

have already declared themselves as strongly in favor of the system. The United Farmers of Alberta believe that their province will be the first to secure this great reform. The convention decided that the Saskatchewan system of internal elevators, with some modifications, would be best suited to their province and the matter will be brought before the government at a very early date. Many other important matters were discussed by the convention, which was decidedly the most progressive meeting ever held in Alberta. Plans have been made for an aggressive organization campaign so that the aims of the United Farmers of Alberta will be carried to a wider field during the next year. The chief hope of the West lies in the work of the farmers' organizations and it is interesting to note that their views are beginning to win substantial support not only among business circles but also among the legislators.

RURAL DEPOPULATION

One of the most striking facts disclosed by the census returns is the relative decline of the rural population of Canada in contrast to the growth of the cities. If there is any country in the world where the homes of the largest possible number of people should be out among the green fields and away from the smoke and noise of the cities, it is in the land of the Maple with its fertile soil, its magnificent forests, its glorious sunshine and its awe-inspiring mountains. The orchards and the trim farms of the East, the illimitable plains of the Prairie Provinces and the delightful valleys of the Rocky Mountains should be, as they have been in the past, the playground of our children and the home of our best citizens. But the census shows that the country is being robbed of its people and Canada, with all its vast fertile areas, is becoming a land of cities and towns instead of a country of prosperous rural communities. Cities and towns are, of course, necessary to the development of any country, and there would be no reason for complaint on account of the growth of cities if this were only in proportion to the increase of rural population. But this is very far from being the case. The facts disclosed by the census are startling. The rural population of each of the Eastern provinces during the past ten years has either declined or been practically at a standstill. In the province of Ontario the total increase of population during the ten years was 340,411. The towns and cities of over 4,000 population increased their population during the period by 344,755, so that the number of people actually living on the land and in towns of less than 4,000 population was 4,342 less in June last than ten years before. The county of Bruce lost 9,000 of its population in the ten years. Frontenac lost nearly 3,000, Grenville 3,500, Glengarry nearly 1,000, Huron nearly 9,000 and so on, but meanwhile Toronto alone increased its population by 168,200. The census figures also show that there has been a big migration of women from the farm to the cities. In Bruce county last June the census enumerators found 1,875 more males than females, in Grey 1,719 more, and in Welland 2,381. There is scarcely a county in Ontario chiefly devoted to agriculture in which there are not many more men than women, while in the single constituency of North Toronto there are 7,500 more women than men, and in Ottawa the women outnumber the men by 3,500. That this is an undesirable state of affairs everyone will agree. It is a situation which demands that the best thought of the nation should be directed towards finding a remedy. But before the remedy for any evil can be found, the cause must first be discovered. It is claimed by the leaders of both political parties that the growth of cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and Montreal is due to the trade policy which they have pursued while in office. The Conservatives claim that the manufacturing industries which have built up these Eastern

cities were developed as a result of the national policy, while the Liberals contend that the credit belongs to their policy of a revenue tariff, with incidental protection. The two policies are the same under different names, for the tariff, though increased here and reduced there from time to time, has remained substantially the same during 18 years of Conservative rule and 15 years of Liberal administration. We are willing to admit the claims of both parties, therefore, and to agree that the protective tariff inaugurated by Sir John A. Macdonald in 1879 and continued by Sir Wilfrid Laurier from 1896 until 1911 has partially been the cause of the development of our Eastern manufacturing cities. But if the credit of the up-building of the cities belongs to protection, the responsibility for the depopulating of rural Canada, which has accompanied it, must be placed there also. Protection, together with a land system under which every increase in the profits of agriculture goes to the landlord instead of to the farmer, is fast driving the people from the farms to the cities. It is sometimes contended that the growth of cities is a benefit to the farmer because it gives him a home market for his produce, but the fallacy of this argument is exposed by the fact that the price of every article which the Canadian farmer produces in large quantities is fixed by the British markets and is not, therefore, increased by the home demand. And if farming was made more profitable by the presence of large urban communities, would not this result in an increase of the number of people on the farms in the vicinity of these cities? The census figures quoted above show that the opposite has happened. In Ontario, in spite of the opening up of large virgin areas in the northwestern portion of the province, the rural population has actually declined, and while there may be other contributory causes, protection and landlordism must be held mainly responsible for this undesirable state of affairs.

