

The Mail Bag

MERCHANT AND FARMER

Editor, Guide:—"A Country Merchant" fails to see the other fellow's side of the country store as a necessity. I am a country farmer who when I have produce to sell have to take for it what I can get and cannot set the price. The country store keeper sets his price and sees that profit is included large enough to make it worth while making the country store a necessity, and then kicks pretty hard if country farmer does not see fit to pay him for hanging on.

I have heard another country storekeeper kick pretty hard at a combination of farmers who co-operated together to bring in the needful things a little nearer the cost of production and then clear out of his business boasting he had made around four thousand dollars per year for the five or six years he was in it, and leave the district to enjoy a well earned rest. I have paid that same storekeeper \$1.25 for overalls not better than I can get from a mail order house and delivered at my post office for 85 cents, paying cash down at both places. No necessity to be charitable in that way, eh? Again, I can go into another store and pay 85 cents for three small articles; mail order price 44 cents, postage 11 cents, a gift of 30 cents to the two men who are running that store of necessity and whom I as often as not find playing cards to while away the time, and so on thru the list.

Now I would like to know why it is a necessity to uphold these institutions of charity. Why should we not endeavor to get our goods at a reasonable price? It does not relieve us of having to pay the express and transportation charges by buying at the stores of necessity, but we get a little added every time, "just a little for the good of the cause" I suppose. The mail order houses pay big rents, employ labor and the like, so theirs must be legitimate business. And I find if country merchants need a few bushels of oats to feed the pony they like the best for the most reasonable price. Therefore I would ask "Country Merchant" not to blame the other fellow for doing as he himself would do.

I think we as country farmers could buy much more economically on the co-operative plan, maintain our own stores, have fewer blood-suckers around and do a larger volume of business in our local centres, if the wholesale merchants and the manufacturers would come in with us and work with us. By amalgamating our farms and our business centres a little more we could do away with a few of those card players and if they could not work they could hunger, the world would not be any worse off. By this method of co-operation cash would be more freely in circulation and we would hear less and less of this bulldogging after the crop is harvested. I have carefully noted in our village there are nine men we can class as "country merchants." Five business men would handle all of their trade and some additional. Why keep the others in idleness?

The country store as we have it today is no necessity. We need distributing houses in co-operation with ourselves and the wholesale and manufacturing agencies and men with reasonable judgment to act therein. It will take time to bring it to that. Let us co-operate, not to cut any but the "wasters" out, and if we look around we will find them in most villages.

"COUNTRY FARMER."

Saskatchewan.

CO-OPERATIVE PROFITS

Editor, Guide:—Do you not think it would be wise for those interested in the spread of co-operation in this country to advocate a change from the Rochdale co-operative system of distributing profits quarterly or annually according to patronage, and the adoption of the system used by the co-operative elevators in Kansas when I lived in that state, viz.: Each co-operative store to sell to its members as near delivered cost as sure to pay out, and to outsiders at half way between that and what outside stores would sell at, provided that members would bind themselves to pay, on trading outside, one-half of what they thought they saved by doing so, said half to be applied to

pay expenses of his company's store made idle thru his defection. If we can buy, ship and handle goods at the same price as "outside" stores delivered cost should be the same to each. At present the Retail Merchants' Association combine can cut below that at one town and make up the loss at another, but under the above plan all other classes would gain, at each town, at their expense. The faith of most people is too weak to wait a long time for a "rebate" to convince them of a gain.

