

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, January 28th, 1914

## NO TARIFF REDUCTION

Judging by the definite statements made in the House of Commons last week by Premier Borden and Finance Minister White, there will be no tariff reduction at the present session of Parliament. Whether or not this applies to the question of "free wheat," it is difficult to state, as both speakers left themselves in a position where they could favor "free wheat" later on if it is deemed expedient. Mr. White, as will be seen in our "Ottawa Letter" on another page, voices the feeling of the most ardent Protectionist. He is opposed to changing the tariff during hard times. That is the typical attitude of a high Protectionist. And when times become easy he will then be opposed to tariff reduction "because the country is prosperous." Mr. White is a high Protectionist thru and thru, and Mr. Borden appears to support his Finance Minister in his views. It is quite evident that the only thing that will alter the views of the Government is the fear that a large number of voters will not submit longer to the robbery that continually takes place under the shelter of the protective tariff.

There is one encouraging note in Mr. Borden's address, namely his clear statement in favor of co-operation between the producer and the consumer. Previously in these pages we have pointed out that at the time when the Canadian Council of Agriculture interviewed Mr. Borden and several of his colleagues, last month, the Premier spoke very favorably on the question of co-operation. We judge by his remarks in the House last week that the Government is very likely to enact a Federal Co-operative Bill. If we are correct in our surmise the government will be taking a step in the right direction, and all such favors will be thankfully received. Let us hope that Mr. Borden will see that the bill is a real good one, that will give the Western farmers the opportunity they seek to organize co-operatively and reduce the spread between producer and consumer.

## THE WHEAT TARIFF

The prospects of securing free entry to the American market for Canadian wheat by the action of the Canadian Parliament are not very encouraging. The wheat question stands out clearly by itself and can be dealt with without interfering with the general tariff in the slightest degree. The clause in the United States tariff which places the matter in this situation is as follows:

### "FREE LIST

"644. Wheat, wheat flour, semolina and other wheat products, not specially provided for in this section: Provided that wheat shall be subject to a duty of 10 cents per bushel, that wheat flour shall be subject to a duty of 45 cents per barrel of 196 pounds, and semolina and other products of wheat, not specially provided for in this section 10 per centum ad valorem, when imported directly from a country, dependency or other subdivision of government which imposes a duty on wheat or wheat flour or semolina imported from the United States."

Thus, if the Canadian Parliament will pass an act of a few words placing wheat, wheat flour and semolina on the free list, these same articles from Canada will at once be admitted into the United States free of duty. The Argentine Republic has already taken advantage of the offer and the Argentine farmers now have free entry for their wheat into Uncle Sam's country. But because of the refusal of Premier Borden to give simple justice to the farmers of Western Canada they are still deprived of their best market and are thereby losing several cents on every bushel of wheat they market. On Friday, January 23 (the

latest figures to hand) One Northern cash wheat was worth 86 $\frac{3}{4}$  cents in Winnipeg and in Minneapolis, 89-90 cents. The Canadian One Northern grade is worth at least one cent more than the American One Northern, so it is easy to see that the Canadian farmers are losing today at least 4 cents per bushel or \$40 per thousand bushel earload on their wheat, by being shut out of the Minneapolis market. And the mystery is that Mr. Borden will give no reason for thus punishing the western farmers. Premier Roblin is as good a Conservative and as good an Imperialist as Premier Borden, yet Sir Rodmond a few days ago voted in favor of a resolution before the Manitoba legislature declaring in favor of free wheat. Why then does Mr. Borden assist in depriving the western farmers of the full value of their wheat? No one will claim for one minute that the Canadian duty on wheat and semolina is of any value to anyone. Our Canadian millers need no protection. Surely it must be that the eastern Protectionists fear that free wheat will be "the thin end of the wedge," and will but increase the demand for more freedom of trade. But is Premier Borden going to allow the Protectionists not only to exact from the farmers tariff tribute on manufactured goods, but also to deny them the right to market their own wheat where they can get the highest price for it? As it stands today Premier Borden is practically holding the western farmer helpless while his pockets are being picked. It is rather a humiliating position for both parties in the transaction and very expensive to the farmer.

