

The Mail Bag

CHARGES AGAINST ROBT. CRUISE

Editor, Guide:—I was pleased to see in your issue of April 21 your editorial entitled, "Charges against Robert Cruise." Since I am the man against whom these charges have been made, it is natural that I should have a very special interest in the matter. I desire the very fullest enquiry into this matter by the Grain Growers' Associations and farmers in my constituency, and I am ready and willing to give them all the information they require to get at the true facts of the matter.

At the time I was elected to the Dominion house, I adopted as my platform "The farmers' bill of rights" and I stand on that same platform today. The effort by Commissioner Ferguson to blacken my character was done in a most unfair manner and this report was brought down in the House a few days before the close of the session, when I was away getting my seeding operations started and so had not a chance to defend myself.

Now, I want the very fullest enquiry into this matter and I am very sure that when the farmers and Grain Growers in my constituency get the real facts of the case they will agree that there was no foundation for the charge. It is far too common a practice in our public life in Canada, on the part of both political parties, to endeavor to blacken and misrepresent the character of their opponents, and I say it with all deliberation that this attempt to misrepresent me is done on the eve of a general election for the sole purpose of placing me in a false light before the electors of my constituency.

Thanking you for bringing the matter up, I am,

Yours truly,

ROBT. CRUISE.

Dauphin, Man., April 24.

LAURIER AND THE TARIFF

Editor, Guide:—On March 24, in your first editorial, you say: "When the finance minister showed that additional revenue must be secured, the Liberal leaders had absolutely no alternative to propose. They ignored the question of Reciprocity with the United States. Judging by the speeches of its leaders, the Liberal party has thrown overboard its Reciprocity and low tariff policy."

In Laurier's speech of March '10 he advocated: (1) Retrenchment. If \$98,000,000 was extravagant in 1911, and it was, is \$140,000,000 economical in 1914? (2) Heavier taxes on banks, loan companies, trust companies, and insurance companies. (3) Heavier tax on luxurious travelling. (4) A heavy tariff on "some articles on which a maximum revenue could be raised with a minimum of inconvenience and loss." (5) An excise tax on spirits, equal to the tariff tax.

Re the Reciprocity policy he said: "Four years ago, when we wanted, not to let well enough alone, but to make well enough better than it was, when we wanted to improve our trade relations with our neighbors in the United States

I admit that these are but mere criticisms of the government tariff and that they foreshadow no revenue policy essentially different from that of the government, yet the opposition leader showed his continued faith in the policy of Reciprocity and made at least a few positive propositions for the increasing of the revenue.

W. J. CONOLY.

Note.—The Liberal leader made no declaration in favor of lower tariff nor in favor of Reciprocity. If he would reduce the tariff when returned to power, he did not say so. The tariff is the biggest feature of the revenue and taxation question and the Liberal party officially have given no indication that they will reduce the tariff if given an opportunity.—Editor.

TAX ON LETTERS

Editor, Guide:—The following letter I wrote in England shortly before my return, and you may care to publish it. From no political motive whatever, but solely in the interests of our country, of which one can sometimes get a better view from outside, I wish to protest mos-

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.

strongly against the tax on letters and postcards and collected in a way which renders it as inconvenient and burdensome as possible, contrary to the canons of good taxation. Everyone I mentioned it to in England was astounded at such a tax; it might have been expected perhaps in a country like Turkey, but she is hardly a country for us to follow. To tax letters is to diminish correspondence, but the progress of a country can be judged by its daily mail. Tax dogs, and fewer dogs are kept; the old window tax in England closed many a window; a tax on date trees caused the Arabs to cut down date trees; the same cause will produce similar effects in Canada, and many a poor person will go without a much needed or comforting letter; the rich it will not greatly affect. Then, if the tax is necessary, why not make it less burdensome by simply increasing the postage to the amount, instead of having to get, and keep, and affix a separate stamp? Also, why not simply charge double the deficiency on delivery if, thru inadvertence or thru the stamp coming off, there is no stamp tax on a letter? To send such letters to the Dead Letter Office is barbarous in the extreme. Many a visitor to our country will not know of our barbaric customs and innocently mail his letters with ordinary postage, perhaps at a post office on landing, and wonder that he never gets any reply. It is indeed a

we are to get it both ways. Let us adopt the English method altogether—it has proven best.