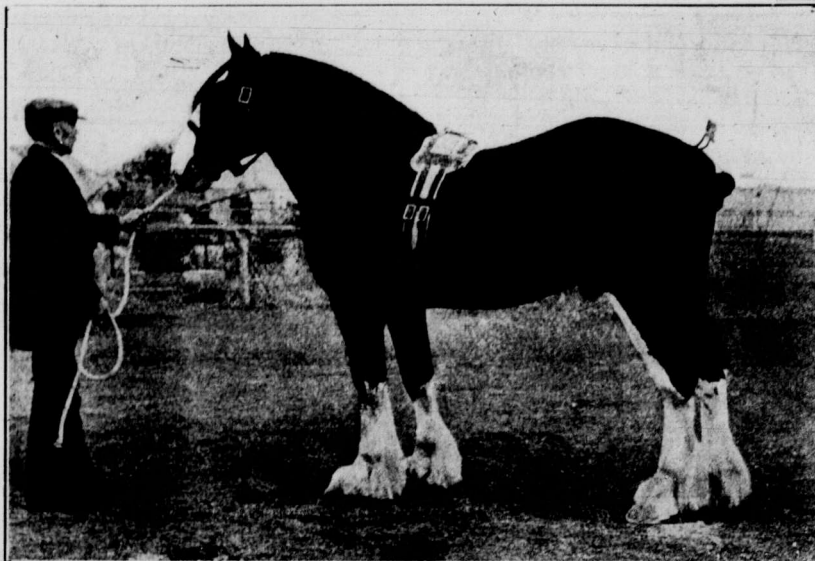
W. B. HULL.

Ambles, Sask.

THE NEW TARIFF

Editor, Guide:—I have been waiting in vain for some radical action on the part of the Grain Growers against this new tariff legislation. Are we as men going to take it lying down or are we going to be up and doing something to let that bunch at Ottawa see they cannot wipe their shoes on us?

Now, I will quote a few figures on the cotton industry, which will, I think, open the eyes of some of our protectionists. If it don't, why, their hide is as



"BARONET OF BALLINDALLOCH" (17101)
Foaled in 1910. Sire, "Baron's Pride" (9122); dam, "Fair Helen," by "Royal Favourite" (10630).
Bred by Sir John Macpherson-Grant, of Ballindalloch, and property of A. and W. Montgomery.

thick as the hide of any of our legislators. It appears the cotton industry employs about 14,000 hands and the average wage is \$285.71 per year. Their own circular says they produce \$20,000,000 worth of cotton goods each year and pay \$4,000,000 in wages to their 14,000 employees. Now they go further and say that this provides a living for 70,000 people. Taking their own figures of \$4,000,000 a year for 70,000 people would be \$57.14 per year for each, or 15½ cents per day. Now before this increase in the tariff, the industry had 35 per cent. of a protective tariff. With 7½ per cent. extra, what will they make now? If cotton goods were allowed to come in free, we could have bought their \$20,000,000 worth of cotton for \$14,814,814, so you see we could have pensioned off the 14,000 employees of the cotton industry and paid them a higher wage and then been a million dollars in pocket. The same is true of the shoe industry. The average cost of shoes in Canada is, for material, 70 cents; labor, 45 cents; or \$1.15 per pair. Still, the average price for boots before this raise in the tariff was \$3.00 per pair.

Seeing that we here in Manitoba are living in a semi-tropical climate, we don't mind the added tariff on woolen goods. We don't need nice warm clothing for our wives and families, and we don't need good warm footwear here in winter. I just wish we had one of these tariff boosters around our farms here for one winter. They would vote

for tariff reduction on all woolen goods and footwear the next time they had a chance. In conclusion I may say I wrote to the finance minister, White, and gave him our opinion on the added tariff, especially against Great Britain. This is the worst blow Britain ever received in her history, just when she is in a life and death struggle for the freedom of the whole world, to add to the tariff on all her goods. Why, it is enough to make a man jump up and never come down, at least, not in Canada. As an Englishman, I have always been proud of Canada until now. I am almost ashamed to write to my people at home and tell them of the way our government has treated them. Hoping to see this thing threshed out in The Guide.

JOSIAH BENNETT.

Pine Creek, Man.

HAIL INSURANCE

Editor, Guide:—I shall be glad if you will allow me space to make a complaint against the manner in which the Saskatchewan Hail Insurance Commission

is handling the people's money and carrying on their business in general.

