

# The Mail Bag

## FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A reader of The Guide residing at Adelaide, South Australia, writes as follows: The elections for the Federal Parliament were held on September 5, and the Labor Party, led by Andrew Fisher, has been returned to power by a very big majority. In the Senate they have captured 32 out of the 36 seats, and they have a majority of 10 in the House of Representatives. If this party were true to name and advocated a policy framed in the interests of those who labor, one could feel pleased at their success. Unfortunately, their policy is one of Special Privilege. They give privilege to the landlord class by supporting an exemption of £5,000 in the progressive land tax. This is so to catch the vote of the small farmer. Then the manufacturer has special favor shown to him by tariff legislation, and labor supporters have Special Privilege in the form of preference to unionists being adopted as the policy in connection with employment in the Commonwealth service. The main plank in Mr. Fisher's platform was that dealing with "effective protection to Australian industries." If this is put into operation it will mean that the consumers will be robbed to a greater extent than they are at present. In every other part of the world the reform parties are trying to solve the high cost of living problem by reducing the customs duties. Here in Australia this so-called Labor Party is trying to solve the same problem by increasing the duties.

The future outlook is very gloomy. We are now experiencing the worst drought we have had for over fifty years. Cattle and horses are dying by the thousands for want of feed and water. In the city of Adelaide we have a water famine, and cottage gardens are dying because of the proclamation issued prohibiting the use of water for garden purposes. Most of our chief mines are closed owing to the war, and because of this thousands of men are out of employment, and government relief has to be given. With high rents and high cost of living the people are beginning to see the folly of tariff and wage board legislation. If the federal government would abolish or reduce customs duties, and levy an all round tax on land values, production would be stimulated and avenues of employment opened to help us in our hour of trial.

The defeat of the Hon. A. H. Conroy, in the Werriwa district of New South Wales, is a great blow to the Free Trade movement. Mr. Conroy is a born fighter, and allows no party to influence him when principles are at stake. He was regarded by reformers as the leader of the reform movement in Australia, and he would have been a tower of strength in the House during the coming session, when it is proposed to reopen the tariff question and increase the duties. Mr. Conroy was opposed by a Labor man who was a farmer. The figures were: Lynch, 15,162; Conroy, 15,155. There was the record number of 537 informal votes. W. E. Johnson, the late Speaker of the Federal House, has again been returned for Lang Division in N.S.W. As he is a single taxer there will be one voice raised on behalf of freedom.

Our State elections in South Australia take place early next year, and it is hard to say which party is likely to be returned to power. The Peake government, which claims to be Liberal, got into power at the last general elections mainly on account of having proportional representation on their platform. When they were elected they at once turned down proportional representation and gerrymandered the electoral districts with the object of securing a perpetual lease of life for themselves. It is just possible that they will be disappointed in this respect, as the Labor party have a policy that should appeal to all fair-minded people. It includes proportional representation for both Houses, an all-round tax on land values, with reduction of railway freights and fares and making the income tax exemption £300 instead of £200. Altho the policy is not a perfect one by any means, and in-

cludes some socialistic proposals which true reformers cannot approve of, still it is going the right way on the taxation question, and also provides for all sections of the community getting their fair share of representation in parliament. On these grounds alone it should be supported by all reformers, as it is a big improvement on the policy of the party that calls itself Liberal.

Our Henry George social was held on September 23, and was a great success. The commemoration address was given by Dr. W. E. Macklin, from China, and was a very fine, inspiring effort. Being a personal friend of Henry George, the doctor was able to give some interesting narratives concerning the life and work

late been urging the same, and in fact a general campaign seems to have been inaugurated to put pressure on the farmer to produce more grain.

About three years ago the dear old flag was wafted high as an appeal to farmers to vote against their economic interests of an increased market for their produce, and as a palliative they were advised in season and out of season by all kinds and conditions of men to quit growing so much grain and to go in more for mixed farming. Now the same flag is again flaunted before our eyes and our patriotism appealed to, to grow more wheat, by apparently the same men. Why this sudden conversion? Less production of grain in Eur-

times, with but one exception—election time.

