

The Grain Growers' Guide

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Parsons Consigns Us To Hell

It is not often we get a letter consigning us to Hell, but here we have it from no less an individual than S. R. Parsons, of Toronto, late president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, president of the British American Oil Company, of Toronto, and a gentleman prominent in Methodist church circles. Under date of September 10, he writes as follows, and requests us to publish it:—

Editor, Grain Growers' Guide: In your first editorial in issue of September 4, you say in speaking of Mr. Beatty's bet, "We called a similar bet by the President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association for \$100, but we have not seen the \$100 yet."

I am aware that you have referred to this matter before, and, notwithstanding my unequivocal reply at the time, you still try to make it appear that I backed away from my position. This is absolutely untrue, as you must know, for the Secretary's letter to me from which I quoted, not only gives the whole statement, which is a complete vindication of the charge which the publication of only part of the statement made possible, but avers that he did not correct the report in the papers at the time, as he had learned, thus early in his career, that it was futile to attempt to clear up any half statements or incorrect views attributed to him in the papers. Mr. Murray's veracity is unimpeachable.

In this connection let me call attention to a very commendable editorial in the same issue of your paper in which you state:—

The power of the press in shaping public opinion is mighty and subtle; and it can work in many ways. To say nothing of actual falsifying of news and the printing of editorials designed to serve not the public welfare but some personal or party purpose, a newspaper can color the news it spreads before its readers. By an omission here and a skillful emphasis there, by suggestion and by insinuation, it can so present the news about public affairs, which is the raw material of public opinion, as to mislead its readers into false thinking.

Surely I need add nothing more except to refer you to another New Testament quotation than that you use, viz.: "Physician, heal thyself." If you are disposed to be fair and honest and apply your own editorial views to the case in point, you will apologize to me for trying to make it appear that I did not keep my word. I have as little respect for the man who directly or indirectly tries to misrepresent another as I have for the man who seeks to evade an obligation. Both are fit subjects for reserved seats in that lowest hell which Dante pictured for those who "sit on the fence" on moral questions.—S. R. Parsons.

Mr. Parsons' finer feelings were evidently wrought up when he wrote that letter. No doubt, however, he experienced a feeling of great satisfaction after his scriptural exploration, and a deep feeling of comfort settled down upon him after he had carefully disposed of us by consigning us to a reserved seat in Hell. Mr. Parsons evidently is not familiar with another divine injunction which says, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Possibly this text does not appear in Mr. Parsons' version of the scripture.

The circumstances of Mr. Parsons' \$100 bet are as follows: Some months ago I. T. Lennox wrote a letter to the Farmer's Advocate, of London, Ontario, replying to Mr. Parsons' speech. Mr. Lennox stated in his letter that some years ago the secretary of the Manufacturers' Association had declared that the C.M.A. could, if it chose, close down the factories of Canada and bring millions of people to the verge of starvation. Mr. Parsons immediately declared that he had never heard of this statement and would donate \$100 to charity if it could be proven. The Grain Growers' Guide immediately reproduced the report of a speech made by G. M. Murray, secretary of the Manufacturers' Association in Winnipeg. The report appeared in the Manitoba Free Press, of February 3, 1910, as follows:—

The re-organized Canadian Manufacturers'

Association is like a young giant, ignorant of its own powers. By the exercise of these powers it could, if it chose, bring several millions of people to the verge of starvation, or paralyze the industries of the whole Dominion.

This is the way the report appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press the next morning after Mr. Murray made his speech. Mr. Parsons replied again, stating that he had spoken to Mr. Murray, who had denied that it was a correct report of his remarks. But in his letter to Mr. Parsons, Mr. Murray stated that he really spoke on that occasion as follows:—

I stated that were the Manufacturers' Association as thoroughly organized as some people gave it credit for, were it responsive to the leadership of unscrupulous men actuated by selfish motives, it could, if it chose, by ordering the closing down of the factories of all its members, bring millions of people to the verge of starvation and paralyze the industries of the whole Dominion.

