

The Grain Growers' Guide

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THE CRUCIAL TEST

The Western farmers are to be congratulated upon the manner in which they have conducted themselves at the various meetings where they have met R. L. Borden during the past three weeks. All over the Prairie Provinces they have stood by the Ottawa Platform, and have talked to Mr. Borden in the same businesslike way they presented their case to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. They have shown conclusively that they are not Grits nor Tories, but MEN who have the welfare of the country at heart. Of course, it must be realized that there are still men in the West who will vote Liberal or Conservative, no matter what might be the issue before the country. But fortunately, such men are growing more rare every day. The great educational work that has been carried on is continually convincing men of the uselessness of partizanship as a means of improving national conditions. It is a cause for gratification that the farmers have forced every one of their demands so far to the front that they are being seriously considered by both political parties. If the Western people had no votes the politicians would never so much as listen to them. It is votes that count. Now, if the Western people decide to use their votes for the good of their country they will be able to secure redress sooner or later. For the past fifteen years the people of Canada have voted at each general election, but it will be a wise man who can decide just what he has voted for. Of course he voted for a party, but would he not be as far ahead if he had not voted at all? The handful of men who control the two parties have succeeded in inducing the people to vote against themselves. They are endeavoring to do the same thing now, and if they are again successful they will be able to disregard the wishes of the people as of old. Former Liberals are now awake to the fact that the Liberal party is not protecting the people of Canada, and the Conservatives realize that the Conservative party is looking chiefly for power. The manner in which these farmers took their stand before the leaders of their parties during the past two years has been the wonder of the civilized world. Just now the world is looking on and wondering what the Western people will do when neither party is prepared to grant them their demands. Now is the crucial test. Are the Western people going to lie down and submit like children to the imposition of politicians or are they going to assert their rights? If the present members from the West are returned at the next election is there the slightest reason to doubt that they will do just exactly what they have done in the past—vote as their leaders tell them. There are plenty of men in the West who are nominally members of the Conservative or Liberal parties, who are just as able and intelligent as any member of the house of commons, and who have the courage to place principle above party. Why would it not be better to nominate such men in every constituency on each side, and then no matter which was elected the farmers would have a supporter of their Bill of Rights? We need in the West not hidebound party supporters, but Progressives. It is time wasted to elect men to represent a party when they should be representing a people. If the people of every Western constituency who favor the farmers' Bill of Rights will elect men pledged to fight for that platform it will be the most salutary rebuke ever delivered to the politicians of any country, and it will also indicate to

Special Privilege that their star is on the wane. If such men are nominated they will not have their campaign expenses paid by the party machine out of funds donated by the "interests," so it will be necessary for the people to provide the legitimate sinews of war. If the election is held before redistribution there will be only twenty-seven members from the Prairie Provinces, but after redistribution there will be more than forty members. A solid West would secure a great deal of support and sympathy from the East and would force the political parties to grant redress. The railway corporations, the financiers and the big moneyed interests are now smiling, and at the same time filled with apprehension, as to what action the Western people are going to take. They realize that so long as the people are willing to endorse either of the old parties that they are safe, but that if they send down to Ottawa Insurgents or Progressives then Special Privilege will not be able to plunder the people as in the past. What will the future be? It all depends whether the people love party more than they love justice.

