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WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

The Mail Bag

Continued from Page 9

for the farmers of the Prairie Provinces to prove their loyalty by buying for the next five years the goods we need from the mills and workshops of Great Britain. I repeat that every dollar's worth we buy from the Canadian manufacturers is a nail in the coffin of the liberty of the laboring class and farmers of Canada. Has there ever been a government in the world that has counted on the ignorance of the people as our present one has done in asserting that the present increase in the customs tariff is to pay the extra expense incurred by the war?

Is it possible the Hon. W. T. White expected his utterances regarding his budget to be taken seriously by the electors of Canada?

It remains to be seen if the people are as ignorant as the heads of our government expect.

The opposition knew that the excuses of the Finance Minister and his colleagues were false, but their protest was feeble and futile. We stand in the position of having a government composed of champions of Special Privilege and an opposition that is servile to the same class. Where do we come in?

JOHN EVANS.

A MERCHANT ON CO-OPERATION

Editor, Guide:—The onward march of economic development in the distribution of supplies calls for the elimination of waste, duplication of effort and for co-operation. Who is going to co-operate? Will the consumers themselves co-operate and start and build up an entirely new system of distribution in opposition to the present system of wholesale and retail, or will we, as retailers, work hand in hand with the consumers and co-operate with ourselves and our customers to attain the same results without unnecessarily disturbing or duplicating the present channels of trade? It would be foolish for us to try, from any selfish reason, to fight against such development. I believe it is absolutely necessary to have retail stores to serve each town or district. What is needed is that the sphere of such retail business should be thoroughly defined so that we as retailers may expend all our energies within that defined limit. I think we have arrived at the time when we should ask our government in the interests of all concerned to appoint a commission to go into this matter and study it from every viewpoint and then outline the plan considered most economical for the distribution of goods, and I have no doubt it will be found that this can best be done thru the modification and co-operation of the present channels.

At the present time the economical efficiency of the retail system is hampered by a good many barnacles. First and foremost is the task of securing a just and economic banking system, in providing such an elastic and plentiful medium of exchange as would suffice to make settlement in cash for all goods. The mail order houses have been able to secure this economy by insisting on cash with order, but by draining so much ready cash from the general circulation they have only made matters worse for the other retailers, the country merchant, who is called upon to help the indolent, the sick and afflicted of each community, thru credit for supplies to tide over themselves and families. Should we decide, as a retail association, to make our demands as rigid as those of the mail order houses, there will be a lot of charity work to be performed by the government or the community direct, which is now performed, perhaps unwillingly, by the retail trade. I believe that with a right system of credit and finance, including a medium of exchange, all this waste and loss would cease, and I am glad to see that the Grain Growers' Association is making a move for the organization of a bank for and by the farmers of Saskatchewan and would suggest that herein lies the solution of our greatest difficulty. I think we should co-operate with the farmers and take shares in such a bank if started, for, by the producer securing the assistance, such a bank would give for the extension of his operations and the purchasing of his supplies upon a cash basis. We can, thru the co-operative effort of our association, supply the same better and cheaper than can be done thru any other source. At least, that is my opinion.

If I am wrong we will all have to admit that we, as retail merchants, are factors to be eliminated by the economic development of our time, which I cannot admit. Any retail merchant who carries large stocks of flour, sugar, salt, apples, etc., and buys by car as we do, knows that in the present handling of these goods he breaks about even. Still, these are some of the goods that the co-operative association are handling. In our own case we have found that we can and do deliver these goods to our customers at as low price as can be got in any other way by accepting their co-operative cash orders and delivering same direct from the car, and make more of a net profit than under the old way of unloading, storing, insuring and delivering in small quantities. The great economic saving is made in pooling of cash orders and the co-operative delivery of same direct from the car, and I maintain that the men who carry out this work are entitled to the benefit.

There are fair minded and unfair minded grain growers. The same as there are in all other lines of action.

Some consumers have an idea that the saving made, say on a car of apples bought from an outside firm is the amount they would have had to pay if dealing in the same manner thru their nearest retail merchant, not comprehending that the saving made was thru their co-operating and taking immediate delivery from the car, and in many cases would find that their local retailer, already in touch with the channels of commerce, could give a more satisfactory service if he was given the chance, and at the same time he would have a net profit larger than before, strengthening his finances, which all the time is, or should be, working in the interests of the welfare of his community.

W. C. PAYNTER.

Tantallon, Sask.

SASKATCHEWAN AND LIQUOR LAWS

Editor, Guide:—Since the announcement of the Hon. Walter Scott, of Saskatchewan, regarding the policy of the government in cancelling of hotel licences, the hotel-keepers are making strenuous efforts in circulating a petition to have a plebiscite taken of the people before such legislation is put into force.

I have come in contact during the last few days with people who have been induced to sign these petitions and the arguments and misrepresentations being used by the hotel-keepers are most diabolical. One of the farmers who is a very religious man was seeding in his field when an auto drew up beside him and in a minute four men had surrounded him. They produced the petition, which he read and refused to sign. They maintained the scheme of the government was simply to get control of the liquor business and use it for political ends. To get rid of them he signed it and five minutes after, when his senses came back to him, he thought what a fool he had been.

Another man was attacked by three men in an auto. When he read the petition he said, why, I cannot sign that; I think Scott is right. He may be right, they said, but if you don't sign that petition you won't get your name on the voters' list; and as they all maintained that fact, he signed. The argument they used to another man when he refused to sign was that when the licences were cut off the vendors of liquor would have no restrictions and would sell at all hours and in any quantities and things would be worse than at present.

Their method is simply to talk a man off his feet and induce him to sign it in spite of his own better judgment. It seems strange that men will be induced to do such a thing, but such is the case and I think that The Guide, which is an advocate of temperance and the policy of the Grain Growers' Association which pronounced so strongly for prohibition at their convention, should issue a note of warning to the farmers to be on their guard against the arguments and methods employed. The hotel-keepers fought strenuously against a plebiscite and now they think with their money and cleverness they can defeat the prohibition measure which the people have been hailing with gladness as the best thing the Scott government has ever done.

J. G. MOFFAT.

Carnduff, Sask.

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