



Mr. J. H. Bergeron on the platform at Maple Creek



Mr. R. L. Borden, Conservative Leader, at Carberry

With the band ahead and the Hon. Robert Rogers in the rear, the unassuming Leader of the Opposition marched to the town hall. Some of the rest of the band may be seen in the lower picture, playing at the hall



The Borden Special at Maple Creek

Opposition Leader and Dr. W. J. Roche, assistant chief whip of the Conservatives



Crowd gathering at the Carberry Town Hall to hear Mr. Borden, the top of whose hat may be seen just outside the door

CAPTURING THE WEST

National Problems and Political Pilgrimages

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

CAPTURING the West has become a favourite pastime of both Government and Opposition in Canada. Sir John Macdonald began to do it when his Government undertook to build the C. P. R., and to extend the efficiency of the Mounted Police. But for many years the West became almost a negligible area in politics. Votes in the West were few. Territorial members in the House of Commons were a small contingent of rather unusual men, representing a land that seemed even more vague than the Great Barrens of Great Bear Lake do now. The chief business of Western members in those days was to act as independents, to kick against the Government and to point out in drastic, if not always elegant language, that the West was being eternally neglected. In the Territories themselves there was no local politics. Members of the Legislative Assembly at Regina were neither Grit nor Tory. The political machine had not begun to be used. In fact, outside of Manitoba it was not imported as an agent until the close of the nineteenth century. Politics was largely a personal game; when one person in a member stood for an

incalculable area of territory and a mere scattering of people.

Ten years has worked more than a transformation. Politics in the West has made as much progress as farming and the price of real estate. Even before the inauguration of the new Provinces in 1905 a general election campaign in the West provided a longer period of excitement than in the East. Since the inauguration political gossip has been busy figuring when in the order of evolution the East and West centre of Canadian population will be at Winnipeg, and when the West will send to Parliament members enough to offset the rather solid block of influence represented by the Quebec members as a balance of power. There has been much angry discussion of the right of Western Provinces to control Crown lands as Ontario does; still more heated argument over the rights of Conservative Manitoba to have her boundaries extended in keeping with the size of her ambition and her importance as a Province. There has even been talk of the West furnishing Ottawa with a political leader. And there has been a vast deal of speculation as to the Americanization of the

West by the importation of United States farmers; the danger of colonization settlements which as a voting machine could be utilized and corrupted by either party in an election. Perhaps there has been more danger from the colony vote than from the continental tendency first represented by the American farmer, and accentuated by the present agitation over restricted reciprocity.

Much talk has been indulged over the probable enthusiasm of the West regarding the Empire, and some more or less vague insinuation that a great deal of that country has more practical interest in Chicago, Minneapolis, Seattle and San Francisco than in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa. Most certainly, however, the West had its opinions about Dreadnoughts and the Canadian navy, part of which is already stationed at Esquimalt. Assuredly the people of the prairie and the Pacific coast are as much interested as any other part of Canada, in reciprocity. In a general way, and for practical reasons, perhaps, the West is more favourable than the East to a measure of restricted reciprocity, outside of party politics.

But whichever way that part of the country may look on any of the great issues before Parliament or the electors, it is highly expedient that political leaders should see for themselves in the first person singular, just how the West is thinking, and as far as possible set the country right where from local influences and newspaper reports of doings in Parliament it appears to be wrong. To that end, previous to the last general election in 1908, Mr. Borden toured the West with his Halifax Platform. To the same end Sir Wilfrid Laurier made an entourage last summer when no election was immediately in prospect. Again this summer, in a tour just brought to a close, Mr. Borden has gone from end to end and top to bottom of the land beyond Kenora. He probably expected a general election on the issue of reciprocity. He has made good use of the opportunity to put himself in direct contact with all sorts and shades of people in all sorts and conditions of places. The pictures on this page give a few glimpses of the man who hopes to be Premier of Canada, as he met the people of Manitoba. Next week there will be more pictures of the Conservative leader as he appeared in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The entourage of the Opposition leader, though less spectacular than the Laurier procession last year, has been one of considerable enlightenment to both the Conservative party and the people in the West. As usual, Mr. Borden has been interesting and convincing without being dramatic.