

# The Mail Bag

## THE FARMERS' OPPORTUNITY

Editor, Guide:—I am much interested in many valuable items from your correspondents re the country merchant and economies in general, and in particular Mr. Kennedy's remarks about the country store-keeper, which are to the point, but until more are on the cash basis, we must consider him a "necessary evil." If we do without him we have to assume his function in some shape or form, and I believe with Mr. Kennedy that at the present, at least, we must take him into partnership thru our wholesale department, when we have become strong enough. In my own district at the present time he is a veritable God-send and asks no protection. Co-operation with him, thru him, would be more sensible than trying to assume his function. The great use of co-operation is, I take it, more educational than economic. Educate the farmer to pay cash or do without; to make his cash go as far as possible; to buy with others as well as sell with others, and to learn that we live not for ourselves but for all. Is it not a fact that when the gains become general, the interests at the other end who control prices are able to take away all gain from us, and all that will be left to us from our effort will be a clearer view of who gets the gain. Consequently, at the same time that we co-operate, we must fight for economic freedom, get rid of this wretched tariff and centre our taxes on the land.

To my mind, this new item of taxation on the part of the Dominion government is a means towards the end of a new lease of power, a bid for the individual support of the manufacturer; a chance to let him collect from the people the campaign fund expected off him to help towards that end. All large economic questions become political questions and the people must deal with them. But how? That is the rub! Without cohesion and without knowledge of the basic principles which underlie, what can you expect but a perpetuation of power on the part of the moneyed interests that have seized the government, and use it for their own interests. We have no patriotism that can be effective. The rich have too much at stake and the poor have no time to cultivate any. What is the use of passing resolutions time after time endorsing Free Trade, Taxation of Land Values and Income Tax unless we take means to enforce our expressed will? If the Liberal party would come out flat-footed for reform, then the situation would be simplified, but the one party has become complementary to the other. The money interests rule no matter who reigns, Borden or Laurier. Would the West vote solid against the government, not in support of so-called Liberal principles, but in protest against the tariff, we might gain something, and moreover would show that we have the courage of our convictions. Jay Gould's saying is just as strong today as it ever was: "The people be damned—when we want the people's power, we buy the people's masters."

I am not sure that we, the people, have any business to find fault with the government, for sometimes I feel that the government is just as good as the people, it matters not which is in power. If we are to improve conditions, the improvement must come from within ourselves—the great, plain people. If we rise to the occasion and elect men of our class to represent us in parliament at the coming elections, men who are not tied to either party, men who are pledged in black and white to stand for the demands of the masses, then and not till then can it be truthfully said that we have one grain of true patriotism. I trust, Mr. Editor, that you will continue your present fight for true patriotism—Independence. The Guide is the only organ that stands up boldly for the masses. I believe with you that the time for passing resolutions and expecting the parties to make them effective is of yesterday. Today belongs to the interests. If we are wise we will make the tomorrow ours.

J. W. ROBSON.

Pelly, Sask.

## VOTING AT CONVENTIONS

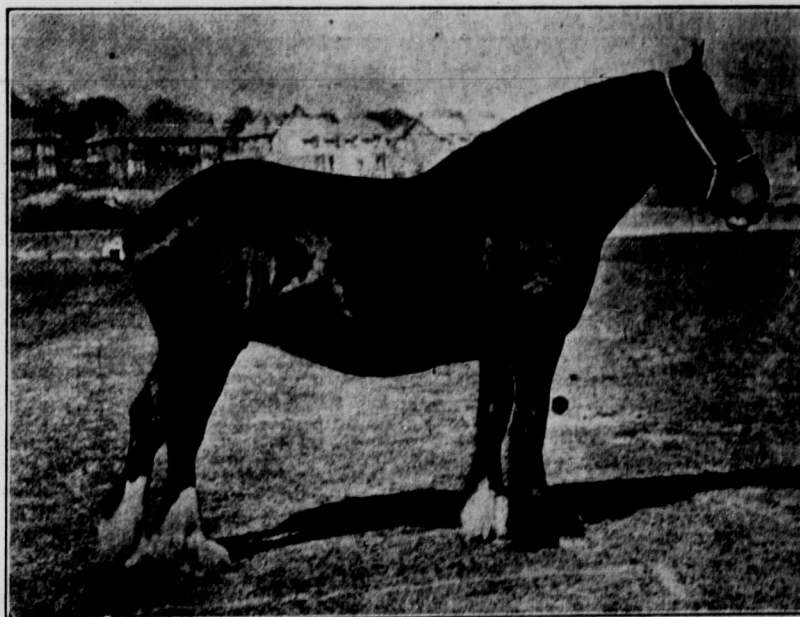
Editor, Guide:—May I present a problem which bothers me? As you are

