

The Mail Bag

PUNISH MAKERS OF ROTTEN SHOES

Editor, Guide:—Will you kindly allow me space in your widely read paper to make a suggestion, that if acted upon should be a severe lesson to the boot manufacturers, who were recently exposed for supplying our troops with unserviceable footwear.

It is beyond question that our boys, when they return from the front, will not want to buy boots made by the firms who supplied them with such rotten footwear. But that may be some months yet, and in the meantime these sharks are fattening on our patronage and strongly urging us to buy "Made in Canada" goods. If every father, and all connections of our soldier boys, will refuse to buy footwear made by the firms who have been exposed, the lesson will cost those firms more than they have made by their dishonesty and we may in future get better service and value for our money. The boys are risking everything, even life, in the service of the Empire, and the people who deliberately handicap them in that service should not go unpunished.

WM. K. S. RUTH,
Father of "one of the boys."
Kelsoe, Man.

PREJUDICE TO BE OVERCOME

Editor, Guide:—If we farmers would look as far ahead and make as many preparations for all eventualities as the line grain buyers do, then we would be in a much better position than we are. As an instance we, of the recently organized Grain Growers' local at Westerleigh, decided to make an endeavor to get a co-operative elevator at our station, Ponteix. Almost the first thing that met us was a statement from the farmers living near town, that a letter was being circulated which states, among other things, that the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company had a surplus of 30,000 bushels of wheat over and above the number of bushels bought and paid for, and the farmers are told or led to believe that this wheat was stolen from those who sold to that elevator, and is now the property of the head men, who are also the leaders of the G.G.G. Co. This is being used to prevent the farmers getting together and subscribing for a sufficient number of shares to get a co-operative elevator here. It is also being used to prevent the farmers from joining the Grain Growers' locals. The largest merchant here told me today that the building of a co-operative elevator, the forming of a strong Grain Growers' local and consequent co-operative buying would soon kill the town, and if the town was not prosperous the result would be that the value of farm land would fall and, generally speaking, dire destruction would be the inevitable result to the entire surrounding country. At this particular point a large number of the settlers living near the town are of French origin, and do not in many cases understand or speak English very well, the result is they are led to believe this.

But what rot! This merchant's denouncement of co-operative selling and buying is a practical admission that unless the merchants, the lumber dealers, the implement dealers and the grain buyers are given perfect freedom to rob the farmers (the producers) at each end of the deal, then the town cannot prosper, and that the general prosperity of the country at large depends on their being left in undisputed possession of the right to take whatever they may need from the farmers in order to make the correct degree of prosperity. It matters not to them whether or not the farmer has anything left so long as they are prosperous. Now this is surely a fine state of affairs, but I assure you that it is a correct statement of the exact condition of affairs in these three Western provinces.

You may have noticed that the Alberta Pacific has just had its best year, making a profit of \$459,819 as compared with \$322,326 the previous year, show-

ing that the condition or amount of crop is a very small factor in the conditions making for a profitable year for the grain buyers.

In the year 1907, I worked in what was probably the largest boom mining camp that we ever had in America. It was a gold camp, and the ore was extremely high grade, a large part of it running from \$10 to \$40 to the pound. A railroad was built into this camp from the nearest main line, a distance of over 200 miles, in a few months, and within eighteen months there was a town of over 20,000 population. This town was situated in what was then the only state in which liquor and gambling licenses were issued to anyone asking for them and being able to produce the necessary long green. There were about sixty licensed saloons and gambling houses and their doors were never closed, because they ran twenty-four hours a day and there were no Sunday regulations there. Wages were good, being from \$4.50 to \$8.00 for eight hours' work, and the miner who could not make from \$40 to \$100 per day outside his wages thought he was doing very poorly. Still, scarcely anyone saved any part of what they earned and stole, but gradually the high-grade began to play out and the ore-bodies became more permanent but of a lower grade, and the companies



Clydesdale stallion "Royal Equerry" (Imp., 11782, 13683), owned by W. T. McPherson, Wadena, Sask.

owning the mines were not able to make such immense profits, so in an endeavor to get as much as possible for themselves they decided to get rid of all their old miners and import new men from camps of a different nature, rightly supposing that the men new to one of that nature (it was base ore) would not be able to steal any. They changed their entire crew, all right, but at once dire destruction hit the town, the saloons and gambling houses began closing up, previously two stock exchanges had been doing a thriving business with a membership of nearly 200 brokers, but they soon followed the saloons. Five or six of these mines are still running, and the town has now a population of about 6,000.

These Western farming towns always remind me of Goldfield, Nevada, the only difference being that in Goldfield the miners stole the money with which they gambled and played the stock market and thus made everything boom, while here the farmer must work hard for everything he produces and then he is robbed at every turn of the road by the dealers of all kinds to make the towns prosperous.

FARMER J. W. V.
Westerleigh, Sask., Jan. 19, 1915.

