

# The Mail Bag

## 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, the not necessarily for publication. Unused letters will be returned if accompanied by postage.

### RECRUITING FROM FARMS

Editor, Guide:—I see a number of articles in papers these days about so many farmers' sons and farm laborers enlisting and I have wondered that our public press of all kinds has not taken the matter up and done something towards stopping this taking away of men that are absolutely necessary for the working of farms and production of crops in 1916. I see by the paper today that one O.C. has recruiting agents out and in one day had entered some forty-two men from country points. I am a man well on to sixty years of age, nearly useless with rheumatism. My two sons have enlisted and up to date I have been unable to get any help for the coming summer. It is impossible for me to do much towards seeding. Last year I raised over six thousand bushels of wheat. This year, so far as I can see, I will not raise a bushel and expect to have to keep weeds mowed down on my farm this summer. Two of my neighbors, older men than myself, are in the same fix. Between us we had seventeen thousand of wheat last year. I don't expect we will have one hundred and seventy this year. Now that being the case in this particular neighborhood there must be lots of places in this Western country in just as bad a way. What about taxes, living expenses, Red Cross Funds, Patriotic Funds, etc., next fall and winter? This winter I gave a hundred dollars to the Red Cross and Patriotic Funds. Next year I won't give one hundred cents because I won't have it. I see the results of trying to get men to go out and help farmers seed have not resulted as well as was expected. Men getting \$1.10 per day and found with food and clothes are not apt to want any more. I have found the general run

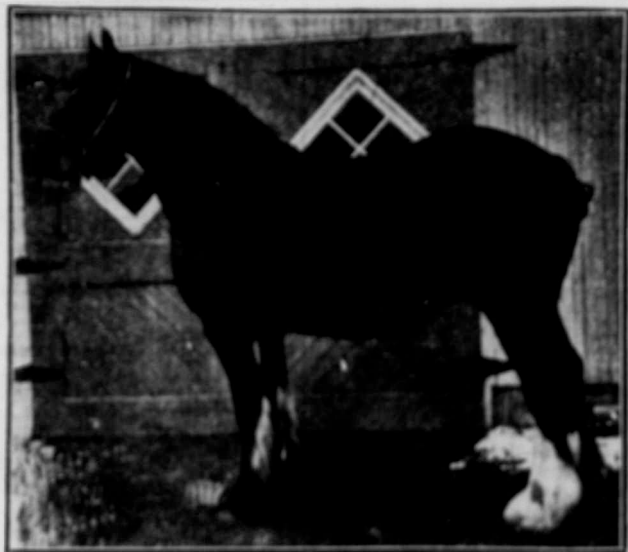
put into effect some comprehensive registration scheme? There ought to be some way of compelling each one to do a share. As it is now it seems to me the farmers of this country are doing half a dozen shares each.

PATRIOTIC FARMER.

### MORE ABOUT RURAL EDUCATION

Editor, Guide:—With further reference to the civic and economic studies proposed in my Mail Bag letter of March 15, I would say that I have long thought this work could be utilized, not only to increase both interest and membership, but also to extend the influence of the G.G.A. in each community far beyond the mere numbers now enrolled. The average local meeting is a dry, formal affair, relating to nothing but routine business. As a rule, nobody attends except those directly concerned with the business transacted. If the Association is ever to become a strong, deeply-rooted, closely-knit institution it must have some line of activity that will appeal to deeper sentiments. And what sentiment is of more absorbing importance than our interest as Canadian citizens?

This point, no doubt, has been raised many times before. A pamphlet, "Studies in Canadian Citizenship," has been published, but unfortunately the studies have never been extended much farther than the pamphlet. The taking up of these studies, so far from turning us aside from our present aims, will strengthen and extend the activities we are already engaged in. We can never develop our co-operative work very far until we have studied the theory of co-operation. We can never establish an efficient system of farm credits until we become familiar with the necessary machinery of credits.



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of men not anxious to work hard for what they get. They would sooner take \$1.10 for nothing than work for more. They are not ambitious to lay up. Enough for today is all they seem to want or care about. How would it do, Mr. Editor, to stop their regimental pay until they did go out and help produce something? Again, why is it necessary to take men from good producing occupations and have the country pay these men to drill and train for over a year before sending them to the front? I know men that have been training since September, 1914, and are still training in Manitoba. Take the case of the 45th Battalion, for instance. It began recruiting in November, 1914, and only left for England in February, 1916. Doesn't it seem foolish to be recruiting men here and parading farming operations with men still here that have been training since September, 1914? Why does not the government

We can never gain standing in the business world until we gain a comprehensive grasp of the principles of commercial relations.

Farmers have been inclined to think that they were the one great object of blessing by every other interest. The recent conference in Winnipeg between the farmers and bankers would seem to indicate that any difference between themselves and other legitimate industries may be adjusted by mutual agreement. A reasonable corollary from this would be that any business which takes toll from production without giving a just return is alike the enemy of every productive occupation. If we can unmask such businesses we may expect assistance from many directions to aid in their elimination. This labor of unmasking is one of the principal aims of the economic studies.

There are many topics in economics

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