Let me add that the tax on seats in parlor cars and berths in sleeping cars, also on telegrams, is particularly hard on the West, where our long and expensive journeys can seldom be made without such relief, and who ever heard of a 15 cent telegram West of the Lakes! No, any tax on communications of any kind in a young and growing country stands condemned on the face of it; these things are our very life-blood. We need feeding up, not blood-letting. If the country needs more money in the treasury, reduce the tariff sufficiently and money will flow in. The higher the tariff, the less revenue from it; this is too obvious to need saying. Free Trade England derives an enormous revenue from her customs house.

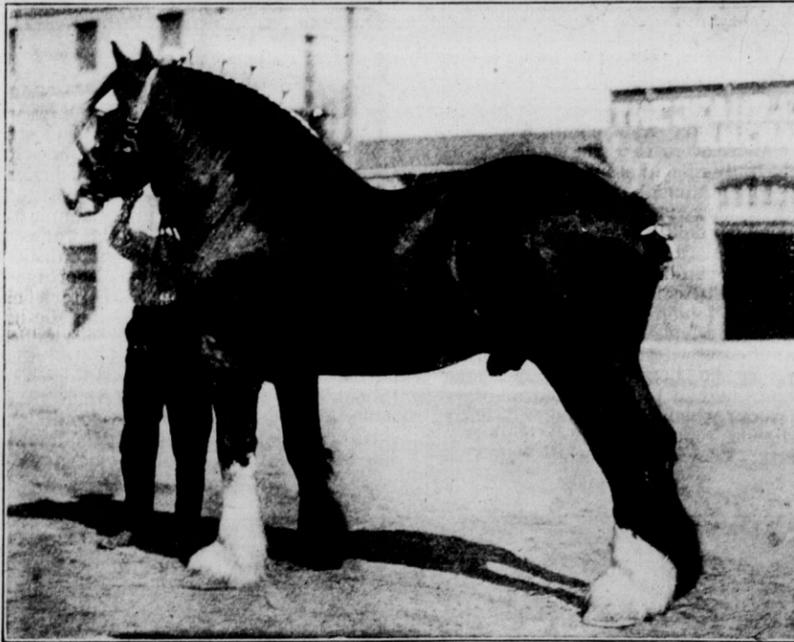
F. W. GODSAL.

Cowley, Alta.

Note.—Since Mr. Godsall wrote the post office department has announced that the war stamp tax may be paid with ordinary postage and has also decided—after vigorous protest—that letters will only be sent to the Dead Letter Office when there is no return address on the envelope.—Editor.

THE SURTAX CONDEMNED

Editor, Guide:—I am a subscriber to your paper, which you represent as



Imported Clydesdale stallion "Title Deeds," six years old and weighs 2,000 pounds. Owned by Alex. Galbraith, Brandon, Man.

monstrous piece of taxation. Then again, do we not advertize our country on our envelopes, the Post Office helping by advertising Dominion and city fairs on its stamp cancellations? And now we shall advertise all over the world, wherever our reduced Canadian letters go, that our country and its finances are in such a parlous condition that we are reduced to a tax on letters and cards. It will give the blackest eye Canada ever had. It will, however, do good by showing that 36 years of protection is a complete failure and that it has not accumulated stores of wealth to be drawn on in time of need, while on the other hand the wealth of Free Trade England is inexhaustible and she is able to carry not only herself, but Canada too, thru any struggle; and even as I write there are advertisements in English papers of a big loan Canada is trying to raise in England. We were content under protection, with indirect taxes, i.e., taxes on everything we use without direct payment, but now in addition to these we are to pay direct taxes as in England;

being the "Only paper in Canada owned and published by organized farmers." I own land in Southern Alberta. I do not live on my Alberta land, nor do I cultivate it, nor lease it, so I suppose I am what you term a "Land Speculator." My character, as you put it, is such that you associate me (see carton G. G. G. Dec. 16) with booze dealers, stock gamblers, usurers, monopolists, grafters and every other class of questionable individuals which you may happen to call to mind.

