



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. 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 of necessity 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.

A FARMERS' PARTY NEEDLESS

Editor, GUIDE:—If I did not believe this subject to be one of great importance I would not trouble you with another letter, and at once I would say it is not at all a question of non-partisanship. Were that the question there would not, I think, be any difference at all between Mr. Kirkham and myself. By a non-partisan I mean a man who keeps himself informed on public matters but stands without pledge to either party, who, when election time comes, gives his support where he thinks his interest will be best served. This is not at all what Mr. Kirkham gives his endorsement to. He uses the word "non-partisan" and at once quotes with approval the following passage: "The great benefit would be to get the Grain Growers organized on political matters and educated to take their right place by having their own representatives in rural districts."

Without debating the question whether an organized party of non-partisans is not a contradiction in terms, it seems to me as plain as daylight that what Mr. Kirkham means is that our Grain Growers' movement should set itself to organize itself into a party for political objects, and that to achieve this end the members should cut themselves loose from any present party allegiance, and having made this proposal he invokes unity in a poetic quotation apparently not seeing that his statement merely amounts to this, "All agree with me, then we shall be united." It is not at all surprising that many who join the Grain Growers' movement should hold this view. To them I would like to point out that they are not advocating non-partisanship at all, but the formation of a party whose program shall be purely industrial. Now I would seriously ask what chance is there for such a party? And what would be its effect upon our Grain Growers' organization?

For one thing, we might make sure of its receiving the antagonism of both the present political parties. It would have to formulate a policy and if that policy was confined strictly to matters affecting farmers it would probably antagonize most other interests in the province, not only so but would anyone seriously contend that such a party would have the ghost of a chance of winning half a dozen of the provincial seats out of the forty-one? I most certainly think not, and while this hopeless outlook confronts us it would entail upon our movement an odium one does not like for a moment to contemplate. It is unfortunately too true that no one can become connected with politics without encountering things in the last degree unpleasant. Can anyone suppose a farmers' party would escape this usual penalty, or does Mr. Kirkham suppose we could have a farmers' party that would be entirely free from the men whose first and last word is what is there in it for me? I should hardly suppose even he thinks it possible. My experience has taught me that we farmers as a class are certainly possessed of qualities that compare favorably with any other class of the community, but we should scarcely be justified in expecting nothing but saintliness even from our own class. To sum the whole matter up the endeavor to form a political party out of the Grain Growers' movement would be just about the most hopeless undertaking to which men could put their hands.

Then think of the likely result of such an attempt upon the movement itself. Up to now we have appealed to all thinking farmers to join, no question has

ever been asked any man about his politics or his political affiliations. All we have pleaded was that as a tiller of the soil, he had a common interest with the rest of us who have formed ourselves into this association. I do not think there can be any doubt that two-thirds of the present members are either Conservatives or Liberals. This may be very unfortunate, but then, Mr. Editor, every theory must take into account common, ordinary every-day facts. It may even be as Mr. Kirkham appears to think very sad or even wicked, but if his opinion is correct it does not alter the fact. One might go further and state that when these liberals and conservatives joined the Grain Growers' Association they had no intention by so joining to forswear their party allegiance. Now imagine an active movement within the Grain Growers' Association, having for its object an organization on political matters. The initiation of such a scheme would be an apple of discord. I am sadly afraid that instead of unity we should have a disruption, in the presence of which Mr. Kirkham's invocation of unity, even though



"Idyl Wyld," Souris, Man.

he gave us more poetry and further quotations of scripture, would be worse than useless, and if this would be so what would be its effect on the work of gaining more members? Why, where to-day we are winning six we should be lucky if we gained two. In short, if at any time we think the Grain Growers' Association has no more useful work to do than start a movement to "organize non-partisans, so as to get a unity of votes," my belief is you will at the same time see the beginning of the end of our industrial movement.

This may appear to men of Mr. Kirkham's cast of mind a somewhat hopeless forecast because he never tires of dwelling upon the bossisms of our political parties, and the juggernaut-like machinery connected with them, the whole of which wants improving off the face of the earth; but for myself I take an altogether different view of these things. The reason I think is, that Mr. Kirkham only sees these things from the outside while I have had some little opportunity of seeing them from the inside, in consequence of which I have been privileged with opportunity to give a more impartial appraisal. The men with whom I have come in contact on both sides of politics will bear fair comparison with those who undertake to criticize them.

That some things each side say need not be taken seriously goes without saying, but outside their criticism of each other I am quite convinced that there is a genuine desire on the part of both sides to do useful public service. But in the work of administration and legislation representative men are largely indebted for their knowledge upon the information supplied by the parties interested. If any of the corporate interests want anything they press that something upon the attention of the legislature and the government. It is notorious that no government, whatever its party name, goes searching very anxiously for additional work, and it is undeniable that in the past the farming community has done little more than grumble. Their grumbling rarely takes a definite form, until, as we know, it has passed into a proverb, "the farmers will grumble anyway."