Now, the question is, whether Mr. Murray's memory is quite accurate, and whether he used all those "ifs" and "weres" in making his speech. The reporter who wrote the report of his speech listened to him, and certainly could have no ulterior motive in misquoting him. Furthermore, this report of his speech was published broadcast and commented upon throughout the West for eight years before he took occasion to correct it. It should not be overlooked that Mr. Murray's speech was made at a brilliant banquet where probably everybody was in particularly good spirits and the speakers not liable to weigh their every word. If, after eight years, Mr. Murray is able to tell exactly, word for word, what he said at the banquet speech he has one of the most remarkable memories on record.

In regard to Mr. Parsons and his bet of \$100. We are quite willing to leave it to the court of public opinion as to whether or not he should put up the \$100. He must please himself in the matter. He is not the first individual to consign to Hell those who do not see things as he does. We would not think of such a ghastly thing as consigning Mr. Parsons to Hell simply because we do not agree with him. On the other hand, we hope that Mr. Parsons will live for many, many years. We hope he will be spared to carry on his church work and pursue his study of the scriptures with great profit to himself and his associates. And we further hope that as time mellows his spirit he will permit people to view things differently from himself and still leave them a chance for the Better Land. The only other suggestion we would make to Mr. Parsons, for his own peace of mind, is that in the future when he makes a bet, in all friendliness, we would advise him always to bet on a sure thing.

Austria Waves the White Flag

The Germans have been driven back in a month and a half out of the 3,000 square miles of France which it took them four months to capture in their greatest offensive since the war began. Their general staff had confidently planned that offensive to be a triumphant rush to the Channel ports and to Paris. Those plans having been turned to defeat by the valor of the Allied armies directed by the military genius of Foch, Berlin has now launched a peace offensive.

Just as when the general staff had everything ready, Austria was ordered in July, 1914, to precipitate the war by the ultimatum to Serbia designed at Berlin for that purpose, so now Berlin has ordered Austria to wave the white flag—which in this case

is a symbol of more ruthless treachery than was ever a pirate's flag with skull and crossbones. Meanwhile, certain newspapers in Germany print radical utterances designed to be quoted by the newspapers of the free countries of the world. The plan is to deceive people in the free countries into imagining that Germany is experiencing a change of heart and is turning towards democracy. This is one of the many forms of German poison gas. The free peoples are on their guard against it.

Register Land Power

On June 22, the Dominion government called for a complete registration of the man and woman power of Canada. That was done with a view to marshalling the resources of the country, and developing a higher degree of efficiency in our prosecution of the war. To effect that most desirable result, however, it becomes necessary to do more than merely take a census of some 5,000,000 men and women in Canada.

One very important phase of Canada's war problems, for instance, is the planning of ways and means at this time of providing employment and livelihood for returned soldiers and for the thousands of munition workers who will be thrown into idleness when peace is declared. Problems of reconstruction are becoming quite as vital a part of the nation's participation in the war as the recruiting and sending of men overseas.

The richest and most approachable of Canada's natural resources is agricultural land; and yet, at the present moment, as everyone knows, the "slacker" acres comprise the larger part of our arable areas. It should be just as essential to have a complete registration of land power as of man power. Not only do the needs of food production during the war demand such action, but the questions of land settlement and rural reconstruction, as integral factors in a Canadian national policy after the war, also cry aloud for immediate answer.

There should be a demand made at once for a comprehensive registration, of all the idle lands—agricultural, mineral and timber—within the different provinces of Canada. Particularly in the provinces west of the Great Lakes, where so much of the public domain has been alienated into private hands, is this registration necessary. On a certain fixed date, and under the auspices of a Federal Lands' Board, registration should be demanded not only of the legal descriptions of idle areas of agricultural, timber and mineral areas, but also of the values at which the registered owners would be prepared to sell.

Co-operation with the municipal authorities in the municipalities of the different provinces would greatly facilitate such a registration of natural resources; and where the owners of lands are distant in other countries, special treatment could be given in securing the registration of their holdings. The important point is that the Federal government should lose no time in establishing some sort of basis for its land settlement policy, whatever form that policy may take.

The Guide understands that Mr. Calder, the Minister of Immigration and Colonization is at present in the West conferring with provincial authorities about land settlement. We should like to commend to him the idea of a Registration Day, or even days, or weeks, on which, or within which period, all owners of idle lands in Canada