

economic conditions, but also upon the morals of the people. It is in one way unfortunate that most of the improvements in conditions secured through the work of the organized farmers are enjoyed as much by those who have not helped in any way to bring about the improvements, as by those who have borne all the burden of the struggle. If it were possible to withhold the benefits of these improved conditions from those who either openly or by their indifference oppose them, their eyes would be opened, but as it is the only hope for the organized farmers is to educate the unorganized farmers, and show them the great advantage it will be to them to join with their fellows in raising the occupation of farming to a level where it will secure its proper returns and recognition.

SOBERING UP

When a man has been intoxicated for a protracted period his recovery is marked by pains and remorse. When a man or woman succumbs to the lure of gambling and becomes intoxicated with the spirit of chance, the return to normal is through the miseries of mental depression. When a people indulge in the drunkenness of land speculation, and each one is obsessed by an insane desire to live without working, the aftermath is misery and suffering. Many of the people of Western Canada have for three or four years been drunk on the seductive wine of land speculation and now are undergoing the pangs of sobering up. The wine of speculation made them joyful and hopeful, and each inebriate saw through his bleary eyes a mountain of gold that would soon be his. This mountain of gold, earned by society, was placed within reach of the speculator—not by labor, not by the sweat of his brow—but by laws made by our western legislatures. Thousands of men in these western provinces who have not done one tap of productive labor in five years have appropriated to their own personal uses many millions from this mountain of gold. The result was that those who worked not took the product of others' labor, while the workers paid higher rents and suffered from a higher cost of living. Still the orgy continued, for even though one-tenth of the people were living on the other nine-tenths the victims were either hoping to secure a slice of the plunder or had not enough intelligence to see that they were being robbed. Even those who piled up fortunes for which they never toiled were frequently seized of the injustice of their gains, and gave largely to charity. This salved their consciences and gave them a feeling of piety that was deeply satisfactory to themselves. In every city, town, village and even in hundreds of districts where there is not even a building the land speculator has been busy. Thousands of men living in Eastern Canada, United States, and Europe, who have never seen Western Canada, have taken millions of dollars of our wealth and given us absolutely not one cent in return. But now comes the sobering up and the remorse. The real estate agents are out of jobs and hunting for productive employment. Stenographers have also to look for work. Telephones have been pulled out and offices vacated. The speculators are hard up and struggling to hold the land upon which they have made part payments, but upon which they still owe money. The profits in land speculation were advertised widely in all the daily papers as indications of prosperity and have drawn population to the cities and towns, where the ranks of the unemployed are steadily growing. The churches that formerly received a part of the gamblers' profits, and the charities also, are feeling the pinch. And steadily the cost of living rises. The farmers are beginning to see that the vacant land lying all around them is taking money out of their pockets.

This pinch, so far as it is caused by the recovery from land speculation, is a good thing for the country. It will be the best thing that ever happened if it shows the people the iniquity of speculating in land which the Creator gave for the use of His people. And the remedy is in the hands of the western people. The western legislatures can remedy the situation, and will do so just as soon as the people have suffered enough to have their eyes opened to the truth.

MANUFACTURERS' ORGAN CONDEMNS BONUSES

Since The Guide frequently finds it necessary, in defending the interests of the agriculturists and the great common people of Canada, to differ very strongly with the official organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, it is very gratifying to find an occasion on which Industrial Canada and The Guide for once see practically eye to eye. In the current issue of our contemporary is an editorial article on "Saskatchewan and the bonus system," in which it says:

"While Industrial Canada remembers that some industries which have received bonuses have been successful, the system, in a general way, cannot be recommended. A manufacturing concern which has the necessary capital, ability and experience does not depend on the size of bonuses in selecting a site. It will consider shipping facilities, labor supply, accessibility to raw materials and other economic questions. Experience has shown that, as a rule, the bonus system does not attract to municipalities the permanent industries which they are anxious to secure. Moreover, it encourages unscrupulous promoters and practically insolvent companies to defraud municipalities and to disappoint their ratepayers."

