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# FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME

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Vol XXIX.

FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 29, 1910.

No. 52

## May Yours Be a Most Happy and Prosperous New Year

### THE FARMERS ON THE QUESTION OF THE TARIFF\*

E. C. Drury, Sec. National Council of Agriculture

**Rural Depopulation Explained—The Farmers of Canada do not ask for any Tariff Favors—They appeal to the Government to Right Conditions which are Unjust to Agriculture and Injurious to our National Well-Being.**

OUR greatest national asset, both material and social, is found in the farms of our country. Our agricultural resources are our greatest national gifts, an asset that with proper management under an intelligent and prosperous farm population will increase, rather than decrease in value from year to year, forming a firm and enduring basis of national well-being. Our farm homes, with their great possibilities for good, physically, intellectually and morally, must always be a most important factor in our national life, while a sturdy, prosperous, and contented farming class must always be our best safeguard against invasion from without or decay within.

#### NOT PROSPERING AS IT SHOULD

Agriculture is not prospering in Canada as it should. It is customary in certain quarters to refer to the lack of intelligence and enterprise among the farmers themselves as the cause of this condition. This however, is not entirely in accord with the facts. No class in the country has shown itself more thrifty or industrious, more willing to take advantage of every opportunity to learn and apply improved methods, or more

ready to adapt itself to changed conditions. The simple fact must be faced that, in spite of these things, agriculture has failed to hold its own. Agricultural population has steadily decreased for the last 30 years in every province east of Manitoba, while even in the western provinces, town population has increased at a faster rate than that of the farms.

#### CAUSES OF RURAL DEPOPULATION

It is useless to point to the settling of the West as the cause of the eastern decrease. That has no doubt been contributory, but it cannot account for the greater part of the decrease. It is equally useless to suggest the use of improved machinery as a possible cause. That largely explains rural depopulation under such conditions as prevail in England where agriculture was fully developed before the introduction of labor-saving machinery and where every piece of improved machinery displaced human labor on the farms. In Canada the case is entirely different. Simultaneously with the introduction of improved machinery has come the specialization of agriculture, calling for more men in our dairy, fruit and mixed farming, even with improved machinery, than were ever required under the old conditions of grain farming. We must attribute these movements of

population, disastrous as they must prove to our national well-being, to the effect of a tariff which encourage city industries at the expense of agriculture.

The farmers of Canada do not ask for any tariff favors. We realize clearly that these can be of little value to us. Practical farmers, engaged in nearly all the varied lines of agriculture, and prominent in these lines, will give their testimony to the truth of this statement. We do, however, ask to be relieved of the burdens imposed upon us by a protective tariff which prevents foreign competition, and allows our manufacturers to raise their prices above those which would exist under free competition. That they do so raise them, in most cases to the full extent allowed by the tariff, is plain. The artificial burden thus imposed on the farmer is very considerable, and is sufficient to account for the decrease in rural population.

#### PROTECTION NO LONGER NEEDED

Protection is no longer needed to encourage infant industries. In many cases, the present tariff actually works to discourage the expansion of manufacturing industries by encouraging the formation of combines whose interest it is to keep the market understocked and which offer a far more terrible competition to a concern outside the combine, than it could possibly find under free trade conditions. Our anti-combine law is no remedy for this condition because of the difficulty, without incurring heavy expense, of gathering sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case even where we are sure a combine exists.

Our manufacturing concerns, many of them

\*The Memorial presented to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada, the Members of the Government, and the Members of the House of Commons, on the occasion of the farmers' deputation to Ottawa.



The Leaders - Members of the National Council of Agriculture of the Farmers' Deputation which waited upon the Government at Ottawa

The National Council of Agriculture, the members of which are here shown, is composed of the members of the Executive of the Dominion Grange, the Saskatchewan and the Manitoba Grain Growers' Associations, and the United Farmers of Alberta. Prominent among those who may be seen in the illustration are: 1—R. McKenzie, secretary of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association; 2—J. W. Scallion, Verden, Man. Honorary life president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association; 3—F. W. Green; 4—E. A. Partridge, both of the Grain Growers' Association of Saskatchewan; 5—D. W. McCusig, Portage la Prairie, president of the National Council of Agriculture; 6—E. C. Drury, Crown Hill, late Master of the Dominion Grange and secretary of the National Council of Agriculture; 7—Thos. McMillan, Seaforth, Ont.; 8—Jas. McEwing, M.L.A., for Wellington Co., Ont.; 9—D. W. Farmer, of the United Farmers' Association of Alberta.