

The Brain Growers' Guide

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IGNORING THE FARMERS

The Financial Post states that the Dominion Government is endeavoring to secure the services of Sir Geo. Paish, the famous British financial expert and President Underwood of the Erie Railway system, one of the leading American railway experts, to investigate the Canadian Railway situation with a view to nationalization. Both men, however, are so busy that there will be some difficulty in securing them. The Post also states that the Minister of Finance, in accordance with the legislation at last session, will appoint three directors each on the C.N.R. and G.T.P. The original intention of the Finance Minister was to name Sir John Eaton, Huntley Drummond and W. J. Christie on the C.N.R. Board and J. L. Englehardt, E. Laport and Geo. Galt on the G.T.P. Board. It appears, however, that Drummond, Englehardt and Eaton are too busy and others will probably be selected. It will be noticed that all the suggested names are business men and neither labor nor agriculture is represented. No person is more interested in the Railway proposition than the farmers of Canada. They provide the larger portion of the traffic and consequently pay the larger portion of the railway revenue. It would seem only reasonable that out of six Government appointments the farmers should have some representation. We have among the organized farmers men of business ability quite equal to those mentioned and there is no reason why the Government should ignore them.

CONSERVATION OF PUBLIC REVENUE

In order to raise equitably the Patriotic Fund in Manitoba and also to adjust the taxation necessary for the payment of court houses, the last session of the Manitoba Legislature decided to equalize the assessment throught the province. A capable commission of three men was appointed and their work has been completed. We would suggest that the powers of this commission be extended and that they be continued in office to carry on a survey of the province of Manitoba which could be utilized to great benefit in the adjustment of taxation and also in the development of agriculture and other natural resources. Such a survey might be made by townships, by cities and by towns showing the vacant land in each township and the ownership, whether local or foreign. It might also show how long such land has been idle, whether it was virgin soil or whether it had been homesteaded and abandoned. Further information of value would be the price paid for the vacant land when it last changed hands. With this information at hand it would then be possible to show how much land value created by the public is being annually diverted to private pockets and how much of it is going to foreign land speculators. The same commission might well also secure a valuation upon the steam railway, street railway and city power franchises within the provinces which would be equally valuable for taxing purposes. Other information might give some idea of the lumbering, mining and fishing resources available. Such a report as this would afford an opportunity of raising large revenues for the province without taxing industry in any respect. These revenues are now, from the standpoint of the province, being wasted. If they were available the money could be used for the development of agriculture to an unprecedented extent. A similar survey of Saskatchewan and Alberta would show even a larger waste by vacant land, tho in both those provinces there is even now a surtax on idle land.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' COMPETITION

On another page of this issue is an announcement of \$150.00 in cash prizes which The Guide is offering to boys and girls between ten and eighteen years of age who will select the best two pound sample of wheat or oats grown in the Prairie Provinces during the present season. The selection of good seed is admitted to be one of the very best methods of improving not only the quality but the quantity as well of grain grown in this country. Boys and girls can easily learn to make this selection of seed quite as carefully and efficiently as their elders and we are offering these prizes to encourage an interest in this work.

If one person on each farm would take a live interest in seed selection each year and follow it out regularly, the improvement in quality and quantity of wheat grown in the West in five years would be amazing. We hope that all parents who read this will encourage the boys and girls in their own family and in their own neighborhood to enter the competition and select the best seed that is grown on their farm. It will not only be a splendid training for the boys and girls, but at the same time those who are most successful will win a prize of real value.

