



Farmers' delegation in front of Parliament Buildings immediately after meeting the Government on Dec. 16. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is in the second row from the front, near the middle, beside President McCuaig

The Ottawa Delegation

The Farmers of Canada for the First Time in History United on Dec. 16, and Presented their Views to Parliament. It was the Greatest Delegation ever seen at Ottawa

The famous Ottawa delegation of farmers which waited on the government and stated their demands in very plain terms on December 16, is now a matter of history. The majority of the delegates have returned to their homes in the various provinces of Eastern and Western Canada and will submit reports of the work done to the organizations which sent them to Ottawa. From the farmers' standpoint the Ottawa delegation was a great success and was regarded as such on every side. Some disappointment was expressed at the character of the reply given to the farmers by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It was felt, however, on second consideration, that the action of the government in dealing with the farmers' demands would be a great factor in strengthening the farmers' organizations throughout Canada. The farmers who visited Ottawa were greatly pleased to meet each other and to attend sessions of the House of Commons and watch their representatives at work.

On the Special Train

There was something unique in the fact that the majority of the farmers' delegates from Western Canada made the trip to Ottawa on a special train provided by the Canadian Pacific Railway. It is the first time in Canada that a special train was run to such a distance to carry a delegation of farmers. The special pulled out of the C.P.R. depot at Winnipeg at 11:30 on the night of December 12, immediately after the close of the banquet given to the delegates by the citizens of Winnipeg. The two days en route to Ottawa were full of incident and interest. There were three hundred and twenty-eight passengers on board the train, and with the exception of about fifteen ladies, these were all delegates. It was estimated that at least seventy-five delegates who had purchased tickets by the C.N.R. had been compelled to go to Ottawa via Chicago and also that a greater number had preceded the special train to Ottawa, so that the total delegation from the West would be about five hundred.

A Business Trip

Immediately after breakfast, on the first morning out of Winnipeg, business began. The executive officers from the three provinces were all in the rear car which had been specially reserved for them in order that they might hold business meetings. These meetings were conducted continuously until a few hours before the train reached Ottawa. All the various subjects to be taken up

with the government were discussed by the executive committee and the entire Western case prepared. So that the West was ready to meet the East before the train reached Ottawa.

Car Meetings

Throughout the thirteen cars of the train meetings were held all day long. The farmers of the three provinces were given a splendid opportunity to become mutually acquainted and by so doing to realize that there was no difference of opinion between the farmers of the prairie. After meals the dining cars were cleared, and as they would accommodate one hundred men, meetings were held addressed by some of the orators on board—and there were plenty of them. On Wednesday afternoon when the various resolutions to present to the government had been adopted by the executive committee they were sent forward throughout the whole train and approved of by the delegates.

The delegation greatly appreciated the splendid service provided for them by the C.P.R. on the train. Nothing was left undone to make the trip to Ottawa as comfortable and pleasant as possible, and whatever the delegates might have thought in regard to the action of the C.P.R. at other times, nothing but praise was heard of the manner in which they watched the interests of the passengers on that special train.

The Winnipeg Free Press and the C.P.R. Telegraph Co. combined to supply a special news service to the train, so that the passengers were all in close touch with the outside world during the whole trip.

A False Report

On Wednesday afternoon a rumor was circulated that the government had just closed a deal with Mackenzie & Mann by which the Hudson's Bay Railway was to be handed over to those two enterprising gentlemen. The slumbering indignation on board that train blazed into a white heat, and the tenor of the remarks made would not be soothing either to Mackenzie & Mann or the government. Fortunately the rumor was proved to be without foundation, as far as could be learned. Shortly before reaching Ottawa a telegraphic dispatch reached the train from E. C. Drury, Master of the Dominion Grange. It contained the tariff resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Dominion Grange at Toronto. It was immediately discussed by the executive committee, and it was found

that the East and the West were one.

There were newspaper men aboard the special from the time it left Winnipeg till the time it reached Ottawa, and special representatives of the Ottawa, New York and Montreal papers boarded the train east of North Bay at various points. The whole world was watching the progress of that special train from the West, and was anxious to know the feelings in the breasts of these three hundred farmers. Column after column of special dispatches and cable messages were sent out to hundreds of newspapers by the correspondents on the train. For the first time in history Canadian farmers were in the limelight of the world and the subject of discussion throughout the whole of Canada. As an advertisement nothing could be more successful than their trip to Ottawa.

One hundred miles west of Ottawa eight of the Conservative members of the House of Commons boarded the train and rode into Ottawa with the delegates.

The Farmers in Ottawa

From the time the five hundred farmer delegates from the West and the three hundred farmer delegates from the East reached Ottawa, the capital city belonged to them. A great deal of curiosity was aroused in Eastern minds as to what appearance the Westerners would present. The majority of the East still expected to see a "wild and woolly" gathering armed with all sorts of shooting irons and ready to fight at a moment's notice. They were surprised to find that the Western farmers talked, acted, thought, ate, looked and paid very much in the same manner that any other man would do. The East were sorry that there was nothing "wild and woolly" in the West. The term "sod busters" was a new one used by Easterners to describe the Westerners and seemed quite appropriate. The officers of the delegations from the East and the West stopped at the Russell House and the Windsor hotel and held their committee meetings at the Russell House. No time was lost in formalities. The farmers were there for business and realized that every minute would be needed. They met for an hour and prepared the joint tariff resolution for Canada, before the meeting of the great convention in the Grand Opera house at ten o'clock Thursday morning, December 15. The Mayor of Ottawa was present and in a three minute speech he welcomed the farmers to the National Capital. President McCuaig made a happy reply to

the mayor. The officers of the Canadian Council of Agriculture occupied seats on the stage, while the delegates filled the body of the theatre and overflowed in the gallery. Of all the vast number of delegates from the Atlantic to the Rockies there was not one man who was not in accord with the resolutions passed at the convention and presented to the government. Every farmer seemed at last thoroughly awake to the fact that he was carrying on his shoulders burdens imposed by federal legislation.

The Convention

There were present at the convention about eight hundred delegates, of whom five hundred were from Western Canada, three hundred from Ontario, seven from Quebec, two from New Brunswick and two from Nova Scotia. The utmost unanimity of feeling marked the proceedings of the great convention held in the Grand opera house on December 15. Those delegates from the West who thought that their views on the tariff might be somewhat in advance of the views held by the Eastern farmers were most agreeably surprised to find that there was the same feeling towards the tariff in the East as in the West. The tariff resolution was passed without a dissenting voice by the great convention. There were speakers from every province in favor of it, and then the meeting was thrown open in order that any persons opposing the resolution might be heard. But no person could be found in all the vast meeting who had one single word of protest against the resolution. The other resolutions were also passed unanimously. Never was the business of any convention conducted with more dispatch or in a more businesslike way. There was only one day to perform the vast amount of work on hand, and the farmers' convention at Ottawa in 1910 marked a new era in the history of Canadian affairs.

Farmers Attract Attention

During the week prior to December 16th there was practically no other subject in Ottawa which aroused more interest than the approach of the farmers' delegation from all over Canada. The Western members in the House in particular were greatly interested, and the subject was discussed in party caucuses and in private gatherings. It was realized that when the farmers were thoroughly aroused it was time for the members of the House of Commons to pay some attention to their demands. The various members of parliament who had constituents among the delegates entertained