

Suggestions and Answers By The Editor

We have received a large number of questions concerning The Guide which we are glad to answer, because we realize that the more our subscribers appreciate the problems which The Guide has to face the more generous will be the response received. In our issue of February 10, in our article entitled "The Cost of Neglect," we pointed out that in the month of January there were 9,000 subscriptions that were one year in arrears. We have had several letters asking why we do not cut off subscriptions when they are in arrears. The following two letters are samples of a number we have received.

Personally, I think the mistake The Guide makes is in continuing to arrive after the subscription is non est. Of course it is a courtesy to the subscriber, and a convenience also, but does he deserve it? I think you will find that a prompt cutting off of the paper will bring a more or less speedy renewal. In the case of tardy renewals, why not send one letter to the agent in the district and let him round up the dozen or so delinquents?

MRS. FLORENCE T. ROBINSON.

Hafford, Sask.
I see in your issue of February 10, an item complaining of subscribers not renewing promptly. Now, I think that if in the last issue paid for you would paste in a second pink notice stating that as you had not received a renewal of the subscription that the paper would be stopped, and anyone who wished to have the paper would make an extra effort to renew. You might lose a few subscribers that would have renewed later, but I don't think there would be many, and you would thereby avoid the expense of sending the paper to "deadheads," as well as sending out so many notices. In conclusion, I will add that I am well pleased with The Guide and will not stop subscribing if you do raise the price, and, what is more, I think that every farmer in the West should get it. Trusting that my suggestion will be received in the spirit it is given, I remain,

J. A. BRYCE.

Bryce, Sask.

A BAD PRACTICE

These letters are both from subscribers who appreciate the work The Guide is doing and also appreciate the financial handicaps under which we labor. We realize that it is a bad practice to send The Guide to a subscriber after his subscription has expired. Until three years ago we cut off subscriptions when they expired, but we received quite a number of indignant complaints from subscribers, something like this:

Why did you cut off my subscription? You knew I was good for the money. The other papers I take do not cut off my subscription when it expires. I always send in the money. Sometimes I wait two or three years and send them in a subscription for several years at the time.

We know it is the practice with mostly all farm journals to carry subscribers for at least a year after they are in arrears, and some papers carry them for three or four years. The practice is a bad one and it is an expensive one to the publisher, because a considerable number of subscribers who allow their subscription to run in arrears do not pay. We have had several letters recently from subscribers who were a year in arrears, saying that they would not pay their arrears because they had not ordered the paper to be continued after their subscription had expired. Last week we cut off from our mailing list 2,000 subscribers that had run over one year in arrears. To each of these subscribers we had sent five notices, but had received no reply to any of them, and there was nothing left for us to do but to cancel their subscriptions. It cost us \$3.00 to send out each one of these subscriptions for the year and we have not received one cent in return. This was \$6,000 straight loss. We have sent a letter to each one of those whose names we have cut off our list, explaining why it is necessary to cancel their subscription, and asking them to renew.

CASH IN ADVANCE POLICY

In view of the facts above set forth and of the heavy expense and loss which we met with in forwarding The Guide after subscriptions expired, we have decided to discontinue this practice. Beginning with April 1, we will follow the policy of cancelling subscriptions as soon as they expire. Each subscriber, however, will receive a notice five or six weeks in advance and a return envelope, so that if he likes The Guide he will be able to renew at once. Otherwise, the subscription will be cancelled. We have a considerable number of subscriptions now from three to twelve months in arrears, and it will take us a few months to institute the "Paid in Advance" basis on our whole mailing list on account of the vast amount of work involved in sending out notices. However, this will be our policy henceforth, and we will send direct notices to all subscribers as quickly as we can. Any subscriber, therefore, who is in arrears and does not receive the paper will understand why his subscription has been cancelled.