RECIPROCITY AND WHEAT

Strenuous efforts are being made by the opponents of reciprocity to convince the Western farmers that free trade in natural products between Canada and the United States will not result in any advantage to the farmer, but on the contrary, will have the effect of flooding the Canadian markets with products of the United States farms. To substantiate this opposition, columns of figures are produced in an attempt to prove that all grains, animals, and farm produce sell higher in Canada than they do in the United States. Opponents of reciprocity in the United States, on the other hand, hold up to the American farmer the doleful prospect that it is not possible for them to compete on even terms with the product of the cheap and fertile lands of Western Canada. It is almost needless to point out that it is the privileged classes in both the United States and in Canada who are raising this cry against freedom of trade and the significance of it is not that they are opposed to freedom of trade, but that they think the Canadian and American farmers are so simple-minded that they can be induced to believe that trading with one another is going to result in ruin to both. In other words, that this is a case where trading will ruin both sides to the deal. In the matter of wheat the argument is being made that the average price of wheat in the United States is less than the average price in Canada. The weakness of this argument is that it takes the average price of wheat in the United States, regardless of its character or distance from the market in which it is consumed. It is manifestly unfair to say because the price of Kansas, Nebraska and Texas wheat is less than the price of Dakota and Manitoba wheat that Manitoba wheat will not secure a higher price if admitted free of duty in the United States, and that permitting United States millers to compete with the millers of Eastern Canada, Britain and Europe for our hard wheat, which they require for milling purposes, will not result in any advantage to the Canadian growers. There is another feature that seems to be lost sight of by the opponents of reciprocity, and that is the difference of grades. It is well known in the West that the Manitoba grades of wheat are at least one grade higher than Minneapolis hard wheat, and that certain types of our wheat which our inspectors put into the

3 Nor. grade will grade 1 Nor. in Minneapolis. In addition to that our inspectors are so much more severe on our off grades than the Minneapolis inspectors that that of itself would justify our people's support of the reciprocity agreement. The system of a sample market in Minneapolis, which has proven so valuable to the Grain Growers, and which the dealers and transportation companies in Winnipeg have so strenuously opposed, will be favored by those distribution and transportation companies in order to prevent diverting of the trade to the United States channels, and will be established in Winnipeg, which will be a very material benefit to the Canadian Grain Growers. Another argument that is being made is because the United States produces a surplus and exports wheat as well as Canada that the price paid for wheat for home consumption will be based on the export value. That argument might apply if the United States exported grain of the same intrinsic value as Manitoba wheat. The fact is that they only grow a limited quantity of hard wheat, and that the production of hard wheat has practically reached its limit, while the requirements of millers for that class of wheat is yearly becoming greater. The United States has ceased to be an exporter of hard spring wheat, their exports of wheat being confined to Durums and softer wheats of the southern states and the Pacific coast. For the year ending June 30, 1910, the United States exported 46,679,876 bushels of wheat, of which 10,500,000 bushels were from the Pacific coast, over 6,000,000 bushels from the Mexican border and Gulf Coast district, and less than 10,000,000 from the northern border districts, much of which was Durum wheat. Here is where the advantage of free access to the Canadian producer of hard wheat comes in. American millers will always be customers for hard spring wheat to blend with their softer wheats, and will always be prepared to pay a high price and come into competition with millers of other countries for its purchase. This will maintain the spring wheat of the Northwest relatively higher than any other class of wheat. Ontario produces a high grade of winter wheat, and each year has a surplus for export, yet Ontario millers are very heavy purchasers of Manitoba wheat and pay a very much higher price for it than for their own product. Toronto market reports indicate that Ontario millers are paying about 76 cents at their mills to the Ontario farmer for his wheat, it being quoted at 80 cents in Toronto. At the same time the Ontario miller pays \$1 per bushel for Manitoba 1 Nor. at Bay ports, and it costs him 5 cents per bushel extra for freight to his mills. That is to say he gets the Ontario wheat at 76 cents and pays \$1.05 for Manitoba at his mills. At the same time there are shipments being made for export of Ontario grown wheat. Just as Ontario people export their own wheat and buy Manitoba at largely advanced prices, so will United States export their low grade wheat and soft wheat and buy Manitoba at advanced prices if freedom of trade is established between the two countries. What applies to Ontario applies with equal force to the British and European markets. The supply of hard spring wheat is limited, and there is an increasing demand for it for blending purposes in every country where high grade flour is used. The British millers usually pay from 8 to 15 cents per bushel more for Man. 1 Nor. than for Kansas, Argentine, India or Pacific Coast wheats. What is needed to maintain the demand for Manitoba wheats at the high price that is now being paid for it by millers is freedom of trade with all countries that produce a high