Protection works against the farmer both when he buys and when he sells. It makes his implements, his building materials, his clothing, his furniture, much of his food and almost everything else he buys dearer than it would be if he were allowed freedom to purchase where he wished. On the other hand, protection shuts the farmer out from the most profitable markets for his produce and compels him practically to sell either in Canada, which can consume only a portion of what is produced, and where prices are kept down by monopolistic combines and the farmer is the prey of the railway companies and middlemen, or in Great Britain thousands of miles away, where he must meet competition from all the world. Western farmers are realizing the thralldom of the tariff today as they never did before. Protection compels them to sell their grain in the Canadian markets or keep it in their granaries or buried under snow drifts in the fields, and since the railroads can carry only a small portion of the crop to Canadian markets, there are thousands of farmers who will see the results of their year's labor rot on the ground if the United States market is not opened to them. Truly, protection has much to answer for. It is no wonder that people are leaving the farm and going to the city.

THE STEEL BOUNTIES

In our editorial "Forward the 'Steal' Brigade," in the last issue of The Guide we stated that the steel magnates had already taken \$7,000,000.00 in hard cash out of the federal treasury in the form of bounties. This was a typographical error; the amount of public money which these gentlemen have been presented with up to date is \$17,000,000.00. Unless a very strong protest is made by the public and by members of Parliament, it is to be feared that the government will yield to the requests of the steel magnates for a renewal of the bounties. The financial world

is evidently confident of their renewal, and a recent despatch from Montreal stated that the betting was three to one that the government would grant bounties at the present session of Parliament. The Montreal Stock market has been practically monopolized during the last few days by transactions in the common stock of the Dominion Steel Corporation, which has gone up from 52 on September last to 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ on January 22. This advance is entirely due to the belief that the bounties, which expired a year ago will be renewed, and that the sums received from the public treasury will be available for the payment of dividends on the common stock, consisting chiefly of "water."

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

Never before in the history of The Guide have subscriptions been received in such large numbers as at present. The farmers of the West are day by day coming to realize that The Guide is their champion and is fighting continually and only in their interest. The friends of The Guide are speaking a good word for it wherever they can and the result is that it is becoming the most widely circulated farm journal in Canada. But still there are 100,000 farmers in the three Prairie Provinces who are not yet reading The Guide and securing from it the information that is of vital importance to them. We want our agents and every one of the friends of The Guide to place it before these people. Wherever The Guide goes it is a powerful factor in building up a farmers' organization. The Guide and the farmers' organization are both working for the same end. Let us co-operate that the objects for which we are struggling may be sooner secured. During the convention season that is now progressing throughout the West is the very best time for securing subscriptions and we hope that every one of the friends of The Guide will do all they can to induce other people to subscribe and assist in the great work of organization that is being carried forward now, more rapidly than at any time in the past.

The success of the Socialists in the German elections is a portentous warning to the powers of Special Privilege. The capitalistic and aristocratic classes of Germany, by high protection and militarism have brought the working classes of Germany to a condition bordering upon revolution and they are turning to Socialism as a means of freeing themselves from bondage. The German electoral system requires re-ballots in cases where a candidate does not receive an absolute majority of the votes, and as there are numerous parties, each with their candidates, a large number of re-ballots have to be taken. The elections consequently are not yet concluded, but up to the present the Socialists have secured 99 seats, the Conservatives and Clericals forming the government have 176, and the Liberals and Radicals 76, while Independents, Particularists and other parties each have a few representatives.

The Winnipeg Free Press has collected in pamphlet form the splendid series of articles which it published under the title "This Country's Burden of Unjust Railway Rates." No journal in Canada has done a greater national service than that of the Free Press in exposing the gigantic system of extortion practised by the railways in the West. Our congratulations are extended to the Free Press and we hope that it will not cease in its good work until justice is secured.

If only those men who are sure that the farmers are amassing wealth would take a homestead and do the duties for three years they would see the other side of the question. But these chaps prefer to buy a few thousand acres and hold it idle while other people work to make the price go up.