

The Mail Bag

BRITISH TRADE DECADENT?

Editor, Guide:—I have little time for reading and less for writing, but with your leave would like to deal with some of the assertions in the letter signed Alex. Coleman, which appeared in The Guide April 17. He says: "Free trade is fast closing up the manufacturing industries and throwing thousands of good mechanics out of work to starve or leave England." This statement, sir, is a base calumny, and I do not know how any person professing such loyalty can with the same breath tell the world that Britain is decadent and "going to the dogs." I wish to enter a protest against this practice. What is the object in making it appear that Britain is not holding her own against other nations? I have a difficulty to understand how any British subject whatever his political or economic creed may be, should prefer to "burke" the facts and proclaim to the world that the Mother Country is on the down grade. To do this under the guise of loyalty is base and hypocritical. I refer Mr. Coleman to the Engineering Supplement of the London Times of January, 1911, which contains the following: "The reports from this formidable array of well known engineering firms establish the fact that trade was better last year than it has been for some time and that prospects for the future are distinctly more promising. . . . Probably the most gratifying feature of our reports is the fact which is emphasized by many of our correspondents that Great Britain is retaining her strong position in foreign markets." And the reason assigned is because of the superior merit of British work. Reference is made to South America, to Africa, China, etc., and these remarks follow: "Travel where you may in these countries you will find one opinion in relation to British goods, British manufactured articles and British engineering undertakings, namely, that they are the best in quality; that the work is uniformly well done, and moreover it lasts." Protection is a premium on incompetency. In special illustration of this fact, one of the correspondents of the Times points out that "even in Cuba and Porto Rico, where American sugar machinery enjoys a preferential rate planters look upon British machinery as the best and cheapest." Mr. Coleman's reference to Germany is not very clear, but he seems to be laboring under the delusion that German prosperity is detrimental to Britain, and that British workmen would be benefited by a tariff imposed on German goods. This is a hoary protectionist fallacy. He evidently is not aware that Germany is one of Britain's best customers, and the more the Germans have to spend the more they will buy, to mutual advantage of both nations. No merchant could be prosperous if all his customers were "broke." Britain's prosperity depends in very large degree on the prosperity of other nations who buy her goods. Nor would a tariff against German goods help the British workman. Because the tariff would enhance the price of German goods by just that amount, consequently less German goods would be sold in Britain, and as a result Germany would not be able to buy so much British goods as she does now. And the result would be less work for the British workman, unemployment, lower wages and dearer commodities.

Your remedy, Mr. Coleman, is a non-trium. It would not effect a cure, it would only aggravate existing evils and make them worse.

Every reasonable man will agree with you about the importance of the home market. Because exchanges will be easier and more rapid, therefore more numerous. And herein lies the value of free exchange; herein lies the secret of wealth production. The more exchanges that take place the greater the wealth accruing. Free exchange is a mutual advantage. It blesses him that buys and him that sells. But to build up the home market in the way you suggest, namely, by a tariff on foreign imports, is a fallacy.

"The home market can not be encouraged by preventing imports, for all imports are physical orders for goods to be produced here in exchange for imports. Any system under which we sent out goods but did not receive goods back would be a veritable bleeding to death. We want to see importers bringing their goods into this country, for that is the only way in which we can make sure of foreign orders for the home market, orders which will keep our workmen at work and our farmers producing grain," etc.

So you see, Mr. Coleman, your "protection does not protect. What it does with one hand it undoes with the other." This quotation is from the editorial columns of one of the oldest and most influential Conservative papers in England. In England they have not quite

do not agree with Mr. Hennig's definition of Socialism. If such definition was correct then all farmers and working men should become Socialists and The Guide their organ. By Socialism I do not mean anything that has at any time been called by that name, but Socialism as propounded by Marx and Engels, and which in the main is the system, theories and teachings circulated by that body in Canada, United States and Europe. The real essence of Socialism consists in the destruction of private property and the common ownership of all means and instruments of production. Under its sway the laboring man could never acquire capital and invest it for the future protection of himself and his family and the ambition to develop himself along human lines would die out of his heart forever. Who would work if the state were to confiscate his earnings? Eliminate private property, destroy or minimize unduly its rights, make it insecure or profitless, you have ruled that labor is not worth the fatigue or privileges to be sought for; you have stilled national progress, you have driven back the human race to barbarism. All men are born equal. Democracy is the government of the people, for the people, therefore say some, there should be equality of possessions and the office of the government is to lend its authority to the enforcement of this equality. This is a fatal meaning to Canadian democracy. All men are indeed born equal—equal in the meaning of the laws of our country; equal in rights

