



GRAIN-GROWERS HEAR R. L. BORDEN IN OPEN-AIR MEETING AT PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE. On the platform sat Arthur Meighen, M.P., thumbs in his vest pockets; Col. Hugh Clark, against Hon. Hugh Armstrong, Provincial Treasurer for Manitoba; W. S. Middleboro, M.P., with his arms folded; opposite side, T. W. Crothers, M.P.

WITH BORDEN IN THE WEST

Effect that the Tour may have on the Coming Election

By HUGH CLARK, M.P.P.

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN tells a good story at his own expense. He had delivered his favourite lecture on "The Prince of Peace," at a town in Georgia. After leaving there he had a letter from the gentleman with whom he stayed while in the town telling him of a farmer who drove twenty-eight miles to hear the lecture, under the misapprehension that it was on "The Price of Peas." If he had attended the meeting held by Mr. R. L. Borden in the three prairie provinces, he would not have been disappointed. If he did not hear a lecture on the price of peas, he would at any rate have heard a good deal about the price of wheat and of barley.

If it were not for these two cereals, Westerners would take but little interest in the reciprocity pact. Grain growers near the border see their neighbours across the line getting from six to ten cents more for hard wheat than the Canadian grain-grower gets. Some Canadians get the same price by driving across the line at night; so at least the story goes. Conservative orators have endeavored to show them that local conditions are solely responsible for the difference in price, that the Pillsbury mills must have one bushel of hard wheat to mix with several bushels of soft wheat to make the best grade of flour, and they pay the premium to get the hard wheat in the limited area where it is grown in Dakota. These Conservative orators have shown them that with free trade in wheat the premium will disappear when the limited market is flooded with the unlimited wheat from the native home of No. 1 Hard; that the Dakota farmer will lose and the Canadian farmer will not.

recently they have secured further corroborative testimony from no less a personage than President Taft. Andrew Broder, M.P., candidly informed them that if they must have this premium they must continue driving at night. Some grain-growers have been convinced by this reasoning; others have not. Those who drive by night would rather drive by day and take no chances.

They take the difference in the price of barley as indicating a general difference in prices favourable to the United States, although malting barley is not grown in the West, and, I am told, cannot be grown successfully. The Canadian quotation is for feed barley, and many Canadian farmers inform me that they get more than the American price for their feed barley by selling it in the form of pork. That does not appeal to the Western farmer, who does not go into mixed farming to any extent. They have a get-rich-quick business in grain-growing and it will have to play out before they think seriously of raising stock. The final stand of the supporters of the pact is being made on the wheat and barley question. They have practically abandoned all of their other positions.

Shrewd tactician as Sir Wilfrid Laurier is, he missed a glorious chance to stampede the Western provinces. If he had accepted the challenge of the Opposition and gone to the country, he would undoubtedly have swept the West. Where there is one in favour of the pact now who was opposed to it at first, there are a score against it now who at first were favourably disposed towards it. The name reciprocity is captivating. It suggests neighbourliness and mutual good-will. Besides there was a tradition in Canada that it would be a good thing for us if we could only get it. We had emerged from that condition unconsciously, but the tradition still lived. Sir Wilfrid gave the people time to see that the average market prices of most of the things we produce are higher than the average prices in the United States. He gave us time to recall that last century was the boom century of the United States and that they took good care to see that we did not get a "look in," while now they recognize that this is to be the boom century for Canada and are anxious to participate. He gave Mr. Borden a chance to make a tour of the West and win back most of the Conservatives who had been attracted by reciprocity. Many of these are members of the Grain Growers' Association, which is a strong organization in the wheat-growing provinces. They had shown some spirit last year when Sir Wilfrid Laurier toured the West and had confronted him on many occasions with reminders of his delinquencies. They asked for many things, but reciprocity was not one of them. That appears to have been an afterthought, and there are Conservatives who believe it was suggested to the great farmers' deputation which besieged the Capital in December last, and that the suggestion came from the Government after a beginning had been made on negotiations with Washington for reciprocity.

It was a shrewd stroke of political business. A trip through the West had convinced Sir Wilfrid that his Government was discredited among the farmers. They had asked for half a dozen things, none of which he felt disposed to grant. He would give them something else they had not asked for and they would forgive him his refusal of the others. He showed shrewdness in this and he would have succeeded gloriously if he had followed it up with a general election. Even yet the value of his action as a political manoeuvre is apparent, for Liberals who were in open rebellion last year have been won over. Mr. Borden may promise them all they asked of Sir Wilfrid last year. That makes no difference with them. They renew their allegiance to him because he gives them something they did not ask for then. It must be conceded that Mr. Borden won over but few Liberals by

promising them government construction and operation of the Hudson's Bay Railway, government control of terminal elevators, state aid to the chilled meat industry; the demanded amendments to the Railway Act, and legislation to allow greater freedom for co-operative trading. They take only a languid interest in these now; their affections are centred upon reciprocity, which, they think, would prove beneficial to their interests.

The Borden tour did, however, have a remarkable effect upon Conservative members of the G. G. A., who were favourable to reciprocity, and also upon an element strong in Alberta and Saskatchewan—the truly independent voter. They gave Mr. Borden his opportunity. The leaders of the G. G. A. are strong Liberals and are suspected by Conservatives of trying to use it to aid the government. Their object in having deputations meet Mr. Borden at most of his meetings may have been to embarrass him, but, if so, it did not work that way. It allowed him a chance to meet the organized farmers face to face. The memorials they presented at all other points were evidently copies of the memorials presented first at Brandon, slightly revised in some cases. Most of them contained the same misrepresentation respecting the Opposition attitude toward the Hudson's Bay Railway and Western representation in the next parliament. Mr. Borden was at his best in these interviews. He was frank in his replies to all questions. His blunt "No" to the reciprocity question gave added value to his candid "Yes" to all the other questions. Where the memorials contained misrepresentations, he lectured the men who drafted them. Many who



On Coronation Day platform when Mr. Haultain spoke. gain; that the price will come down to the export basis. They quote Hugh Guthrie, M.P., and Dr. Mulloy, M.P., in support of their contention, and



Getting a Civic Welcome from the Mayor of Lacombe.