FARMING AND DISTRIBUTION

Prof. Carver of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, in a lecture the other day remarked:—"The farmer is the only business man who buys always at retail and sells always at wholesale." One of the biggest problems of agricultural development is summed up in that one striking yet truthful sentence. The farmer is the largest manufacturer and the greatest producer per capita in the country and yet he enjoys none of the advantages or concessions that are granted to the regular factory manufacturing businesses. Everything he buys is at the highest retail price and a great deal of it has passed thru three or four hands before it reaches him and each one has added on a profit. He pays a rate of interest, not only for his mortgage but also on his short term loans or on his credit purchases, that would wreck any manufacturing establishment in the country. Another discrimination against the farmer manufacturer is that he not only has none of the tariff protection afforded to the factory manufacturers but he is forced to pay a special tax purely for the benefit of the other manufacturers. When the farmer has anything to sell in the way of grain or livestock or farm produce he always sells at the wholesale price, selling in quantities and getting the lowest price. Every farmer nowadays is aware of the unjust discrimination against his business but it is the business men and the politicians who force him to accept these conditions. Any business man who is honest and will consider these facts must admit that the discrimination against the farming business is decidedly unfair and cannot continue if agriculture is to achieve any permanent prosperity in this country. Co-operative organization is the remedy.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Toronto News, which probably voices the views of the Ottawa Government more nearly than any other newspaper in Canada, is advocating the nationalization of the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific Railways apparently to the exclusion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. There seems to be something sinister in such a project. The C.N.R. and the G.T.P. have been losing money at the rate of about \$20,000,000 a year, according to the government reports. A few

months ago the government loaned them \$23,000,000, altho everybody expects the loan will be really a gift. The annual statement of the C.P.R. for the year ending June 30, 1916, according to financial statements, will show \$57,000,000 profit, of which \$26,000,000 will be paid out in a ten per cent. dividend and \$6,000,000 will go to the public treasury in war tax, still leaving \$25,000,000 of net surplus. Now, if the government seriously proposes to take over our two great national railway sink holes that are losing money to the extent of \$20,000,000 a year, what good reason is there for not taking over the C.P.R. at the same time and thus securing to the public treasury this magnificent revenue which is now going into private pockets? From the standpoint of efficient operation it would undoubtedly be easier to nationalize all three railways than to take over the two losing roads and operate them in competition with the C.P.R. If the C.P.R.'s influence is sufficiently strong to prevent the nationalization of that road it will be also strong enough to prevent the government from operating the G.T.P. and C.N.R. in such a way as to make them effective competitors to the C.P.R. If there is any argument whatever in favor of taking over the losing railways there is certainly ten times as strong an argument for taking over the profitable road. Canada is the only part of the British Empire which now maintains privately owned railways. The governments of South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain and India are all operating their own railways successfully and profitably. In Canada we are still pouring money from the public treasury into the pockets of the railway promoters. It is time for a change. By taking over all our railways at once the government will have a profitable proposition and at the same time remove the most dangerous political influence in our public life.

THE TARIFF AND EFFICIENCY

The organized farmers of Western Canada favor free trade and direct taxation of land values as the best fiscal policy for Canada. They know from practical experience that it will remove a considerable portion of the heavy economic burden under which they are laboring. It is also a fact not so generally admitted, but we believe quite capable of demonstration, that a policy of free trade, or rather free imports, would be the best policy for the healthy development of our manufacturing industries. Any well informed manufacturer will admit privately that a great many manufacturers (like a great many farmers) adhere to antiquated methods which not only increase the cost of their production, but at the same time lower the quality of their products. In such cases the farmer has no corresponding compensation, but places his product on the open market and is compelled to take a price for it that does not give him a fair return for his labor. We would not advocate any legislation, nor do the organized farmers advocate any legislation, to bonus such farming methods. They do advocate an educational policy to help such farmers and a fiscal policy which will enable such farmers to procure the latest and most up-to-date machinery for the operation of their farms. In the case of the manufacturer, however, there is not the incentive to modernize his business methods because the government steps in and provides legislation which enables him to charge 25 to 40 per cent. more than a fair market price for his product. For this reason he can still make a profit on his business even tho he is not entitled to any more than the inefficient farmers. Under a policy of free trade or free imports the Canadian manufacturer would be compelled to use the very latest and best ma-