

The Brain Growers' Guide

—Winnipeg, Wednesday, December 18, 1918

Get the Farmers' Platform

The partisan who votes faithfully for his party's candidate, holding to his party allegiance with unswerving devotion—and wearing his party's tag with pride that is pathetic, if he only knew it—is unable to say what principles he is pinning his faith to. Each party, after attaining power, has failed to be true to principles which its leaders professed with much vehemence, when out of power. Each party on taking office, has continued policies which its leaders, when they were in opposition, denounced. The hidebound partisan cannot know what he stands for.

He may pride himself upon his loyalty to "the grand old party" (which is a title claimed and used by each of the "historic old parties"). But he cannot tell what his party's principles are, for his party hasn't principles. It has only the arts and practices of politics, which is played between the "ins" and the "outs," with appeals to sentiment and prejudice and passion and anything else that can be made use of. The politicians on both sides work to obscure the real problems to which the people should be giving thought.

The only existing clear-cut declaration of principles and policies for the national welfare is the Farmers' Platform, as revised and extended to meet after-the-war conditions, at the recent session of the Canadian Council of Agriculture. It is a carefully thought-out manifesto of progressive proposals, designed to secure economic and social justice. Since its first framing the Farmers' Platform has been a potent influence for betterment in the body politic.

Already not a few policies which found their first enunciation in the Farmers' Platform have been enacted into Dominion, or provincial statutes. The Farmers' Platform is destined to mean still more in the national life of Canada in the years to come. Every farmer should study it and devote his political activity to bringing its principles into operation.

The Guide will send a copy of the Farmers' Platform, in a form convenient for slipping into the pocket, to every person who will ask for it, sending with his request an ordinary envelope addressed to himself and bearing a one-cent stamp.

Carry the Farmers' Platform with you. Be able to point to the principles you stand for.

As to Refund of Duties

During the past 20 years manufacturing for export has been aided by refunding to manufacturers of 99 per cent. of the customs duty they have paid on everything they have brought into Canada and used in manufacturing for export. Now, the exports of agricultural products from this country are of greater magnitude and value than the exports of manufactured goods.

Might it not be argued, not without some show of reason, that the men engaged in agricultural industry should be placed on a footing of just equality with the manufacturers and have refunded to them 99 cents of every dollar of increase in their costs of production by reason of the tariff taxation of the things necessary in their industry, especially agricultural implements?

So long as the refunding of duties is done justly, in accordance with the principle of equal rights for all and special privilege for none, a defence may be made for it. But the

refund to manufacturers of duties they have paid does not end with duties on things that enter into the production of articles for export.

In 1906 an order-in-council was passed, which is still in operation, by which 99 per cent. of the duties on rolled iron, rolled steel and pig iron (The Customs Tariff of Canada, Item No. 1102) is refunded when such rolled iron, rolled steel and pig iron are used in the manufacture of mowing machines, reapers, harvesters, binders and attachments for binders, whether such farm machinery and implements are exported or are sold to Canadian farmers.

How would it do to apply this principle to the production by the farmers of goods for consumption in Canada? Why should not the tariff be reduced to a level of one per cent. all round, on everything?

Swindlers Seeking Victims

In the Business and Finance department of The Guide of this week there is reference again to a matter which was dealt with in the same department in last week's issue. Evidence is coming to hand that unscrupulous seekers are beginning to get active in the West at the work of deluding unwary holders of Victory Bonds and to turning them over in part or whole payment, by way of "investing" in fraudulent oil or other promotions, promising large returns—or failing that, these swindlers endeavor to buy the Victory Bonds at a price less than their actual value, using misrepresentations to accomplish their purpose.

Any holder of Victory Bonds who finds himself forced by an emergency to part with so desirable a security, should communicate with an established bond dealer. Victory Bonds are worth from 99 to 100, together with accrued interest; and there is reason to count on their value increasing in time.

Profits and Publicity

With reference to the immense profits of the milling corporations which are now the subject of general discussion, it is to be noted that these profits come to public knowledge only because the shares of the corporations in question are listed on the stock exchanges. All companies whose shares are bought and sold on those public markets for such securities are required to publish annually, statements setting forth a full and complete showing of their business.