One of the things that have weighed upon me since I have been a member of the legislature, is the lack of apparent interest taken in the work of the legislature by even my own farmer constituents, and this is, I feel certain, the chief reason why farmers interests have not received the amount of attention they should have done. How many of the local branches of the association have thought of sending their resolutions to their M. L. A.? Not many I feel sure. The point of all this, Mr. Editor, is, that it is futile to create new machinery when you have plenty already which you do not try to utilize.

My hope is that as an organization, we shall, as far as possible, keep to those industrial matters that affect us in our occupation as farmers, upon which we may reasonably hope that there will be no serious division among us; or at least no division that cannot be removed by friendly discussion among ourselves. As to those things upon which we may desire legal enactment we may rest assured, if our organization is sufficiently strong and aggressive the politicians will be found bidding against each other for our sup-

ported me my wages. But what is this \$200 that he has given me? Is it not simply so much of the crop—wheat, cattle, hogs, etc., etc., that my labor has helped him to produce? That is, I gave him so much labor, and he gives me back in exchange, so much labor in the shape of "labor certificates" that will exchange at any time and at any place for other people's labor in the shape of goods, such as shoes, overalls, lumber—labor and products generally. A dollar bill is really so much corn, wheat, goods—things labored for. A dollar bill means more than the dirty bit of green paper with printing on. It represents human effort, human flesh and blood. In this sense all money is blood money. So that the farmer does not pay me off with money, but really with the things produced by labor. He has given me labor for labor, and this exchange of labor between me and the farmer is an exchange of mutual benefit. All buying and selling is only a matter of "exchange of labor for labor." Let us get this clear idea of money in our minds first, and then perhaps we can find out, "who pays", and "how" the paying is done. Most people have a very hazy idea of what money is and what it is not. Gold and silver are not at all necessary as many people suppose. We are supposed to pay our debts in gold, but the fact is, we seldom see a gold coin. In the time of the war in the U. S., between 1861 and 1865, the government issued paper money in denominations of 10, 20, 25 and 50 cents, and Lincoln pointed out one of the most important lessons of that war, namely, that people could get along without gold and silver, as money, and could actually create millions of "fat" money in paper, as easily as a printer can run off doggers. A dollar, then, is a labor certificate, being a medium of exchange and a measure of value. When we pay our M.P.P.'s a thousand dollars seasonal indemnity we really give them a thousand dollars' worth of wheat, cattle, and store goods, that others have labored for. When the federal government boasts that its customs receipts for the year ending March 31, 1910, is one hundred million dollars, it means that the people of Canada have had to work and earn one hundred million dollars' worth of wheat, and then hand it over to the government for the fun of being "governed." So it is easily seen that it is not "money" that "pays," but the "labor" of the people that money represents.

Who Pays for the Elevators?

That being the case, we can now see who "pays" for the elevators. An elevator is a product of labor. It is human labor that cuts the trees into lumber, seasons it, makes the nails, paint, everything that goes into its construction, and puts it together. It is not capital that erects elevators, but labor. Capital itself is a labor product and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. The capitalists are men with money, the stored up labor of other people.

It is the labor of the farmers that produces the crops. Without this labor there would be no crops for any elevator to handle. The railways would have no grain to be hauled. The implement factories would shut down the minute farmers ceased to raise grain. Seeing, then, that it is the labor of farmers that keeps going, and makes pay, all elevators, railroads, factories, etc., then is it not their labor that pays for all these things in the long run?

But farmers "own" none of these things, although it is their labor that produces them, furnishes business for them, etc. If the railroad company gets money is it not out of the farmers that they get it, in the last analysis?

Now, if a private individual can erect an elevator, run it, get interest on his investment and pay for his labor, pray, out of whom is he getting it? Whose labor is paying it? So, if the government erects an elevator, and makes it pay, is the "pay" not coming out of the crop? Out of the farmers? Private individuals have been known to leave the farm, move to town and buy grain, and soon have homes and luxuries that they never could have dared to indulge in on the farm; but was it not the grain growers that paid for all? An elevator erected out on the prairie, far from a railroad, would be a losing proposition, but an elevator in a town, beside the track, where elevators usually are, with a lot of grain growing farmers tributary to that town, could not

port, and we shall realize this most desirable result, that instead of the farmers being the tools of the politicians, as they too often have been in the past, the politicians will be made what indeed they always should be, the useful servants of the farming community.

GEO. LANGLEY.

Maymont, Sask., April 2nd.

WHY GOVERNMENT ELEVATORS WILL PAY

Editor GUIDE:—In your issue of March 30, Mr. Geo. Steel, M.P.P., of Glenboro, is reported as saying:

"If the advocates of this bill could show me that, as a competitive system the grain passing through these elevators will pay interest on the cost and the running expenses I would support the bill."

Now, Mr. Editor, the point raised by Mr. Steele is very important; of the very highest importance, and it should be met and answered. It is a question that has arisen in the minds of a great many, and they want it answered, hence I take this opportunity of asking the question, "Who pays?"

But first, let us get a clear idea of what "pay" means. If I work for a farmer for seven months, and he pays me \$200 at the end of my service, he is said to have