All the employees of The Guide are paid their wages in full weekly, the same as is done in the majority of business establishments in every city. We pay the bills for our paper on which

The Guide is printed every thirty days, and all other charges in connection with publishing The Guide are paid every thirty days. Thus The Guide, so far as paying its bills is concerned, is conducted practically on a "cash in advance" basis. If we continue to give our subscribers credit for their subscriptions, it means that we will have to find the money elsewhere for this purpose, and the burden is becoming so heavy that we cannot continue it. We know that it will be far more satisfactory to both our readers and to ourselves to have the subscriptions paid in advance.

COST OF NOTICES

Here is a letter which we have received containing a suggestion which has, no doubt, occurred to many subscribers:

As to the cost of sending out renewal notices, this expense, I think, could be cut down to one-third by using postcards, as each notice would only cost one cent instead of three cents. Hoping that this writing will not be looked at as an offensive intrusion but a mere suggestion, I am,

HENRY H. OLSON.

Hardy, Sask.

We have found from experience that postcard notices are not nearly so effective as letters, and after some years' experience we find that it is actually cheaper to send out letter notices, even tho they cost more than postcards, because we get a larger number of returns. Under the new system, however, of cancelling subscriptions when they expire, we will not need to send out more than one notice, and we will thus save upwards of \$2,500 a year. Each subscriber will receive his notice five or six weeks before his subscription expires, and this notice will be pasted on the first inside page of his paper, and will be accompanied by a return envelope. All he will have to do will be to write his name and address, put in a postal note for \$1.50, and mail the letter to The Guide. We will do the rest.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ASSOCIATION DUES

Another suggestion that has been received from a large number of subscribers is contained in the following letter:

I would suggest that the members of the Grain Growers' Associations pay \$2.00 to become members, and that \$1.00—less postage—be forwarded to The Guide for one year's subscription. Members, or those wishing to join, to pay at the annual meeting to the secretary-treasurer.

Long live The Guide, the farmers' pride,
And the champion of our nation;
It upholds the weak, defends the right,
The "Rose" of our Grain Growers' Association.

JAMES HALLIDAY,

Sec.-Treas., Oakburn G.G.A.

The great drawback to this suggestion is that The Guide, in each local community, would be dependent upon the rise or fall of the local association. At the present time when an association either dies or lapses into a comatose condition The Guide still continues to go to the subscribers in that neighborhood. By reading The Guide the farmers realize what benefits other neighborhoods are receiving thru their association, and sooner or later they will reorganize their own association. We have given this question a great deal of consideration, and feel that it would be very unwise to do other than allow the farmers to subscribe to The Guide independent of their fee to the association.

THE RIGHT SPIRIT

Here is a letter which is typical of many received, and it is very encouraging:

I take this opportunity to say that I am heartily in sympathy with the good work you are doing, for all my life I have been engaged in this kind of work, and if we are blessed with good crops this season, so we have a little money to work with, you will hear from Darmody in a way that will convince all that we are alive to the issues of the day and up and doing. If I can be of any help to you in this work for the emancipation of the yeomanry of this and all other countries, all you have to do is to command me.

C. E. WALLMAN.

Darmody, Sask.

The spirit shown by Mr. Wallman is what will make The Guide the greatest success possible. If all our readers will help us in the same way, The Guide will go forward with greater success than ever it has had in the past.

THE GUIDE IS INDEPENDENT

Here is a letter from a man who has had experience with newspapers in other countries:

At the convention of the U.F.A. held in Edmonton last month, it was my privilege to "break a lance" for a paper financed by and therefore belonging to the farmers as their organ. I pointed out, how the editor of the agricultural paper in Seattle, Wash., said to me: "If I print the stuff you are writing I will lose all these pages of display advertising, and I want you to understand that I have no rich Dutch uncle keeping me. I am running this paper to get bread and butter for my wife and kiddies and not to educate the down-trodden farmer. If that down-trodden farmer wants any special information, or is looking for education, let him pay for it himself."

