

heard him went away convinced that he was a strong, capable leader, sincere in his convictions, who could not be intimidated. As one man put it, "Well, there's no shenanigan about it, anyway." Those meetings with the organized farmers were the most successful feature of the tour. They were kept up to the end, evidently to show the strength of the organization in all parts and the strength of reciprocity sentiment.

It was the best thing that could have happened for the Opposition leader, for, outside of the fact that it gave him a chance to define his position clearly to men who were alleged to be against him, it was a stimulus to him. He is a careful, studious man and he weighs and measures his words before he utters them. When prodded by an interruption, or a memorial containing an unfair representation, his response never lacks fire or animalism. I have heard him make many speeches, but none so critical and convincing as those he delivered to the organized farmers. He made converts at each of his meetings. They went away convinced, at any rate, that he was an honest man with a forceful personality. Their memorials spoke of him as a "possible Prime Minister." That itself is significant. Four years ago, the gentlemen who drafted these memorials would have scoffed at the suggestion; in point of fact, they would not have bothered themselves to lay before him their views, and draw from him a declaration of his principles.

Speaking generally of the effect of the tour, I believe that when the elections come on the voters in the Western provinces will vote as they usually did. The Conservative grain growers will vote for Borden because he concedes them all they asked for a year ago. The Liberals will support Laurier in spite of this, and because he offers them reciprocity. The independent voter will go one way or the other according to his idea as to which is the paramount consideration. Of course, it is difficult to say what will happen. The prospect of a redistribution has prevented the nomination of candidates, and political conditions may be complicated by the G. G. A. placing candidates of their own in the field. While they are not pleased with Borden's rejection of reciprocity, they are not pleased either with Laurier's side-stepping of the other issues placed before him, and they may select candidates pledged to all that both Sir Wilfrid and Mr. Borden offer them. They are generally men of sound intelligence who can express their views freely and forcibly. There are, however, a few among them who would place the East against the West and would destroy every industry and interest in Canada except their own. According to one of them, the gory hand of the Eastern manufacturers is elbow-deep in the life-blood of the Western farmers. Men like these would be dangerous if they were as influential as they are noisy. The great bulk of the organized farmers is composed of sensible, intelligent men who are broad-minded enough to see that the various provinces and interests of Canada are interdependent, and that the success of each is necessary to the success of all.

The Borden tour has succeeded in stemming the tide that was flowing favourably to reciprocity and the Laurier Government. Most of those who were favourable to it at first were attracted by the magic of the name. There was, too, a deal of misinformation respecting its terms. This is not surprising when we recall Hon. Mr. Paterson's definition of talc and Hon. Mr. Lemieux's dissertation on the advantage of the Maritime Provinces of free trade in lobsters which had been on the free list many years. Mr. Norris, leader of the Liberal party in Manitoba, expatiates on the advantage of free trade in oranges and bananas, although they have been on the free list for four years. This misinformation is, therefore, not current among its rank and file exclusively.

It was not surprising that many learned for the first time at Mr. Borden's meetings that manufactured articles and particularly agricultural implements are not put on the free list under this pact, and many others heard for the first time that a dozen other nations are allowed access to Canadian markets on the same terms as the United States without giving similar advantages to Canada. Needless to say, they went away with a different view of the question, and they will carry Mr. Borden's arguments to others who may be similarly misinformed. I was with Mr. Borden for one week, but since then I have visited places where he held meetings and am assured that personally Mr. Borden

created a very favourable impression in the West, and that as a result of his visit, reciprocity will not



Band at Lanigan, Sask., waiting for Mr. Borden to appear.



Open-air meeting at North Battleford on June 30th.

cut such a figure, particularly if the tour is followed up by a more general campaign of education.

The Government still holds the advantage of controlling the land agents and homestead inspectors who do valuable work during elections, particularly with the foreign element. It will probably secure, too, the votes of English and Scotch free-traders who left their homes in spite (or because) of the fact that it is the ideal of a free trade country. They like the idea of reciprocity, and will therefore vote for the only government in Canada that was ever offered and that ever refused free trade with the United States. These will probably be offset by an element of Britishers who are not at all pleased with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's attitude at the Imperial Conference. The American settlers in the prairie are, I am told, generally favourable to reciprocity, although I met a number who are very much opposed to it.

## Reciprocity and Fenians

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE.