During the year 1914 I had a growing crop on six different quarters of land, five of which were visited by a violent hail storm, July 7. Four of these were rented quarters. Now this hail insurance tax, as I understand it, is a tax on the land and not on the crop, and I want the chairman of the commission, the secretary-treasurer, or any other gentleman to explain to me what right the commission has in making out checks for indemnity to hold a tenant's money to pay taxes on the landlord's land? It appears to me that such action would be very similar to seizing a tenant's property to pay the landlord's school tax, simply because the tenant's property might be easier to get hold of, or because the tenant perhaps had children of school age, while the landlord perhaps has no children at all. Now, in the light of reason, one would be as reasonable as the other, and either one as far from reason and justice as the north is from south. However, this is what the commission has done to me. And this is only one of the rank injustices I have received at their hands this year. My neighbors, no less than seven in number, not one of whom is a relative, have freely defended my position, with their affidavits, proving beyond a doubt the justness of my claim, and still the commission refuse to settle with me.

E. N. CRANDELL.

Radville, Sask.

INDEPENDENT POLITICAL CANDIDATES

Editor, Guide:—The year before last I was present at the North Battleford convention and we had a very spirited and interesting discussion on the question of a Grain Growers' political party directly representing and supported by the Grain Growers. Mr. Green put the case very clearly and out of some 45 delegates, I think there were three who did not approve of this scheme. At the last district convention at North Battleford, our delegate tells us that the meeting was unanimously in favor of this scheme and passed a resolution to that effect. He tells us that the executive, who were strongly represented, did their best to persuade the meeting that it wouldn't do. Well, the matter was not brought up at the Regina convention—it was too insignificant and got crowded out. That unanimous vote represented some 500 genuine Grain Growers (more, probably, but 500 at least) and our executive tell us that it is not good for us and I think they crowded that resolution out on purpose. It is curious that their counsel happens to agree in every particular with the local Conservative heeler and machinery agent living in a town handy to this settlement. He thinks it is his business to run the politics of this neighborhood and the Grain Growers will be alright as long as they keep out of politics. It is curious that even our prominent Liberal statesmen hang by the same tale in another form. They say you can get more by asking us than by forming a party of your own. It won't wash—and if our executive are afraid of the Liberal party or the Conservative party, we, the rank and file, are not. Our executive are, I suppose, one of the finest bunches of men in the West, but is it possible that they are learning the politicians' trick of trying to fool the people for what they consider the people's good?

You had a magnificent leader bearing on this third party question a few weeks ago in The Guide. I have just read with pleasure the address by the president of the Ontario Grange, W. C. Good, in which he asks the farmers of Ontario to help the farmers of the West to remove the tariff and get a just taxation on land values. I want to know how they are to do it. If they vote for the Liberals they may get another 15 years of useless regrets, and if they vote for the Conservatives they can see before them a rising wall of tariff and a continuous hand out to the interests.

I was on Vancouver Island one winter and there I met many more Socialists than I expected to see. I found that most of the votes were Conservative. I could only presume that the people, having got sick of unfulfilled promises, wanted a change, as the Laurier government was then in power. What am I to do at the next election? Vote for the Conservative candidate and high tariffs or vote for the Liberal candidate and what? Probably unfulfilled promises. No Sir, I won't vote for either; I would infinitely rather vote for our own representative who was responsible to us, even if my vote was the only one recorded and I had 20 miles to travel to record it. I would have done a good day's work. No wonder the aforesaid machinery agent laughs in his sleeve. He said, "How many farmers are there in the Ottawa House?" I said, "I don't know." He replied, "I believe there's one." No wonder they laugh.

If we have a third party we can march shoulder to shoulder with those farmers of Ontario, with the ranchers of Vancouver Island and our men can often vote and join with the representatives of labor who are endeavoring to lift the load off the overburdened common people and the sooner we can all see it the better.

EDWARD G. WEST.

A CONSERVATIVE'S VIEW

Editor, Guide:—Enclosed please find \$2 as renewal for Guide. I like your paper very much, it is like the water in the well, "Never missed till run dry." If you had the welfare of the farmers at heart you would advocate a farmers'

Continued on Page 16