I bought land on my first trip to Alberta seven years ago. The laws then seemed just and reasonable and the climate was healthy. The people whom I met were very enthusiastic in their efforts to induce me to buy land in Sunny Southern Alberta. The C.P.R. to help draw me into temptation, charged me only one cent per mile for car fare. I was told wonderful tales of wonderful crops. Since I acquired this land I have made several trips to it and have observed conditions closely. It is similar to early days in North Dakota.

The farmers of Alberta have had my sympathy, and they still have it. They are fighting battles in defense of their own welfare, with odds hard against them. It is the correct thing for them to do. It will be a fight of long duration. They must be just toward all to succeed. Are the organized farmers fair toward the non-resident vacant land owner? The Guide, which is the voice of the organized farmers, has used some very unkind, yes, even vicious expressions about the vacant land owners in nearly every recent issue of the paper, which fact has called forth this letter.

Some conditions in Western Canada have not proved to be ideal to the farmers of that region and while looking about for a cause of his troubles, someone seemingly whispered in his ear, "It is all due to the non-resident vacant land owner, otherwise known to you as the Land Speculator. He is making enormous profits and paying no taxes. He is the one great evil to your welfare and an all around bad man. He must be driven from among you before you can have good times in Canada. You are here and he is not. Your votes control the provincial government. Graft the vacant land owners' property. Pass a few laws so as to legalize the graft. It is easy money."

Only twelve years ago, what is now known as Western Canada, was a great stock country, if it was anything. It was crossed by the C.P.R., which was then the only railroad. There were just as many acres of land then as there are today and the soil just as fertile. The C.P.R. and the H.B. Co. owned many acres as grants from the government and the remaining acres of the vast fertile expanse of unoccupied land was open to homesteaders. The H.B. Co. had been out there for a hundred years. The C.P.R. for twenty years. It was known that the names, Alberta and Saskatchewan, appeared on the map, and that was about all we did know about these provinces of Canada. Why did not the farmers go in and occupy and cultivate the land? Land was then extremely low in price. There was no one doing any "boosting," the "Land Speculator" was not there.

I remember well when the first tract of land, 150,000 acres, was contracted for from the C.P.R., just north of Portal, by two American "Land Speculators" and advertised for settlement. It was bought up readily by men of small means for investment and settlement. Other speculators then appeared and the Canadian government and the C.P.R. were induced to help, and so was begun the greatest emigration movement ever known in the history of the North American continent, and it continued unabated for six years. That whole vast district lying between Edmonton and Prince Albert to the North, and to the U.S. border to the South, was in so short a time transformed into the great agricultural tract that it is today. The point I wish to make is this, namely, the "Speculator" is a very valuable factor in the opening of new lands for settlement. He may make large profits, but he is worth the price. He did more for the Western Provinces of Canada, for he bought the lands of the C.P.R. and H.B. Co. and so removed such lands from a position wherein they could not be taxed into a position wherein they could be taxed. Vacant land owners have since paid taxes in all provinces, equal to the same amount paid by resident farmers adjoining them. Such vacant lands have remained as free range, taxes paid by the owner, the grass absolutely free to the nearby farmer. A farmer cannot succeed by growing grain crops alone. He must diversify, and grow both grain and stock. This free grass range stands today as one of the best solutions to a farmer's thin pocket book in Western Canada.

For all the "Speculator" has done for the Dominion government to induce settlement, and for the provinces by bringing land into position to be taxed, and for the resident farmer by placing at his very door free pasturage, what return is he given for it all? We are told that we are a "curse" and a "parasite" and a "privileged" class. What

Continued on Page 17