



NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

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. Each correspondent should remember that there are hundreds who wish to discuss a problem or offer suggestions. We cannot publish all the innumerable number of letters received, and ask that each correspondent will keep his letter as short as possible. 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. The aim is to make this department of great value to readers and no letters not of public interest will be published.

TRUSTS

Editor, Guide:—Seeing in THE GUIDE of December 28th an address by John Kennedy on "Direct Legislation," I decided to write to you on the question of the trusts, which so many people think (with I think Mr. Kennedy, from the tone of his address) are abnormal growths which should be cut out.

What is the use of industry? If you ask the industrial magnate this question he will answer, to make profit; but ask a man whose brain is clear and he will answer, to provide people with food, clothing or shelter, and to cater for their pleasure; which condensed is, to provide for their material needs. What is the easiest way to do this; by a large number of individual workers going to work in their own individual way, or by one large concern?

We have seen in many instances the large firm undersell and eventually drive out of business the small firms. The large firm, by division of labor, can obtain men much more expert at each single process than the small firm, whose men have to pass from one process to another, or maybe make whole articles themselves; also management costs much less per article produced by large firms than small ones, and last but not least, the large concern can employ machine instead of hand labor. Thus the trust can produce much cheaper than competing firms. Then what is wrong with the trusts?

I hear you say: Yes, but they charge us just as much as if they could not produce cheap. Quite so; if they did not charge as much as they could get, they would be violating some law of nature. They have the power to charge, so why shouldn't they? When the fox steals your chickens he doesn't ask whether he has the right; he has the power and that is enough for him.

Now, Mr. Farmer and the rest of the slaves, why should you not own the trusts and reap all the benefits that would result from that ownership? You have the power, and you have the right, as I shall attempt to show, but have you the desire? If not, I would advise you to cultivate it, and start early or the trusts will eat you up.

Perhaps some of you will not like me calling you slaves, but that is what you are nevertheless. Say, when a man works from 12 to 16 hours a day and four-fifths of what he earns goes to someone without his sanction, would you not call him a slave? Why the cattle slaves were quite as well off, though they had to work they were always sure of a living, whether in sickness or health, and they at least were never willing slaves. Can you say as much, Mr. Average Farmer and Wage Slave? Oh, but you own property; when you are not a tenant of a loan company.

But to get back to the trusts: I said you had the right to own them. Labor produces all wealth. By wealth is meant products or commodities ready for consumption. Ore in the earth is wealth, but it is not produced. Timber in the forest likewise. Can you tell me, then, anything that produces wealth besides labor, i.e., brain, brawn and muscle? If not, what right have a class of people who do no useful labor to take four-fifths of the product of labor?

Some may say the capitalists put capital into the trusts and why should they not get returns from that?

Capital is crystallized labor, accumulated at some previous time and used for the exploitation of the workers. This exploitation is made possible through the capitalist system, which forces men to

sell their labor power to obtain access to the means by which that power is exerted. The capitalists own the machinery of production and raw material. Those people who must have access to this machinery of production must sell their labor power for its cost of production, viz., what it costs to keep themselves and families in working order. Of course those who do not choose to sell their labor power in this way need not, this is a free country and they can starve if they prefer.

The farmer's position is slightly different. He maybe owns the machinery, raw material (land), etc., which are necessary for the exertion of his powers; he also owns the product of his toil, but that product is no use to him until he can sell it, and he must sell to a capitalist or to some middleman who must, which is the same thing. He, like the wage slave, must have access to capitalist property before the product of his labor is of use to society, viz., before it reaches the consumer. His position, with regard to capitalism, is practically, therefore, the same as the wage slaves.

But how are we to take control of the trusts? The present owners retain their ownership through their government. But, you say, the government is ours. Let us see; if it was ours it would be

IMPORTANT.

When writing to The Guide it would aid matters very much if our readers would not write upon more than one subject on one sheet of paper. There are several departments in every large paper and they are given the special attention of different members of the staff. If you wish to send in comment or ask questions or deal with any other matter at the same time you are sending in subscriptions please use separate sheets of paper. We know that our readers are anxious to help us in every way and if they will bear this in mind it will greatly facilitate matters in the office.

under our control, and make laws in our interest, but does it? What makes you cry so much about grafters if you control the government. Who pays election expenses? Answer that and you know who controls the government.

The government is the tool by which the capitalists shear you of four-fifths of your earnings (among what they leave is a good sized tuft of wool over your eyes). Then we must capture that tool and thus control the armed forces, preventing their use against us. We can then take that which belongs to us.

I know the management of these gigantic machines is bothering you. Don't worry. The managers are slaves like yourselves, maybe getting a little more pay; but they will be as glad to do their share in the production of wealth when they have an interest in the concern they manage, as now, when they are liable to be thrown out of their position as soon as someone can be found to grind more profits out of the machine than they can. I think it is plain that if we are to free ourselves from slavery we must capture the government. To do this we must elect men of our own class and watch them close; they must be independent of old political parties (since they are elected by the aid of capitalist booze, soft soap and other objectionable matter) and election expenses must be paid by ourselves.