I therefore heartily endorse an advanced subscription to The Guide, and I am personally quite willing to pay \$1.50 annually if thereby I can get what I am after, or if such amount

is not sufficient to obtain a paper without strings on it, absolutely owned and controlled by us farmers, then I want the editor to tell us as much, and further state just what it will cost to procure such value.

The present prices paid to farmers for hogs and cattle are altogether out of proportion to the prices paid for the products when sold at retail. So glaring is the difference in any other line of farm produce in regard to the spread between market and retail prices that the exception serves—most conspicuously—to confirm the rate.

My neighbor, as an instance, was offered the market price for a heavy sow in this town, which he refused. Killing the sow himself, he obtained a rather larger sum of money for the cured hams than the butchers offered for the whole carcass, while the lard alone would give handsome wages for killing and pay for all further labor and outlay in connection with the transaction. This proves that we must gain control of our markets—driving all speculators and gamblers out of commission—and in order to do this we must fight every form of private ownership of public utilities, and more especially every form of industrial and commercial undertaking or organization which, calling itself co-operative, or collectively owned and controlled, yet allows all the "tricks of the trade" to govern its activities, and the money paid as shares of stock—by the few—to absorb the profits, or surplus in settlement of accounts, produced by the many workers. For profits, earned by money which has no earning power beyond its market value, owned by the people who render either no service at all or else such as is disproportionate in the production of such accumulation, is one phase of what the Apostle James so graphically describes as: "The hire which by fraud ye rich have withheld from them that harvested your fields."

Now, Mr. Editor, this will be a bitterly strenuous fight and I sum up by asking once more, if you will tell us plainly whether, by paying the half dollar yearly increase, The Guide can stand by us, allowing an open and free discussion without fear or favor; or, if not, what then must be done by us to put The Guide in a position to positively assure us this open forum. Yours for the blessings promised by David to "the man"—social organization—"which putteth not out his money to usury"—rent profit and interest.

DANIEL F. BOISSEVAIN.

Strathmore, Alta.

We believe that at \$1.50 per year we can make The Guide a financial success and also permit us to improve the paper very considerably. The Guide will continue in the future as in the past to be free and independent, and will handle all questions without fear or favor. The Guide is conducted entirely for the benefit of its readers, and our experience in the past has shown our readers that advertisers do not influence the policy of our paper. If our advertisers are not satisfied to publish their announcements, they are at liberty always to withdraw them, because we have not in the past and will never in the future allow advertisers to dictate the policy of The Guide.

TELL US YOUR PROBLEMS

Here is a letter from a good friend of The Guide, who has just collected six subscriptions to The Guide from his neighbors:

I like The Guide very well, but I would like to see more in it in the way of farming. There are lots of men who say they would like to read more on the cultivation of different kinds of soil and something about dry farming. I let different men read my paper and when I try some of our best and most interested farmers that is what they tell me. Of course I do my best and sometimes win and other times I lose.

J. W. GODDARD.

Hilda, Alta.

We have had a number of letters in the past year asking us to give more information in regard to various farming operations and farm problems in the pages of The Guide. In response to this request we have secured articles from leading authorities on practically all farm problems, and have been publishing these articles in The Guide for the last six months. At the present time there is no farm paper in Western Canada publishing any more up-to-date and practical information on farming than is published in The Guide. We can promise our readers that in the future The Guide will supply the information they require to help them in their daily work on the farm, and in addition will continue to give them information on marketing, tariff, taxation, co-operation and other subjects of vital interest to the farmers of Western Canada. To help us in supplying this information, we want our readers to tell us exactly what information would help them in their farm work. Don't write and tell us what would help somebody else. Tell us what you personally would like to know in order to make your farming more successful. If we can get this information from our readers, we can then find some person who can give authoritative replies. We can only give this definite information when we know exactly what is required. We hope that each and every one of our readers will assist us in improving The Guide by telling us just what problems they are meeting in any phase of their work, and we will then be in a position to make The Guide give the very best possible service to all our readers.