is not the gods who creates man, but man who creates God." In other words God is only a dream. All this is of course rotten, but there is none of it new. It is as old as Christianity itself. A Vancouver paper, reporting a Socialist lecturer in the Empress Theatre recently, has this choice bit: "The Bible was handed down by a bunch of savages who lived in Palestine about two thousand years ago. The Irish can not make up their minds which to follow, the Dutch king who crossed the Boyne about 400 years ago or the 'imbecile' who is elected by the cardinals." The paper adds: "Every sneer at religion, and there were many, was heartily applauded." The great body of our laboring men are opposed to Socialism. It was the Butte miners who prevented the Western Federation of Miners from affiliating with the International Workers of the World, a purely Socialistic organization, at one of the late congresses. The Federation of Labor, under Gompers and Mitchell, rejected Socialism by a vote of three to one. No doubt those men studied the origin of the labor problem. There was none in Paganism because one-half of the population were slaves and were condemned to do all the work for the other half in the field, workshop and mine. The slave and the laboring man were synonymous terms under Paganism. The reason of this lies in the fact that the state was the only thing that had any absolute or intrinsic value. Man was a mere cog in the wheel of the state. Under present conditions man is supreme and the state his servant. Let us have Direct Legislation and we can set things aright without affiliating with any brand of Socialism, either scientific or otherwise.

W. J. DONAHOE.

Virden, Man.

SIKHS AS FARMERS

Editor, Guide:—We are told by missionaries and British statesmen that India's future may be determined by Canada's treatment of the Sikhs. The Sikhs were true to Britain in the Mutiny. India today is in a ferment of unrest. If another mutiny took place in India today the stand of the Sikhs might once more decide India's future. There are 7,000 Sikhs in British Columbia today. Thousands more would come, but organized labor in British Columbia is opposed to them, and Ottawa is preventing the Sikhs from gaining further admission. This virtual refusal of Canada to let the Sikhs in is being used effectively by anti-British agitators

in India to spread dissatisfaction among the loyal Sikhs. It seems to me Western farmers might find the Sikhs useful men. We might find the solution of the permanent labor problem in them. A few months ago I watched gangs of these brown men digging stone and clearing land for California orange groves. These men are born agriculturists. Would it not be worth our while to hire Sikhs and find out to what extent they would adapt themselves to our conditions? They are of Aryan stock, and their features show their kinship with our own races. They rank high as to intelligence. They are not polygamists, neither are they idolaters. I would suggest that any farmers wishing to employ Sikhs should write to Dr. Sunder Singh, Victoria, B.C., who is seeking to secure better conditions in Canada for his countrymen.

DAVID ROSS.

Strassburg, Sask.

ONE ON HER

A woman with little wit sat at a public meeting between a bishop and a rabbi.

She thought she would be clever, and said to the rabbi: "I feel as if I were a leaf between the Old and the New Testaments."

"Yes, Madam," said the rabbi, "that page is usually a blank one."



Survey Party on Cross Lake, locating the Hudson Bay Railway, a much needed outlet for the Prairies' increasing harvests

forgotten the "hungry forties," when the tariff on wheat and other food-stuffs was so high that the people did not have enough to eat, when the common people were driven to desperation by the pangs of hunger, when corruption was rampant. As described by Fox: "The corn law is the harvest of Death as well as of the landowner, and monopoly says to corruption: 'Thou art my brother.'" No country can produce all the commodities it needs. Therefore we ought to exchange what we can produce most cheaply and in the greatest quantity for what our neighbors can produce more cheaply and in greater quantity than we can. We can only obtain the things we need in two ways. Make them ourselves; or make other things to exchange for them. The idea that the state can determine this by means of a tariff is absurd. As individuals we can determine this better by practice. Geographical position and climatic conditions are determining factors which no tariff can avail against.

UNITAS.

Nipawin, Sask.

THOUGHTS ON SOCIALISM

Editor, Guide:—Having read with interest Mr. Hennig's letter "Socialism Defined," and also Mr. Bebbington's, and as the latter invites others to give their views on the same lines, I thought I would give mine as a plain farmer. I

derived from government, equal in such opportunities as government creates or is enabled to create—but all men are not equal in Nature's gifts, physical or moral, and equality of this kind no government can create. In the battle for the possessions of earth the essential factors are strength of limb, strength of mind, perseverance and self-control in winning the prize and holding it when won. In all those endowments men by nature are utterly unequal. Equal in ownership today, tomorrow they will be unequal. Democracy increases the opportunity, but opportunity to all is not success to all. Defining democracy the great Napoleon, though himself a despot, said that it is a "clear pathway for merit of whatever kind." Mr. Hennig says: "The ethics of Socialism and Christianity are identical." Engel says in his introductory: "This book defends historical Materialism. Nowadays in our evolutionary conception of the universe there is absolutely no room for either a Creator or a ruler." This is the statement of one of the men who made Socialism. This was not made in an after-dinner speech but is one of the standard books written in explanation and argument of Socialism and the same writer says "beyond nature and man there exists nothing," and again he says: "Religion is nothing but the fantastic reflection of the brains of men." Bebel in his book on Woman says: "It

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This Department of The Guide is maintained especially for the purpose of providing a discussion ground for the readers where they may freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, though not necessarily for publication. The views of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.