

# The Brain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, July 16th, 1913

## CO-OPERATORS BOYCOTTED

The current issue of the Canadian Co-operator, a magazine of social and economic progress published in the interests of the Canadian Co-operative movement, makes public the details of what appears to be a determined, organized effort to crush co-operation and to raise the price of the necessities in Canada. During the past six months, the journal states, there has been extraordinary activity on the part of the Retail Merchants' Association, the organization which, it will be remembered, sent the deputation to Ottawa which succeeded in persuading the Senate to reject the Co-operative Bill a few years ago. The aim of the Retail Merchants' Association is to organize all the storekeepers of Canada in such a way that they will be able to eliminate competition and fix prices. If they are successful it will mean that the value of the Canadian dollar will be substantially at the discretion of the distributive interests of the country. The best, and in fact, the only means whereby the completion of such a monopoly can be prevented is by the establishment of co-operative stores throughout the country. To prevent this upsetting of their plans, the retailers and wholesalers are combining and the latter are refusing to supply co-operative societies with goods. The Brockville, Ont., Co-operative Society has had its orders refused by three wholesale houses, and one of these has written as follows:

"Am sorry to say that according to the rule of Wholesale Grocers' Guild, we will be unable to supply you. Am sorry about this, because when speaking to you I was not aware of this fact, but all members of this Guild are unable to sell any co-operative society."

It is claimed that this boycott of co-operative societies by the Wholesale Grocers' Guild constitutes a conspiracy in restraint of trade punishable by heavy penalties under the Combine Investigation Act of 1910. The Minister of Labor has been notified of the facts, and it is, therefore, likely that the matter will be brought before the courts at an early date. Consumers in the West should take warning, and every effort should be made to organize co-operative societies which will aid in combatting the monopoly. In Winnipeg a co-operative store has been in operation since June 1 and so far has met with gratifying success. It should have its counterpart in every town in the West and eventually we may hope to see a Canadian Co-operative Wholesale, with its own manufacturing and importing departments, all working to reduce the cost of living for the benefit of the people as a whole.

## WATCHING YOURSELF GO BY

Did you ever watch yourself go by in the human procession? You are always watching, no doubt, more or less closely, your neighbors and those you meet in your daily round. You see their shortcomings. You condemn their little meannesses. Occasionally you praise their good qualities. But generally it is with a critical and unsparing eye that one surveys the currents and cross-currents of humanity which pass before his view. He is so impressed with the faults of almost everyone he sees that he thanks God he is not as other men. But how about yourself? You are passing by others in this ceaseless drift called Life, just as others pass by you. Are you showing up any better than those whose failings you despise or look upon with good-humored tolerance? If you could only detach yourself for a few minutes from your familiar stock of prejudice and bias, from all the special circumstances of heredity, environment and education which

make each person's world distinct and different from every other person's, if you could get outside of yourself, as it were, and watch yourself with the same critical and impartial look as you bestow on others, you would certainly have your eyes opened. You might not be so supremely satisfied with yourself, your attainments and character. This would be no loss, but a distinct gain, for self-satisfaction is the foe to progress and the companion of petty souls. No truly great man was ever satisfied with himself. It takes a big soul to measure the possibilities of human nature, and the ideal moves forward faster than achievement can follow. Watching yourself as you pass by in the human drift, like the ceaseless crowds hurrying along the streets of a big city, can you not detect in your daily conduct, in your inner motives, in your relations with those about you, some of those failings which appear so glaringly in the lives of others? Are you always sincere with your fellows? Are you ready to help good causes at the cost of personal sacrifice? Is your ideal to serve your day and generation and leave the world better than you found it? Or is it to get as much as you can for self and to give as little as decency will permit? Condemnation of the rich comes easily enough. You have scant respect for those who, having amassed immense fortunes, press on in the mad race for more money and more power, regardless of those who are crushed under the juggernaut of present economic evils. But can those who lift no finger against existing abuses, who do nothing to help forward a better day when justice shall reign, can they be held blameless? Unless one is doing his utmost within his own circle of influence for reform it is idle to denounce the heartlessness of plutocracy. If a man in moderate circumstances is not stirred to action with sympathy, the chances are that he would not do any better, even with a large fortune at his command, for extreme wealth almost invariably fixes a gulf between its possessor and the common people. One's attitude toward the democratic movements of today, however, is only one respect in which you may check up yourself as you would another. As you view your daily round of activities from the standpoint of an outsider are you cheerful amid discouragement, helpful in the home, always mindful of the Golden Rule in your dealings with others? Or do petty annoyances embitter you, do selfish aims engross all your powers, and is the rampant materialism of today allowed to tarnish your ideals? It is so easy to see that neighbor Jones has failed for one reason or another to make the best of his life. But may not Jones say the same about you, and with perhaps far more truth? His faults are different from yours, and much more glaring, of course. One can always summon a host of reasons for his own particular failings, but as others see you, your shortcomings may be quite as serious blemishes as those you condemn so frankly in people about you. Another thing worth watching for as you see yourself go by is, whither bound? Are you moving ahead, or going in the wrong direction? Are you making any real progress, or have you got into a narrow rut, continually going over the same self-centred round, with no outlook nor advance? Every person might profitably take a few minutes now and then watching themselves go by. If you go at it in the right frame of mind it would both spur you up to your best efforts and also make you more charitable in judging those around you.