Appeals are made to us to increase our work and expenses, but so far there seems to have been no appeal to the predatory interests to get off our backs and stop stealing all our profit. There has been apparently no departmental appeal to the banks to reduce the 10 or 11% interests charged to the farmer on money loaned, or even an appeal to lend to us farmers less stringently to enable us to perform the extra work asked for. No flag has been waved before the transportation companies asking them as patriots to charge less exorbitant rates and so give their countrymen a better chance to live a little more in less hardships. Land speculators are not appealed to to lower the price of land, that unemployed men may find work and the cost of living may be reduced, nor is there any promise of a lowering of the tariff wall even against the mother country; in fact, the contrary has happened in as far as the duty is concerned. Who, Mr. Editor, is going to benefit the most by an increase in wheat production, the farmers or the predatory parasites?

N. H. NATHOUT,  
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## WOULD REDUCE TARIFF

Editor, Guide:—In the disguise of patriotism the protected interests are trying to fasten themselves more securely on the backs of the Canadian people. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and now more than ever the friends of democracy must be on the alert. Already a proclamation has been issued from Whiskeyville clamoring for more protection under the specious cry, "Keep your cash in Canada," and urging people to buy only goods made in Canada.

If the Canadian manufacturers offered us goods equal in quality and price to those we can secure from other sources a protective tariff would be unnecessary, because we are naturally inclined to buy from our fellow countrymen. It is only because they demand high prices for inferior goods that we are reluctantly compelled to trade abroad.

Now, in the face of a falling national revenue, they cry for more protection in the name of patriotism. Let us keep cool and think this thing over. Who is the greatest patriot, the man who buys foreign goods and pays the duty into the government treasury or the man who buys Canadian goods and pays nothing into the government treasury? All of the profit on Canadian made goods, enhanced by reason of the tariff, going into the pockets of the manufacturers. Take a concrete case. Some time ago you quoted figures showing that a Canadian made engine gang plow could be bought in Minneapolis for \$502, while the price in Winnipeg was \$680. If a farmer bought his plow in Winnipeg the government would get no revenue on it, while if he bought from the United States the government would get the duty. Which man would be the most public spirited?

The decrease in the national revenue calls for an immediate reduction of the tariff, because it is an axiom in political economy that "the more protection the less revenue, the less protection the more revenue." If the tariff were high enough to keep all goods out there would be no revenue. The lower the tariff the greater the imports and the larger the revenue. Not that I agree in the slightest degree with taxing imports at all. The proper way, in my opinion, to raise revenue is by a tax on unimproved land values. But while things are as they are let us make the best of them, and

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## 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. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, tho not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.



MISS CHRISTINA GORDON

of that great reformer. The account of the reform work in China was also very interesting. During his stay with us the doctor pleased all with whom he came in contact, and we were all sorry that this enthusiastic single taxer could not prolong his stay with us.

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## INCREASING WHEAT PRODUCTION

Editor, Guide:—Some time ago, like most if not all other farmers, I received a circular from the Department of Agriculture, urging us farmers to raise more wheat during the coming summer. Newspapers of every stripe, politicians, boards of trade and what not have of

ope because of the war is given as a reason, but do the predatory interests in Canada really care about that? How about the scarcity of meat that we heard so much about last year and the year before? We farmers were then accounted almost criminal because we did not produce meat, butter and eggs in large enough quantities for home consumption to say nothing about export. Surely the war has depleted live stock as well as the supply of grain, or have times in Canada become so hard that the common people can no longer afford meat?

It would seem that whatever we farmers do we are always in the wrong, and it is perhaps well that our shoulders are broad and our backs have become rounded, that we may carry all the burdens of iniquity that are accredited us at all



AND, HER POTATO PATCH

In the accompanying illustrations are seen Miss Christina Gordon, pioneer woman farmer of the Fort McMurray, Alberta, district and the produce from her garden, raised sixty-five miles north of the 56th parallel of latitude. In the garden were celery, parsnips, cauliflower and all other kinds of vegetables grown farther south.

During the thirteen years that Miss Gordon has been in the district she has gained the enviable reputation of never having refused an Indian or a white man a meal. Considering that the Indians are notoriously improvident and have occasional bad years when game is scarce, the number of meals furnished by the lady would be difficult to calculate. She speaks three Indian dialects, Cree, Chipewyan and Dog Rib, as well as French, English and Gaelic, and her word is law among the Indians. Besides being a capable farmer Miss Gordon conducts a small store. A part of her potato patch in the heart of the wilderness is herewith shown. The tubers by their size speak for themselves.