Direct legislation (the initiative, referendum and right of recall) would be very useful for keeping the line on mem-

bers, if those same members could be persuaded to give such legislation to us; but to stop the growth of trusts it would be useless. The growth might be retarded somewhat, but that would only be prolonging the agony. I have been trying to prove that the trusts are not bad; it is the ownership that is at fault.

There is a party in existence in every "developed" country in the world, that has for its aim the transferring of the ownership of all highly developed industries to the rightful owners, viz., the producers. If you are interested in the abolition of slavery, that party needs your assistance. Its name I will leave you to guess. Anyone wishing for more information may write to me and I will advise them what books to read (they can be had at small cost).

HARRY F. SMITH.

Roccliffe, Sask.

THE VIEWPOINT OF THE COUNTRY MERCHANT

Editor, Guide:—I notice in your issue of THE GUIDE, Jan. 12, page 34, in box in space market page, reference to prices quoted for poultry, eggs, butter, etc., by city retail dealers and, as you go on to say there, "thus eliminating the profits of the middlemen," of course implying the country merchants.

Now, sir, we feel sure you wish to be fair, and this implication does not coincide with that endeavor, for were the truth known, and I am in a position to know myself, being a country merchant in conjunction with my brother, the city merchant is the one who gets the profits, while the country merchant pays the top prices, barely clearing and very often losing and never making a profit, or if he did once or twice it would be wiped out on perhaps the next shipment. The producer gets from the country dealer just what the dealer can get from the commission man less freight and five per cent. for handling. The country merchant handles, and his profit is what he makes on his goods on exchange and if the customer in the city pays a much higher price, it is the city retailers who get the difference between what the producer gets and what the consumer pays, less

ers' Associations to take up and discuss, viz.—the methods to adopt to the producing of the best in the farm by-products, and the best means for the most advantageous placing of this on the city markets, why not have government grades for such products, as well as wheat, oats, etc., so that the people buying would know by date of inspection and grade, just what they were paying for. Then quality would be assured and the maker of the good article would at last come into his reward, then the second raters and the third raters would sit up and take notice and work for putting their own poor productions up to a more paying basis, thus, the almighty dollar would be a good educator, I trust.

At present it is a regrettable fact that the producer of first-class produce does not get what is due him while the second and third raters get far too much. A means to "give unto everyone according to his ability" to produce quality goods, his just reward, has as yet not been evolved in other than isolated cases, where the producer has gone out and found his direct market with actual consumers. The country dealer is helpless, as he only has control of goods till they leave his hands. These prices have to be very nearly the same when a large spread is really right and justifiable. No sane farmer would expect No. 1 price for No. 4 wheat, but somehow, if you infer when buying, say butter that is number 4 stuff, that it is poor, the farmer and his wife take it as a personal insult. Were there some scientific grading scheme evolved, this would be obviated to an entirety and then the value of farm products would rise for reasons as aforesaid.

The country merchants, as a class, I am assured are hand and glove with the farmer in his fight for industrial freedom and the getting of more for his varied products (the few there may be who are not, are blind to their own interests).

Like the farmer, we are in the business for a living, and if possible, a little laid by to improve our business, and against the time of old age, we do business direct with the farmer. What helps him, helps us. A higher price for his products gives him a greater buying power, and the more a merchant sells, the more his income, and the larger his trade, the lower the prices may be. So it behoves us as dealers to further and back up all fair means to have the producer come into his own.

The writer farmed for twenty years in Manitoba and knows just what the toiler of the land has had to contend with in many adverse ways, and am heart and soul in sympathy with him in his advance towards a higher and fuller destiny.

At present, on the other hand, we have mean, little towns for small tradesmen and sordid shacks for the toilers in close connection. "The man with the hoe, back bent with toil, coarse boots, overalls, and life's necessities only, striving like a Hercules to progress and succeed, while the wife does her stern duties in the little simple home, their pleasures few, their duties many and over-pressing; this on the one hand. On the other hand, the city's towering grandeur, magnificent banks, palatial palaces of commerce, whose very doors outvie the settlers' shack in value, to the toiler of the soil, a Holy of Holies, as he enters on marble floor with timid steps, halting and meek; but he helped to pay for it all, and the price is very large that he pays, but he is awakening and is heading for the promised land, of more returns for his large endeavor.

On page 6, third column, same issue, you state that the western farmers pay too high interest. It is so, and would you let through the medium of the Grain Growers' Guide the remedy be suggested to your eager readers. It is simple as A.B.C. if the workers would hang together to bring it about. Now, Mr. Editor, enough this time, please insert this in next issue of the GUIDE in the defence of the country merchants and the opening of the question it evolved.

R. P. PAYNTON.

Tantallon, Sask., Jan. 18, 1910.

PUT ON THE PRESSURE

Editor, Guide:—Permit me to express my appreciation of your remarks re Veteran Scrip in the issue of January 5. I would suggest that you further emphasize advising farmers to write the member of parliament for their district opposing time extension. I greatly applaud your worthy efforts.

Asquith, Sask. JOHN HOLMES.