There are many manufacturing, mercantile and other companies whose shares are not listed on the stock exchanges. They are close corporations. They make no disclosures of their business to the public. Some of them are large beneficiaries of the protective tariff. Their profits are unknown to anybody outside the magic circle of the shareholders and their chief officials.

One of the publicity planks in the Farmers' Platform demands that all corporations engaged in the manufacture of products protected by the customs tariff be obliged to publish annually comprehensive and accurate statements of their earnings. Another plank in the Farmers' Platform demands that in levying and collecting the business profits' tax insist that it be absolutely upon the basis of the actual cash invested in the business, with no consideration for watered stock.

When this letting in of daylight becomes an accomplished fact, it will prove itself of very great value in hastening the coming of economic justice in this country.

Blackguarding the Farmer

The Farmers' Platform has reached the office of the Financial Times, of Montreal, the unofficial organ of the big financial interests of the East. Here is what the proprietor of the Financial Times has to say about the farmers of Canada in an article entitled, "Still He Wants More."

The farmer's political platform embraces everything but grace before meals. As usual, each plank of his platform contains the grilling remains of a section of business enterprise not engaged in agricultural operations. The farmer has put over 75 per cent. of the world's war profits into his jeans—pardon, into the pockets of his dress pants; he spends his winters abroad; he lets the other fellows pay the war taxes, pensions, Red Cross and Patriotic Funds, etc., etc; he enjoys a guaranteed minimum for his wheat; treats his farm hands in a way which would not be tolerated in commercial or industrial circles; wants government ownership of railways so that the tax-payer will provide lower freight rates for crop moving; wants everything he consumes, internally and externally, put on the free list; wants soldiers settled on the lands "with the aid," as he specifically states, "of public funds," and a whole lot of other things too numerous to mention.

The farmer is the most prosperous individual on the face of the Dominion. He was prosperous before the war, if we ignore his wild gamble in "central" real estate, but today his prosperity, his well-being, stands head and shoulders above that of any other industry in the whole list of Canadian enterprise. The huge profits derived directly through Europe's war has put the farmer in exceptionally happy circumstances, from an operating point of view. He has been enabled to pay off his original machinery debts, also to purchase new machinery; he has been enabled to extend the quantity of land under cultivation, sometimes to the extent of two or three-fold; he has a lot of money in the bank, and a few Victory Bonds—in fact he has everything needed to make him the most contented individual in Canada, with the added assurance of another two year's highly favorable market conditions.

But he is not satisfied. Successful as he undoubtedly has been and as he undoubtedly will continue to be, he still wants more—he wants the other 25 per cent. of the world's goods which slipped by him when orders were placed for munitions. The farmer will get little sympathy from the other members of this national community. If circumstances were adverse to the farmer's interests, one could appreciate the endeavors towards "reform." The farmer merely exposes himself to a charge of being money-mad—his political platform being devised essentially with the object (so he declares) of still further adding to the distended condition of his pocket book. When the farmer's condition is not a happy one; when it is not fortified by large cash equities, it will be time enough to try and disturb the economic safeguard of a nation that has just begun to find itself capable of producing the finished article from a great reservoir of raw material, and thus give employment to our present population and perhaps absorb millions of newcomers from abroad. Canada cannot live by farming alone, but she can grow to be a great nation if industrial possibilities are cultivated alongside the natural development of the farm areas.

For falsehood, misrepresentation and sheer nerve this Financial writer takes first place. His is the true Prussian attitude which is held by many—but fortunately not all—financial and industrial captains east of the Great Lakes. And then they have the hypocrisy to regret that the East and the West does not get closer together! What chance is there of getting together with men with minds of that type? The Montreal Dictator shows absolute ignorance of farming conditions. He lives in the midst of the war profiteers who have amassed millions out of the blood of their country, yet accuses those who never yet enjoyed a special privilege.

In his ignorance, he does not know that the price of wheat was fixed to keep it down instead of to keep it up. Had the price not