

The People's H.B. Road

Editor, *Grain*.—Four articles dealing with the proposal to organize a popular joint stock company to build and operate, or operate, under lease a road to the Hudson's Bay have appeared in the editorial pages of *The Grain*. Subscription lists have been sent to many persons throughout the three provinces. Some financial support has been given, and considerable correspondence has had the attention of the committee of organization.

Apparently there is considerable misconception as to the enterprise. At present no company is being organized, and no stock is being offered for sale. Subscriptions have been and are being solicited from the public, and from the funds derived, bills for printing, for postage, for clerical assistance, and for travelling expenses of those presenting the scheme at public meetings, are being met. If a sufficient number of persons show by subscribing \$10.00 each to an organization fund that the public interest is sufficiently strong to make it possible to secure a sufficient number of subscribers for stock in the proposed company, then letters patent will be applied for, the nucleus of a company will be provided, and the stock will be placed upon the market through the medium of canvassers or paid solicitors as in the case of any other joint stock company enterprise.

In that case, all persons who have subscribed \$10.00 to the organization fund will be credited with 10 per cent. paid up on a share of stock so soon as they shall sign the stock sheet for one share. Let it be understood that no person has yet become a subscriber to a stock sheet, nor will they be asked to take stock unless there be reasonable prospect of a very large company being organized.

In signing the subscription list, which has been presented to them, they have indeed agreed to become a subscriber for stock to the extent of one share, if a certain number of signatures are secured and they be asked to do so. Unless, however, there be a widespread support given to the scheme at an early date, they will not be asked to subscribe for this share of stock which they have conditionally agreed to take, but will have returned to them as much of their \$10.00 subscription as has not yet been expended in the attempt at exciting public interest, and taking the preliminary steps towards organization.

Provided the response to the appeal of the organizing committee is great enough to warrant them in proceeding with the work of organizing formally as a joint stock company a certain number of subscribers to the memorandum of association would be chosen from the subscribers to the organization fund, letters patent would be secured, provisional directors named, and the public would be asked to take stock and to pay (where they had not previously contributed to the subscription fund) 10 per cent. on each share taken, balance subject to call after an organization meeting has been held, and the permanent directors has been elected.

It is not contemplated that, in the event of the company being organized, any further call would be made up to the time when some arrangement should be made with the government in respect to either the company undertaking to build or to operate the Hudson's Bay road. The people would simply be so organized that the directors of their company on their behalf would be in a position to enter into negotiations with the government. It would be foolishness for the organization committee or a little group of farmers to approach the government with any specific proposals for either the building or operating of the road. But representatives of a popular joint stock company, embracing many thousands in its membership, could approach the government with reasonable prospects of a respectful attention to their representations or demands made in the interest of the general public.

Suppose, for instance, that the government should finally, definitely decline to operate the road to Hudson's Bay under an independent commission; then they must adopt some other method of operation. There being no popular organization, such as we propose to create, in existence, they must per force hand over the operation of the road to either an

existing railway, to some organization of capitalists, or else give the existing railway roads running powers over the road. Hence the necessity of the people being organized and ready in such an event to enter into an agreement with the government to operate the road in the public interest.

Or suppose that the government, owing to the development of eastern hostility, should be unable or unwilling to proceed with the construction of the Hudson's Bay railway, or should proceed with it in an altogether too leisurely fashion, would it not be wise to have an organized body to bring aggressive action to bear upon the situation, either by applying for charter or acquiring some existing charter, and, with the aid of provincial guarantees, proceeding with the enterprise?

It is unfortunate that a number of the executive officers of our several provincial Grain Growers' Associations have not recognized this movement as in the nature of an alternative or a stimulative proposition, but regard it as being in a measure a stultification of ourselves in our reiterated demands for public operation under an independent commission.

(Sgd) E. A. PARTRIDGE
Chairman of Organization Committee.
Sintaluta, Sask., Feb. 23.

TAFT STANDS PAT

Washington, D.C., February 27.—President Taft made it plain tonight that he will not be deterred from his determination to call an extra session of congress to secure action on the consideration of the Canadian reciprocity agreement by any vote which the senate may take on the question unless it is plain to him that such vote is a real test on the merits of the agreement and not merely an attempt to avoid an extra session.

Intimations were made today that the president might be kept from convening congress in an extra session if some sort of a vote could be secured, whether direct or not, tending to show the strong opposition to the measure. Efforts were being made, it was said, to secure the votes of a number of members who were in favor of reciprocity but opposed to an extra session, the intimation being that the president would be satisfied with a test vote which showed the opposition against reciprocity would not be overcome even in an extra session. The president declared emphatically tonight that nothing would satisfy him but an absolutely honest vote on the merits of the bill.

ENDORSED AT CALGARY

Calgary, Alta., February 27.—The Calgary board of trade this afternoon, after a debate of two hours, by a vote of 26 to 10, endorsed the reciprocity agreement in its entirety. Most of the speaking was in favor of the agreement. Opposition to the agreement was divided. A. E. Cross, president of the Calgary Brewing company, favored reciprocity in natural products, but opposed reduction in the tariff on manufactured goods. W. Georgeson favored any reduction in manufactured goods, but spoke guardedly upon the agreement. The question of loyalty was not urged by the opposition. A. E. Devenish, a naturalized American, who introduced the motion, said that if a poll were taken today among naturalized Americans upon the question of annexation 90 per cent. or more would oppose annexation because they were contented in Canada, were doing well, liked British institutions and the way that law was respected. The resolution was seconded by W. J. Tregillus, vice-president of the Alberta Farmers' union.

FARMERS ON RECIPROCITY

The Canadian Farm, Toronto, is conducting a postcard ballot on the reciprocity question, querying farmers all over Canada. At noon of Wednesday, February 22, 385 replies had been received. Of these 226 favored the agreement, while 159 opposed it.



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