



The Canadian Council of Agriculture in 1917.

economic system prevailing in Canada and that they are just as much interested as the farmer in economic and social reforms. It is a noteworthy fact that at the big political convention held in Winnipeg in August, 1917, the Farmer's Platform was adopted on that session practically in toto, and since the election last December when the Union Government was returned to power, the farmers of Canada have had the pleasure of seeing many of the measures, advocated by them in their platform put into effect by the Parliament at Ottawa.

What the Platform Says

With the exception of those measures which have already been adopted, such as woman suffrage, prohibition, abolition of patronage, income tax and other incidental reforms, the Canadian Council of Agriculture still stands on its platform of 1916, and for that reason the recommendations made at that time and put into the form of a resolution, may very appropriately be reproduced here, as follows:—

Whereas, the war has revealed the amazing financial strength of Great Britain, which has enabled her to finance not only her own part in the struggle, but also to assist in financing her Allies to the extent of hundreds of millions of pounds, this enviable position being due to the free trade policy which has enabled her to draw her supplies freely from every quarter of the globe and consequently to undersell her competitors in the world's markets, and because this policy has not only been profitable to Great Britain but has

greatly strengthened the bonds of Empire by facilitating trade between the Motherland and her overseas dominions—we believe that the best interests of the Empire and of Canada would be served by reciprocal action on the part of Canada through gradual reductions of the tariff on British imports, having for its object a closer union and a better understanding between Canada and the motherland and by so doing not only strengthen the hands of Great Britain in the life and death struggle in which she is now engaged, but at the same time bring about a great reduction in the cost of living to our Canadian people;

And whereas the Protective Tariff has fostered combines, trusts, and "gentlemen's agreements" in almost every line of Canadian industrial enterprise, by means of which the people of Canada—both urban and rural—have been shamefully exploited through the elimination of competition the ruination of many of our smaller industries and the advancement of prices on practically all manufactured goods to the full extent permitted by the tariff.

And whereas agriculture—the basic industry upon which the success of all other industries primarily depends—is almost stagnant throughout Canada as shown by the declining rural population in both eastern and western Canada, due largely to the greatly increased cost of agricultural implements and machinery, clothing, boots and shoes, building material and practically everything the farmer has to buy, caused by the Protective Tariff, so that it is becoming impossible for farmers generally to carry on farming operations profitably.

And whereas the Protective tariff is the most wasteful and costly method ever designed for raising national revenue, because for every dollar obtained thereby for the public treasury at least three dollars pass into the pockets of the protected interests, thereby building up a privileged class at the expense of the masses, thus making the rich richer and the poor poorer;

And whereas the Protective Tariff has been and is a chief corrupting influence in our national life because the protected interests, in order to maintain their unjust privileges, have contributed lavishly to political and campaign funds, thus encouraging both political parties to look to them for support, thereby lowering the standard of public morality.

Therefore be it resolved that the Canadian Council of Agriculture, representing the organized farmers of Canada, urges that as a means of bringing about these much needed reforms and at

the same time reducing the high cost of living now proving such a burden on the people of Canada, our tariff laws should be amended as follows:—

1.—By reducing the customs duty on goods imported from Great Britain to one-half the rates charged under the general tariff and that further gradual, uniform reductions be made in the remaining tariff on British imports that will ensure complete free trade between Great Britain and Canada in five years.

2.—That the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911, which still remains on the United States statute books, be accepted by the parliament of Canada.

3.—That all food stuff not included in the Reciprocity Agreement be placed on the free list.

4.—That agricultural implements, farm machinery, vehicles, fertilizers, coal, lumber, cement, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils be placed on the free list.

5.—That the customs tariff on all the necessities of life be materially reduced.

6.—That all tariff concessions granted to other countries be immediately extended to Great Britain.

Taxation for Revenue

As these tariff reductions will very considerably reduce the national revenue derived from that source, the Canadian Council of Agriculture would recommend that in order to provide the necessary additional revenue for carrying on the government of the country and for the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion, direct taxation be imposed in the following manner:—

1.—By a direct tax on unimproved land values, including all natural resources.

2.—By a sharply graduated personal income tax.

3.—By a heavy graduated inheritance tax on large estates.

4.—By a graduated income tax on the profits of corporations.

Other Necessary Reforms

The Canadian Council of Agriculture desires to endorse also the following policies as in the best interests of the people of Canada:—

1.—The nationalization of all railway, telegraph and express companies.

2.—That no more natural resources be alienated from the Crown but brought into use only under short term leases, in which the interests of the public shall be properly safeguarded, such leases to be granted only by public auction.

3.—Direct legislation, including the initiative and referendum and the right of recall.

4.—Publicity of political campaign fund contributions and expenditures both before and after elections.

5.—The abolition of the patronage system.

6.—Full provincial autonomy in liquor legislation, including manufacture, export and import.

7.—That the extension of the franchise to women in any province shall automatically admit them to the federal franchise.

It may be seen, in the light of the reforms which have been brought into effect in Canada during the past few years, that many of the recommendations contained in the foregoing platform have been adopted and thus a revision of the agricultural policy for the Dominion becomes necessary.

Committee of Commerce and Agriculture

A worthy development in the relationship of the Canadian Council of Agriculture with the interests of the country at large occurred in March 7, 8, and 9, in the year 1916. In the previous November a proposal was made to establish "A Joint Committee of Commerce and Agriculture" to be composed of representatives of the business interests of the Western provinces and representatives of the organized farmers' associations. The object of the organization, expressed in broad terms, was to bring the western farming and business interests together from time to time to discuss problems affecting their mutual welfare, "in order that in matters where an agreement of opinion is reached, joint action

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