Our politicians seem to have forgotten what they used to write in their copy-books: "Two wrongs don't make a right."

## MORE MILLIONS FOR G.T.P.

We sincerely hope and trust that when the Government hands over the \$15,000,000 which it is going to lend to the G.T.P. for ten years at 4 per cent., it will have the contract drawn up in such plain words that even a corporation lawyer will not be able to contend that the company is not compelled to pay the interest every year or to repay the principal at the end of the period for which it is loaned. It may seem superfluous to warn the Government to exercise care in this respect, but past experience shows that caution is necessary. The present tightness of the money market is making the blunder of the late Government in the famous implementing clause in the original G.T.P. contract more expensive than it was at first expected to be, and it now looks as if the Canadian taxpayers would be compelled to pay the shareholders of the G.T.P. at least \$13,000,000 as a result of the successful quibbling of their lawyers. The circumstances are worth recalling. By an Act passed in 1904 the Government undertook to guarantee the bonds of the G.T.P. to the extent of three-fourths of the cost of construction with a limit of \$13,000 a mile on the prairie section and \$30,000 a mile on the mountain section. The bonds bore interest at 3 per cent. and sold considerably below par, some bringing only 80 cents on the dollar. To make matters worse, the cost of construction exceeded the estimates, and the G.T.P. having very little money of its own, went to the Government for more aid. The Government was quite willing, and promised to guarantee whatever additional bonds were required to raise three-fourths of the actual cost of the line. The bargain was embodied in an Act of Parliament, in a clause which read as follows:

"The Government may and shall . . . implement . . . its guarantee of the bonds of the said company to be issued for the cost of the construction of the said western division, in such manner as may be agreed upon, so as to make the proceeds of the said bonds so to be guaranteed a sum equal to 75 per cent. of the cost of construction."

There was no question at all that the Government intended that the "implementing" should be done by guaranteeing further bonds, Sir Wilfrid Laurier distinctly stating that this was the meaning of the clause. Lawyers employed by the G.T.P., however, claimed, after the bill had been passed, that the "implementing" was to be done by a straight gift in cash out of the Dominion treasury, and after the Supreme Court of Canada had decided against them, they went to the Privy Council in England and secured a verdict upholding their contention. Several million dollars was paid out by the late Government as a result, the G.T.P. being entitled to receive the difference between par and the price at which the bonds were sold. The bonds are still being issued, and the public are still paying for the mistake, but now, instead of merely making up the deficiency the Government buys the bonds and pays par for them, although the interest which they yield is only three per cent. and their value is only about 75 cents on the dollar. If an institution conducted on business lines was forced to pay \$13,000,000 more than it agreed to, on account of a legal quibble its managers would be exceedingly shy of further dealings with the men who had got the best of them, and relations, to say the least would be badly strained. The Government, however, is still on excellent terms with the G.T.P. and has now agreed to lend the company \$15,000,000 at 4 per cent. The present ministry, of course, is not responsible for the blunder which was made by their predecessors.