**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.

aware, the women in the Saskatchewan G. G. A. possess equal rights with the men. The recent convention in Regina was the first time that I was privileged to cast my vote for officers of the Association. I spent a perturbed five minutes over the ballot paper. It had been impossible to gather much from the short speeches the candidates made in the limited time they had. I wished to use my franchise intelligently. I voted for one man because of what the Association owes to him, for another (who did not get in) because I had previously heard his platform, and I believed he would stay by it; for another, because I thought he had more personal interest in questions affecting the more struggling members. Another I would have voted for personally but that I am opposed to interlocking political and G. G. A. offices. The last X I placed against A because I did not place it against Z. Was that intelligent voting? I found a number of delegates had done similarly. One man said, "Oh, I voted the old ones back—I knew very little about them, but less about the others."

Now, Mr. Editor, I am not reflecting on the men or methods of our Association,

a hard question, as brewery and distillery companies' shares are distributed among the people, many of the clergy even, to their shame, holding them. In one street in Liverpool I noticed that there was a public house at each corner and only six other houses between each set of 'pubs.' In the country, too, in some counties one is never out of sight of a public house, sometimes more than one is in view at same time on country roads. I wrote to the London Times, begging them to set a noble example to the press of the Empire and refuse all advertisements pertaining to liquor during the war at least. They did not print it, but the manager wrote me "that they could not very well cancel existing contracts, but short of that, they are helping the movement I advocated in every possible way." I give this as a hint to the press of Canada, the nobler part of it. As to the liquor and temperance question in Canada, I can best answer it by sending you some remarkable returns from New Zealand, a happy country which is governed by the people and for the people, and these returns have silenced every opponent of the prohibition of the sale of liquor I have yet met.



"Blossom of Newhouse" (19164), foaled in 1904. Bred by Wm. Muir, Newhouse, and exported to the Colony Farm, British Columbia, in 1912.

but the question is, "Is interest and intelligence needed in this matter?" If not, we might as well have an office lottery whereby anyone wishing office could enter his name and draw lots. Or, if the best policy is "Vote the old officers back," why not make the offices life terms? It would save time.

If nominees names could be proposed at the district conventions, the list published, and at the provincial convention candidates selected from the list, we might, many of us, be better prepared. The friends on the list would have time to make or increase their reputation and the members would know a little more about their old and something about their would-be new officers. If such form of procedure would be impractical, will the men of our Association devise means whereby we can do our duty in this respect a little easier?

## A WOMAN GRAIN GROWER.

## THE DRINK QUESTION

Editor, Guide:—You ask me for a letter on the temperance question in England and Canada, but I do not think I had better tackle so big a question as drink in England, and I think that Lord Kitchener, Lloyd George and the government, with their practically unlimited powers during the war and backed by a loyal opposition in a country where none are for their party, But all are for the State will find a solution. It is undoubtedly

The following figures show the number of convictions in police courts in an electoral district in New Zealand where liquor was not allowed to be sold for 3½ years compared with the previous 3½ years when liquor was sold:

	Liquor	No liquor
Drunkenness	130	6
Breaches of the Peace	16	2
Assaults	11	1
Disorderly and riotous conduct	9	1
Lunacy	7	2
Assaulting and resisting Police	4	0
Threatening language	3	0
Cruelty to Animals	3	0
Disturbing congregations	5	1
Other offences	112	53
	300	66
Sly grog-selling	1	24
	301	90

The above figures are more striking when it is remembered that liquor is not forbidden in the district, but only its sale forbidden and, further, near the boundaries of the district there would be liquor shops which would serve those who lived near them. In the same district the returns for 4½ years show 342 convictions with liquor to 126 without. In another district one year's trial gave 234 convictions in one year with liquor to 91 without the sale of liquor. No

wonder that the whole of New Zealand is fast going dry. It is an excellent part of their law that at every election a paper is given to each voter on which he votes for a reduction of licenses or for total abolition of them in his district. Public desire is thus obtained every three years without cost, and if abolition does not follow, it at least makes the liquor men very careful that liquor is not abused.

Let us join the Allies on the liquor question and not continue with Germany.

F. W. GODSAL.

Cowley, Alta., April 22.

## RAILWAY EXTORTION

Editor, Guide:—I would like to point out to you, that you may possibly find the example useful at some time when on the subject of freight charges, an example of absurdly excessive baggage rate from New York to Edmonton.

A lady, now my wife, travelled from England, coming via New York on the G.T.P. She had 365 lbs. excess baggage and had to pay \$36.50, which is at the rate of \$10 per 100 lbs. Parcel post rate from England is 3s. (74c) for 11 lbs., or \$6.73 cents per 100 lbs. Further comment is unnecessary.

NORMAN P. FINNEIVOE.

Winterburn, Alta.

## WHERE DO WE COME IN?

Editor, Guide:—A cartoon that appeared in your paper some time ago and the question, "What shall we do—buy abroad, enrich the Dominion treasury and starve our working men, or buy 'Made in Canada' goods, enrich the manufacturer and starve the treasury?" has set men thinking all over the country. What shall we do? In all ages the strong have oppressed the weak, the burden of taxation has always been avoided by those who had it in their power to place it on the backs of others.

The present increase in the tariff is another attempt on the part of the privileged class (of whom the Hon. W. T. White is the servant) to use this power. While we have nominally a government of the people, this power still lies in the hands of a very few privileged ones and they are using it. What shall the great mass of people who work for their living do now that the heaviest burden of taxation that has ever been placed on their shoulders must be met?

Let us consider whether we are tending as a nation. The manufacturers of Canada, with the heads of the financial concerns, stand to us as did the tyrannical landlord class of the British Isles. They are gradually bringing under their power both the working class of the manufacturing towns and the farmers of the whole of the Dominion. The workers of the cities will be entirely at their mercy and their servility will be only partially mitigated by organization. The farmers are being brought into subjection by an iniquitous tariff. The more we tax the goods of Britain, the less will she buy from us and this latest increase in the tariff of 7½ per cent. is just so much more a restriction of the farmers' markets. We are already in the position of having to pay for needed commodities an unjust price altogether out of proportion to their price in the open markets of the world, and having to accept for our products the prices paid in the free trade markets of the world minus what a tyrannical banking combine and the railway companies charge us. This servility will go on from bad to worse as the monopolization of land will increase—a goal that is bound to be reached as unjust burdens are placed on the farmer. It is already creating unstable conditions in the occupancy of land and men. Even the experienced farmers are finding the burden too great.

The Grain Growers' Associations have it in their power to call a halt. Even if we could not create a third party and capture the legislative halls at Ottawa, we could at least do a patriotic deed by buying all our needed commodities where we sell our products. Our goods would not cost us any more and we would have the satisfaction of knowing that the Dominion treasury would be filled instead of forging shackles to curtail more and more our own liberty. It would be an easy matter, as well as wise,

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