

The Mail Bag

DIRECT LEGISLATION

Editor, Guide:—Most certainly we are right in for it, and don't forget we Canadians can't get away from it. We have been doing things along the same lines for many and many a day, using the same old team, the same old machinery, the same old trace harness with the same old reins, bridles and bits. This old outfit was once new and did fine duty in its day, but as everything gets old and out of gear, so this old equipment has come to that stage where its usefulness is not quite up-to-time. It has fallen into ruts and out of control and pokes along in ways not quite fanciful to the desires of those interested in nowadays' economics and demands. In fact the old team and its trappings have become quite wayward and persists in doing what it pleases in spite of the wishes of its supposed owners. The reins and blind-bridles have aged and are so weakened that they will not control the wilful headedness, that they once did. We are only doing with this past time outfit until the new is completed and ready for installment. It is now a foregone conclusion that a complete up-to-date outfit is to take the place of that now in use. The new team is to be of the new type of power. It will be well groomed and fed. There is to be a new set of harness with burnished buckles and mountings, new bridles with effective curb bits, new reins of the best of materials that will neither break nor weaken. There is to be entirely new machinery, built along new lines, artfully and scientifically arranged. All the up-to-date improvements and economic attachments are to be applied to this wonderful apparatus. Not only are the brain and best thought of the ages, but the genius and intelligence of our day are to enter into the perfecting of the system. It is to be an automatic equipment, under the perfect control of the operator's will and direction. The output of this work of art will be the most perfect and satisfactory that has ever been produced—why, the prime and active promoters of the scheme are the most optimistic ever known and declare that it will bring into existence a new world, a sort of Paradise in which equity and justice will again be united and peace and good-will shall again ascend the throne to the comfort and happiness of all concerned. Master minds and thinkers are in full work upon this up-to-date system of Legislation. They are educating, organizing, collecting evidence and assembling all the theoretical and practical knowledge in connection with the system. An evolution among all civilized peoples and some who are set down as old and primitive is working out to the end that the enfranchized people, and all adults of eighteen years and up, both men and women, of good ethic character and sound mind should be on the voters' lists; should not only own their councils, legislatures and parliaments, but that every voter should have an effective vote through Proportional Representation, and have perfect control over their representatives through the Recall and over all legislation through the Initiative and Referendum; that they should have tangible right of all revenues and expenditures through Direct Taxation, that would fall upon land values, idlers and idle and unearned increments; that our political parties, all parties, should be safeguarded through the Direct Primaries; that they should be able to carry on the legislation of the country in the most economic way both in money and time and with the least number of representatives through the Short Ballot, and that all

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, though not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.

decisions of a majority of the electorate be safeguarded through the Pledge.

These are some of the equipages of the Direct Legislation machinery of the present day, and under the conditions and circumstances of the times, must in a comparative short time supersede the present and old systems of legislation. The decision of the United States Supreme Court, the most influential and powerful advisory board in existence, to the effect that the Oregon Direct Legislation is constitutional, has placed Direct Legislation among the most prominent systems of all countries in all ages, and it is safe to predict that a boom of the Oregon Direct Legislation system will pass over and be adopted in some form by all civilized and semi-civilized nations in the near future. Is Canada and the provinces to be in the background? Are we to go on dragging the cat by the tail to our utter helplessness? Canada today is in con-

season, on the quiet, when he or she is sober in thought, be tactful in creating a thirst for knowledge of the new and spreading idea. Nobody likes to be considered behind the times. Be prepared to have a say in public gatherings, in personal letters, in the press. The press of America has a wide-open door, and it is getting farther open every day for the advocates of the new-fangled political system to air themselves, and it is being aired with sharp, effective arguments that cannot be gainsaid. We Canadians must be to the front. We ought to lead instead of bringing up the rear in this political evangelism of our day and century. Our present conditions and circumstances, the oppressiveness and unfairness of the present system of political economy, demand of us the reform. Our posterity will revolt and be ashamed of our semi-civilization if we do not leave the best of our day as a legacy to them. We look