MR. W. S. MIDDLEBORO, of North Bay, must be one of the humourists among the Conservative party. Having just got back from the Borden tour, and being deeply convinced that when the House opened it was the supreme business of his side to talk out reciprocity, he perpetrated a sample of grand humour.

It was on Tuesday of last week that Mr. Fielding gave out that it was Government's intention to get busy with the reciprocity discussion postponed for the Coronation. He moved that the House go into a Committee of Ways and Means. When he knew very well that a whole brigade of tactful members opposite had been lined up to evade reciprocity. Mr. Middleboro rose with an amendment. Then began the farce-comedy.

The amendment of Mr. Middleboro called upon Parliament "to recognize in some substantial manner the services of the Fenian Raid veterans of 1866 and 1867."

The latter, it will be remembered, was the year of Confederation; which may have been an historic

reason for lugging it in against reciprocity. At any rate the Premier rose to reply. He did not say to Mr. Middleboro: "My honourable friend from North Grey is a joker. He knows very well that he is not interested in Fenians; as well as he knows that this Government and this country are interested in reciprocity." He did, however, point out that the matter was some forty years old even in Parliament; that the Government of Sir John Macdonald had dealt with the matter and so far as he knew the country was not disposed to worry much about the results.

As a matter of form the Premier recollected that he himself had been a Fenian Raid veteran; though he had never received a medal and did not deserve one, since all he had done was garrison duty.

This was a severe blow to Mr. Middleboro, who probably did not know that Sir Wilfrid had ever been a soldier.

The Premier sat down. So far as he and his Government were concerned the Fenian Raid was all over.

Not so Mr. Middleboro's brigade. The member for North Grey read interesting and enchanting passages from Hansard of 1875; being the realistic story of a famous passage at arms between Sir John Macdonald and Alexander Mackenzie on that very topic. Remarkable! Here were the very words used by those historic politicians thirty-six years ago! The House sat back, folded its arms, tilted its hat over its eyes and listened.

It was a thrilling episode. It seemed as though the shades of two great statesmen were in the House. The visit of the Sheffield Choir a few months ago, when they sang to the House of Commons, had not been so supernatural an incident. With much feeling the member for North Grey read the famous words. They were the echo of a day when oratory had been the custom; when the martial spirit was in the air; when even Col. Sam Hughes could have brought the House to a cheer.

How different now! Here was a House assembled merely in the name of the country's business. Here was a Government which seemed to have lost its sense of history and its veneration for the heroes of old. It was a time for a Macaulay to have taken the dry bones of Hansard and at the clerk's desk to have written then and there the ballads of the Fenian Raid, that a degenerate, unsentimental and commercialized government might be thrilled away from the path of commercial intrigue to the contemplation of deeds of valour and heroes of old.

Hour by hour Messrs. Sproule and Barker, Reid and Lancaster, Lennox and Boyce and Sharpe—and even Borden himself—dilated and expatiated solemnly and earnestly upon the duty of the House and the Government to remember the graves of their fathers and the heroism of a vanished age.

And then plumb in the midst of this most solemn and impassioned crisis in the history of parliamentary debate—what did some irreverent and materialistic Liberal members do but interject loudly—"Vote!" and "Carried!" These irrelevant interruptions had a marked effect upon the antiquarians. They were observed to wince and to glance audibly and appealingly at the Speaker. Surely these flip-pant gentlemen opposite understood that this was no laughing matter. Surely they had perception enough to see that the discussion of the claims of the Fenian Raid veterans was itself part and parcel of the subject of reciprocity. Were not the Fenians of 1866 the very scoundrels who at that time tried the absurdly impossible and chimerical task of annexing Canada to the United States. Were not the Fenians of 1866 the restricted reciprocitarians of 1911 in another guise? Were not the reciprocity-pacters of 1911 just Fenians in another form?

Hour by hour the clock ticked away under the gallery and the members dribbled out to smoke. Towards six o'clock the benches on the Government side were deserted save for a bare quorum. Only the Premier and one or two Ministers were left in the Treasury benches. Never in the most dismal days of Dr. Sproule lambasting Mr. Pugsley's sawdust wharf schemes, or Mr. Foster unraveling the iniquities of patronage, had there been known such regrettable apathy and lack of patriotism.

It was one of those sad moments that sometimes unearth the true condition of a people. The member for North Grey discovered that he and his party had fallen upon evil days. And as he went to the lobby he was heard to mutter with something betwixt a sneer and a sigh, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria moriri."