AN OPEN FORUM

This page is maintained to allow free discussion of all questions vital to western farmers. Up to the limit of space letters will be published giving both sides of all such questions. It is not possible to publish all letters received, but an effort will be made to select those most fairly representing different views. Short letters will be given preference. All letters must be accompanied by name and address of writer, tho not necessarily for publication. Unused letters will be returned if accompanied by postage.

A PUZZLED CITIZEN

Editor, Guide:—After ten years residence in Canada I am still puzzled how you Canadian people expect me to prove my patriotism or loyalty to Canada and its interests.

We are told we must buy "Made-in-Canada" products and build up home industries and by so doing show loyalty and patriotism. Again, we are told we must buy foreign products and assist the government in raising war revenue in time of need, hence, if we buy "Made-in-Canada" products we rob the government of war revenue, which would not be loyal or patriotic.

As a protective duty on products, before the war, made the price of both home-made and foreign products all we could possibly pay, and now, since the war revenue has been added to protective duty, before imposed, the prices have become prohibitive so we are no longer able to buy either home-made or foreign products and are unable to show our patriotism or loyalty by either means.

Will The Guide favor us by telling us in some simple way how we can best serve our country and still be consistent?

A NATURALIZED CITIZEN.

Note.—Our correspondent should address this question to the minister of finance and the premier of Canada. Our opinion is that the tariff should be abol-

ished and direct taxation substituted, and then we should be able to buy Canadian made goods and contribute to the revenue of the country as well.—Editor, Guide.

BANK WILL NOT HELP

Editor, Guide:—Having read in The Guide and different papers how the bankers are helping the farmers, or are trying to make the public believe so, I will relate my experience. Thru the drought and hail I had a very poor crop of wheat, barley and oats—not fit for feed or seed—and having paid out more than I ought to have done, I applied to the bank for a loan of \$25 to buy feed to finish feeding 14 pigs. I could not sell them as they were. The manager asked me all about my business and I told him and offered to give as security 3 oxen, 1 cow, 14 four-month old pigs and 2 sows, and there were seven farmers who would have backed my note. He said he could not let me have it. I asked the reason. He said I did not pay my notes when due. It is about two years since I borrowed \$25 from them, and I could not pay at the time on account of threshing. What can I do with a bunch of pigs and no feed? The government keep preaching

not to part with stock, but I should like them to tell the farmers how to keep them. I might say that I am not the only one here that is in the same fix. It seems to me that the only farmers that can get a few dollars are those that have their patent. As to seed grain for farmers, the municipality will not have anything to do with it out here, and the law seems to be continually altering. Farmers do not know where to apply for it. As I have over 20 acres which I cannot crop I should like to know.

ALFRED BROMLEY.
Brightholme, Sask.

THE COUNTRY STORE

Editor, Guide:—I notice in your columns much controversy of late on the above question, contributed from readers of The Guide thruout our Western provinces.

Now, I might introduce myself. I am a small general merchant in one of the best mixed farming districts in Manitoba and I believe conditions as they exist here will correspond favorably with conditions thruout our Western provinces.

To begin with, are the stores thruout the country a necessity? If they are they most certainly deserve the support of their respective communities. If co-operative buying will meet the demands of the community, I must admit that the country stores should not have any existence. But can any district get along without its local stores? I am very much afraid they can not. These stores are a great convenience and a necessity, so deserve the fullest patronage of the community.

In nearly every district there are two classes of people, viz., those who have the cash to pay for their merchandise and those who secure their merchandise on credit. To the latter class the country store keeper is in many cases their very existence. He extends them credit, takes chances on their crops, sticks to them thru thick and thin, and quite often loses whole amounts of credits thus extended.

In the event of good crops and high prices for produce, when these people have money in excess of their immediate needs, they cry out, "Let's co-operate and cut out the country merchant." The results are they send out their money to mail order houses and pay large amounts of money in express and transportation charges, which very few of them take into consideration. When this surplus is expended they again turn to their local merchant, who has stood by watching proceedings, whilst his stock of goods lay unnoticed on his shelves, and ask for credit until next year's crop is again gambled on.

Again, take into consideration the expense of the local merchant. He must keep a stock of goods on hand for which he must pay out cash or equivalent with a good rate of interest. Is he not, therefore, entitled to profits on his sales? Often he buys stocks of goods which depreciate with markets and other conditions, so that he is compelled to sell at losses beyond his control.

The line of co-operation in buying which I think the farmers need most is co-operation with their merchants. Give them your business in all lines, remember they are a part of your community, they are a necessity, they are human, and the better you treat them the better treatment you may expect.

I would like to see many letters published from readers putting forth both sides of the above argument.

A COUNTRY MERCHANT.

A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

To steel our souls against the
lust of ease,
To find our welfare in the
general good,
To hold together, merging all
degrees
In one wide brotherhood—
This is our part.

—OWEN SEAMAN