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The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, November 27th, 1912

BRITAIN'S FREE TRADE VICTORY

The Western farmers will be greatly interested in the series of articles now running in The Guide, describing how the battle for free trade was fought and won in Great Britain more than sixty years ago. There are many lessons to be learned from the history of Cobden's triumph. The movement started among the people and was successful because the people rallied to his support. No help was secured from either of the political parties until the popular movement became so strong that the politicians were forced to give it attention. There is another point which needs attention, namely, that Cobden and Bright and the free traders did not beg from either party. They knew that they were right and they demanded justice. As in Canada, the two political parties in Great Britain when they realized the growth of the free trade sentiment attempted conciliation. They offered reductions in the tariff, but the free traders would have none of it. They had studied the question themselves and believed that free trade was the only remedy. For this reason they declined an alliance with either of the political parties, but carried the fight into the country where the common people rallied to their support in immense numbers. Cobden and his free traders were called "traitors," "disloyal" and nearly every other epithet that could be coined. The protectionists insisted that free trade would "ruin the Empire" and would "destroy all the industries in Great Britain." Every one of the dire prophecies which we now hear from the protectionists in Canada, were then heard from the British protectionists. But Cobden and his followers knew the cause was just and were not deterred by falsehood and vilification. The tariff wall fell after a several years' siege, and Cobden became a national hero. The downfall of protection in Great Britain should inspire the opponents of protection in Canada to greater efforts. The fact that Cobden and his followers allied themselves with neither of the parties, but carried on their fight throughout the country independently, deserves careful consideration. Many in Western Canada today believe that the only hope of success lies in the organization of an independent federal party. Up to the present time the two parties in Canada have adopted the same attitude towards the Grain Growers as was adopted by the two British parties in the early years of the Cobden fight. What lessons are there in the British struggle to guide us in Canada today? We would be glad to have our readers discuss this subject.

ALL WOULD FAVOR REFERENDUM

There is undoubtedly much difference of opinion on the naval question, both as to an emergency policy of direct contribution and a permanent policy for a Canadian navy. No matter what policy Mr. Borden may bring forward this difference of opinion will continue. On great matters of public policy there is bound to be such divergent views held. Every man in Canada has a perfect right to hold any view that his conscience dictates. But there is one point upon which all good citizens of Canada will agree, namely, that the majority opinion should prevail. This is the fundamental principle upon which our constitution is based, and it is the recognition of this principle that has developed civilized nations from the age of barbarism. The Grain Growers have declared for this principle repeatedly by endorsing the Initiative and Referendum. There will be beyond doubt a certain differ-

ence of opinion among the Grain Growers upon any naval policy that is brought forward. But every Grain Grower will be willing to abide by the result of a referendum vote. Mr. Borden could easily put the naval question to a Referendum and thus have it definitely settled. If the people of Canada declared in favor of his policy then it could be carried out without opposition. If the people of Canada declared against his policy then he could abandon it or revise it and not be compelled to resign. There are many arguments in favor of such a referendum, and none that we have seen against it.

CONFERRING WITH THE MANUFACTURERS

The proposition made by the Manufacturers' association through their official organ, Industrial Canada, to hold a conference with the Grain Growers on the subject of increasing the British Preference, is creating a great deal of interest. The Winnipeg Free Press and the Ottawa Citizen, representing both views of politics, have favored the idea as likely to bring about a clearer understanding and better feeling. There certainly is no reason why the Grain Growers should avoid such a conference. They have conducted their campaign always in the open, and their policy is known to all who read. We believe that if a dozen representatives each of the Manufacturers and the Grain Growers, held a public conference in Winnipeg upon the subject of closer trade relations with the Mother Country, that much good would come from it. The Manufacturers have already made their proposition to meet the Grain Growers. As this matter is of great public importance, we would be glad to have it discussed in the correspondence columns by our readers.

CAR SHORTAGE ACUTE

Reports coming in from all three provinces indicate that the car shortage is already acute, and that farmers are losing money thereby. The reports indicate that the Canadian Pacific Railway is doing far better than last year, though there is congestion on this line also. The chief complaint is against the Canadian Northern Railway, which is failing miserably to meet the demands of the farmers depending upon its service. Even in Manitoba farmers report that in two months they have not been able to get a car on this line, which means a loss of several cents a bushel on their wheat. Despite the rosy utterances from Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann, the Canadian Northern Railway is not fulfilling its obligations to the Western people. This line is owned by a handful of men and has been built almost entirely upon public credit. Nearly every government in Canada has guaranteed the bonds for the Canadian Northern Railway for the purpose of securing good railway facilities. But despite all the assistance given to the Canadian Northern Railway magnates, no government seems to have the slightest control over the road. Instead of spending their money for the development of the railways for the Canadian people, they have bought street railways in Winnipeg and Toronto and have invested millions upon millions in Mexico and South America. If these millions had been spent as they should have been spent there would be little or no car shortage in Western Canada today on the Canadian Northern line.

The Montreal Witness remarks in its issue of November 13: "Nobody thinks the Canadian Senate what it should be; nobody knows how to make it better, and nobody wants to

abolish it." We would like to see the question of abolishing the Senate put to a referendum in Canada, and we are willing to wager that if it were, this anachronism would disappear.

SIR EDMUND IS MISLEADING

At the Canadian Club banquet in New York on November 12 Sir Edmund Walker, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, was one of the chief speakers. The following is an extract from his address when speaking of Canada:—

"We need at the moment, in addition to our own savings, over \$200,000,000 annually for our material development, and we get it from the dear old Mother Country. Without this stream of new capital the stream of immigration would be lessened, but unless we have a widespread European war, I do not believe it will be checked, except temporarily, when the over-eager son asks too much from the indulgent mother, and thus justifies reproof."

We regard the sentiment expressed in Sir Edmund's remarks as misleading, and as likely to create a decidedly wrong impression. For instance, the Mother Country does not loan Canada one single cent. It is the individual financiers in Great Britain who loan money to Canadian governments, corporations, or individuals strictly upon a business basis. These same financiers loan money to a much greater extent in the United States. The flag makes no difference to the investment. What the financier is interested in is a stable system of government and a progressive nation in order that he may be absolutely sure that he will receive his interest regularly and that his investment is safe. In these financial dealings between British financiers and Canadian borrowers there is absolutely nothing of the relationship of parent and child. It is a business matter purely and simply and is conducted without sentiment. It is the same kind of business proposition as when Sir Edmund's bank makes loans to the Western farmers at 8 and 10 per cent. If his parent and child simile is correct then his own banking system should be as a blood brother to the Canadian people. But his banking system works on a hard, cold business basis and not on the principle of brother love.

FODDER PLENTIFUL; CATTLE SCARCE

It is unfortunate that in a season like the present one with such an abundance of rough feed throughout the country that it is not possible to bring in cattle from the south as it would provide profitable use for a great deal of fodder that will otherwise go to waste. George Lane estimates that not less than 250,000 head of stock cattle could easily be finished for beef in the Prairie Provinces if they could be brought in from the States. Thousands of stock cattle have been shipped from the southern states into the northwestern states this year to feed upon sheaves and straw and thus providing an additional source of income to the farmers in those states. It is often more profitable to feed sheaves to stock than to go to the expense of threshing and to face the risk of car shortage and other obstacles between the shipping point and the market. Many farmers in the Prairie Provinces could manufacture beef in this way at a profit if they were allowed to get their "raw material" brought into the country duty free as do the Eastern manufacturers. The tariff wall across the continent is a source of loss to both nations.