## THE U.F.A. CONVENTION

The Sixth Annual Convention of the United Farmers of Alberta, a full report of which appears in this issue, was an excellent indication of the progress and development which that organization is making. In attendance it was larger than any previous convention and the enthusiasm was quite equal to that of similar gatherings in the past. The volume of business transacted in the short space of three days was enormous, and the businesslike manner in which it was handled should afford food for thought to our various legislative bodies, who would require not less than two months to deal with matters of equal importance.

Altho the decisions arrived at by the convention will have a great influence in legislative circles, not only in Alberta, but also at Ottawa, the most far-reaching influence will be among the farmers of Alberta. Each local union that was represented by a delegate at the convention will receive stimulus from the encouraging report which its delegate will be able to take back to the members who remained at home. If there are any members who fancy that the struggle for justice for the farmers is abating, they will be disillusioned when they hear of the work of their Annual Convention. They will realize that the fight for a square deal and for equal rights to all has really only begun. They will realize that the forces for right are only now organizing in earnest, and that the call to battle is being sent out all along the line.

The next few months will see a great increase in membership in the United Farmers of Alberta and will also undoubtedly see the organization of a considerable number of new local unions. The aim must be to have every farmer of Alberta a member and a working member. The annual address of President Tregillus was a most inspiring effort. The president of the U.F.A. has caught and expressed the true progressive spirit of the organized farmers of his own

province. Every farmer in Alberta would do well to have a copy of this annual address and study it very carefully during the year to come. There was no shrinking on the part of the delegates at the convention to deal with problems of great magnitude.

The report of Secretary Woodbridge shows that the central office has been exceedingly busy during the year and has been able to protect the interests of the members in many important directions. The members of the provincial organizations in all three provinces should realize more fully the great service which their central offices could render if provided with sufficient funds. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association maintains a central office in which a large staff of highly paid experts are always at work looking after the interests of the manufacturers. The farmers' organization will never have the strength to secure the reforms for which it is aiming until the members provide sufficient funds to carry on an aggressive fight.

It was most encouraging to note the able manner in which the report of the Co-operative Elevator Committee was received and discussed. Naturally there is bound to be a certain amount of criticism of any great project which is launched for the purpose of improving conditions for farmers. Most of those criticisms come from outside sources and are animated by envy or malice. Such criticisms do not deserve the serious attention of the farmers themselves. There is also generally to be expected a certain amount of honest and sincere criticism from members of the farmers' organization. It would be impossible for all of them to see eye to eye upon every question that comes before them. So long, however, as they are willing to accept the will of the majority and work together for the common good, such criticism and such discussion is of the utmost value and should be looked upon in that light. After a full discussion of the elevator question the delegates decided, almost unanimously, that their Elevator Committee had done excellent work in bringing the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company into existence. It was undoubtedly the best single piece of work done by the organization in the past year and as their own company develops it will be a great factor in improving grain marketing conditions in that province. No doubt the private elevator companies who have piled up a good deal of money thru unjust exactions from the farmers, will fight the Farmers' Company, but if the farmers remain true to themselves they need not fear any outside opposition.

It will be an eye opener to Special Interests everywhere to notice the unanimous and enthusiastic manner in which the delegates declared for free trade. The farmers of Alberta know that the protective tariff is their enemy and they are opposed to it with all their might. The fight for Free Trade is on in earnest and because it has right and justice on its side is bound to triumph eventually.

The delegates also expressed their dissatisfaction with the Direct Legislation Act placed on the statute books of Alberta a year ago. They realized that it contained provisions that made it absolutely unworkable, and they have therefore demanded that the Legislature amend it so as to make it useful as an agency for Democracy.

Last year the convention declared for the Taxation of Land Values and the farmers of Alberta are heartily in support of this reform. The endorsement of these three reforms marked the farmers of Alberta as a very progressive organization. They will have much

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