LET THE PEOPLE RULE

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of the 17th inst. Mr. Austen Dronney "comes back" to the subject of Direct Legislation. He is still "agin" it. The essence of his latest letter is contained in this sentence: "How will you guarantee to the people under Direct Legislation that the majority will not be swayed by prejudices, by the nasty politicians and spellbinders?" The answer is that the people are far less likely to be swayed by prejudice, politicians and spellbinders under Direct Legislation because the life of political parties will not depend upon the success or failure of particular measures at the polls. It will be no longer necessary to vote for the "yellow dog" because he stands upon the platform you favor. Therefore Direct Legislation will diminish partisan prejudice and give the people a chance to vote for the good men and the good measures irrespective of party affiliation or personal friendships. The fact that the fate of the party is not interwoven with the fate of the measures submitted to the people will do away with the motive for the campaigns of misrepresentation which are now carried on by partisan newspapers, and partisan spellbinders in order to defeat political opponents. It will abolish the spoils system by giving the people control of their own cheque book. Now the politicians sign the cheques and we have to pay them whether we want to or not. Under Direct Legislation we will be able to "stop payment" of any cheques issued against our will. This will drive out the crooks and induce better men to enter the political arena. Direct Legislation exercises a great educational influence upon the people by placing upon each voter a greater amount of personal responsibility. This in turn stimulates the interest of individuals in public affairs. This is no fad, Mr. Dronney. Direct Legislation has stood the test of time and experience and we know it will do what we claim of it. It is hardly necessary to point out that under this system laws will be made by majority rule. The farmers constitute a clear majority of the voters in the three prairie provinces (our immediate aim is to establish Direct Legislation in provincial affairs). Mr. Dronney admits that the farmers have "a fair amount of horse sense," and we agree with him. The farmers of the West are showing "horse sense" by the splendid manner in which they are supporting Direct Legislation. This is one reason why we feel that they are capable of making laws for themselves when necessary. Now the politicians and spellbinders have a monopoly of the law-making power. The people have no control over them after they are elected. Direct Legislation will put the people in control of the law making power all the time. Let the people rule is the prayer of

Yours truly,

F. J. DIXON.

Winnipeg, Man.

HIS CONVICTIONS

The Visiting Chaplain—Ah, my brother, this world is full of trials.
His Majesty's Guest—Oh, dry up, gov'nor! Think I dunno that? It ain't the trials I minds; it's the verdicts.—London Sketch.

vulsions. Why? Our parliaments are owner and controlled from the wrong end, and the electorate are owned and manipulated by the parliaments. Of course the electorate is a little on the ear just now and there is game in the wind—the fight is on. Who is to win, Popular Government or Privileged minority Government? Is the electorate being properly organized and drilled for the fray? Is the new system to penetrate and break down the invincible Compact Phalanx of the privileged and moneyed interests and usury controlled governments? If so, the new order must be made efficient. The Direct Legislationists must stand to their guns to the finish—must conquer. The electorate must be organized and educated; must be up-to-date in Direct Legislation knowledge, be prepared to give a convincing answer to the opposition and the inquiring mind; be ready to button-hole a fellow here, there, everywhere in

out over our horizon to find others far above us along these lines, leading out into new fields of legislative reform. Every Canadian ought to jump out into the room and "go some." It is foolishness to allow the present conditions to remain any longer. There has never been in any age with which history acquaints us so effective a system of governing people, and dealing equitably and justly with them as through the "little stone" cut out by the Swiss among the Alpine mountains, and Direct Legislation is destined to fill the whole earth. The Oregon system is acknowledged to be the most up-to-date, effective and practical in operation, and if fitted to Canadian conditions and applied to provincial and federal parliaments would make of the Dominion a new country in which would flourish political righteousness.

J. E. FRITH.

Moosomin, Sask.

PROTECTION

Editor, Guide:—A neighbor got a barrel of flour from England last year, a special kind which would cost more than ordinary flour; yet after paying freight and duty it cost no more, rather less, than flour bought here. "There is something rotten in the Kingdom of Denmark," that rot is the canker of Protection, it may help the miller, but not the farmer.

GRAIN GROWER.

Cowley, Alta.

At the recent city election in Copenhagen, Denmark, nine women were elected to municipal offices. It is said that never before have Danish women shown such lively interest in the elections, and that their methods were "characterized by clearness, calmness and balance of mind."