These sentiments are very similar to those which have on more than one occasion been expressed by The Guide, and we welcome the support of the Manufacturers' organ in protecting the taxpayers and citizens of Western towns and cities from unscrupulous promoters and real estate boosters.

COMMISSION ON COST OF LIVING

It is announced that a departmental commission, consisting of C. C. James, of the Department of Agriculture; John McDougald, Commissioner of Customs, and R. H. Coates, statistician of the Department of Labor, has been appointed by the Dominion Government to conduct an inquiry into the cost of living. The commissioners have instructions to enter upon their investigation with the least possible delay, and it is expected that their report will be presented to Parliament early in the coming session, which is to open on January 15. It is pointed out that if an independent commission were appointed, the officers named would be among the chief witnesses, and both time and expense will be saved by permitting the commissioners to tabulate the information which is already in their departments. The report of the Commissioners will, no doubt, be both useful and interesting, but the question is whether the government, when it has the report, will have the courage to deal with the causes which have brought about the enormous increases in the cost of living which have taken place in recent years. A committee of the Toronto Board of Trade, it will be remembered, reported some months ago that the tariff, and the trusts and combines which have grown up under its protection, were among the chief causes of high prices, and we have not yet seen any intelligent denial of this obvious fact. The government, however, has given no indication that it intends to reduce the tariff even upon the

food and clothing which thousands of men, women and children are suffering from the lack of in every considerable city in Canada. But while the government is taxing starving people upon their food and clothing, it is to be hoped at least that they will have a better theory upon the high cost of living problem than The Winnipeg Telegram enunciates in its issue of Saturday last. The Telegram claims that the higher the price of food goes, the cheaper it becomes, or in other words, it maintains that when the people are forced to pay high prices for the necessities of life it is a proof of their prosperity. Consequently The Telegram looks upon high prices as a good sign. If The Telegram's reasoning is true, then Canada is at the very height of its prosperity, a fact of which few people, apparently, are aware. Mr. Coates, one of the members of the commission to which we have referred, publishes each month, on behalf of the Department of Labor, a report on wholesale and retail prices, and the last report which he issued established a new high record. If The Telegram is interpreting the views of the government there is no doubt our present prosperity will be continued. The price of commodities might be lowered by removing the tariff and other taxes upon business and industry, but it would be even easier to increase prices by raising the tariff wall and fostering more trusts. May Heaven save us from any more prosperity of that kind.

THE GUIDE REFERENDUM

Although the ballots for The Guide Referendum were published in the issue of December 3, every mail still brings in a batch of votes, and consequently we are keeping the ballot box open so that every reader may have the opportunity to record his or her opinion on the eleven great questions submitted. It is important that every farmer and every woman in charge of a farm home should make known their opinions through this Referendum. If the farm women of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta want the suffrage this is a splendid opportunity for them to say so, and if the men, and the women, too, believe in Free Trade, Land Value Taxation, Direct Legislation and the other reforms submitted in the Referendum, they can express their belief by marking a ballot in their own homes and mailing it next time they visit the post office. The ballots appeared only in the issue of December 3, because only one vote may be recorded by the same person. The Referendum will be closed in about two weeks' time and the votes will then be counted. The result will be announced by provinces, and will show the men's and women's votes separately.

Rumors are afloat that the \$41,600,000 which the C.P.R. is raising by the issue of \$52,000,000 worth of 6 per cent. notes, is to be used for the purchase of the C.N.R. system. Sir Donald Mann, vice-president of the C.N.R., denies this report and states that the C.N.R. charter explicitly forbids the merging of the two companies. But if the C.P.R. or anyone else did wish to purchase the C.N.R. it surely would not need to pay \$42,000,000 for it. Any company which takes over the C.N.R. would have to take over its bonded indebtedness as well, and it is commonly reported that the outstanding bonds, guaranteed by the Dominion and Provincial governments, are at least equal to the value of the railway.

The cost of living still climbs. In November, 1912, the index number of the Department of Labor for wholesale prices in Canada was 136.6, in October, 1913, it was 136.8, and in November, 1913, it was 138.4.