.00. It will be paid out to the twelve agents who send us the largest number of subscriptions before the end of the year.

More Agents Wanted

We already have a number of agents in Alberta, but we need more. Many districts are not fully represented. Any person, man or woman, boy or girl, who would like to earn one of these prizes, has a good chance. We shall be glad to appoint new agents wherever we have no agents now covering the district. Any person who would like to enter the contest for these cash prizes should apply at once. Let us know if you are prepared to devote a few hours a week to the work, and if we have a vacancy in your district we shall appoint you our agent at once, and forward supplies necessary to carry on the work. Address enquiries to:

Circulation Manager

The Grain Growers' Guide

WINNIPEG, MAN.

N.B.—We want agents also in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and pay the same liberal commission in each province. But the \$500.00 in prizes is donated by our friend for ALBERTA AGENTS ONLY.