

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 17th, 1911

## GOVERNMENT PLAYING WITH WEST

Last week we mentioned briefly that the Dominion government had provided \$2,000,000 in the supplementary estimates for the "immediate construction" of the Hudson's Bay Railway. At the same time the government announced a guarantee of bonds to the extent of \$35,000,000 for the Canadian Northern Railway from Port Arthur to Montreal. This new line will be 1,000 miles in length. Thus \$35,000,000 out of the people's treasury is to be handed over to Mackenzie & Mann, and there is not even a suggestion that the government will have any control whatever over the freight rates on this new line. There is no need for the Port Arthur-Montreal line at the present time, and no person is clamoring for it except the two knights who will profit thereby. The road can no doubt be built for about \$20,000,000, which will leave Mackenzie & Mann \$15,000,000 to invest in their Mexican, South American or other foreign enterprises. These enterprising gentlemen have been endeavoring to secure assistance from the Ontario government, but were not promised enough to suit them, so they returned to Ottawa with the above results. Mackenzie & Mann have no party politics. One government is the same as another to them, so long as they can get the money. The Dominion government was very willing to hand out this \$35,000,000 to these two gentlemen, and it is doubtful if we shall hear any objection raised by the Opposition in the House of Commons. The political parties are careful not to offend the railways when an election is near. Now let us look at the Hudson's Bay Railway. Mackenzie & Mann have been trying for years to get a huge sum of money out of the government to build this railway. Had it not been for the strenuous opposition of the Western people, there is every reason to believe that Mackenzie & Mann would be building the Hudson's Bay road today. Had they done so the road would have been no good to the Western people because there would have been no competition in rates. In the House of Commons on March 10 Hon. George P. Graham announced that it would cost about \$30,000,000 to build the road to the Bay. Three years ago on the eve of the general elections the Dominion government pledged the "immediate construction" of the Hudson's Bay road. So far they have done practically nothing except investigate. Today they are voting \$2,000,000. Last week we said it would take twelve years at this rate to complete the work, but going at the rate of progress during the past three years it will take at least thirty years. Can anything be plainer than that the Dominion government has deliberately betrayed the Western people in this matter? The surveys have been made and all necessary information is at hand. The entire road could be built and in operation in four years if the government were in earnest. The Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in five years. One million people in the Prairie Provinces want to see the road completed as rapidly as possible and operated by the government in order that the freight rates may be reasonable. The government has been forced by public opinion in the West to undertake the construction, but it is going ahead just as slowly as is possible and will make no guarantee that the road will be operated for the benefit of the people. Now in view of this public knowledge is it not reasonable to assume that the government intends to hand the Hudson's Bay Railway over to Mackenzie &

Mann just as soon as they consider it is safe to do so? The vote of \$2,000,000 is a farce. This same government has given in the past few years over \$7,000,000 to one steel plant down in Sidney, N.S., for the benefit of no single individual except a few promoters. Steamship subsidies, bounties and tariff protection are handed out with a lavish hand where it is to benefit a handful of wealthy people. But when it comes to meeting the needs, the urgent needs, of 1,000,000 people in the Prairie Provinces, the government hands out a niggardly \$2,000,000. This is a distinct betrayal. If the government were sincere it would have asked parliament to vote at least \$10,000,000 for the work in hand. The Hudson's Bay Railway is needed at once and construction should begin at both ends of the line. There are only 480 miles yet to be built. Mr. R. L. Borden, the leader of the Opposition, has been very active in opposing the reciprocity agreement because he says it is not in the best interests of the people of Canada. Speaking in the House of Commons on February 9 in regard to the Hudson's Bay Railway, Mr. Borden said:

"In justice to this road it ought to be proceeded with without any delay. Further than that, I think the government ought to have regard to the wishes of the West as to the operation of that road. It should not be placed under the absolute and sole control of any one transportation line, but it ought to be operated by means of a commission, so as to give to every one of the great railways of the West equal rights over it, and to give to the people of this country complete control of rates. If the government are prepared to deal with the construction of the Hudson's Bay Railway along these lines, they will find the members on this side of the House prepared to give their proposals a warm support."

Now, if Mr. Borden and his party desire the people of the Prairie Provinces to believe that they are interested in the welfare of the Western people here is an opportunity to show it. Let Mr. Borden rally his forces and "fight to the finish" the Hudson's Bay Railway question for the benefit of the people. If the Western people do not wish to see the last possible hope of relief from railway oppression slip from their grasp they must take action now. Are they satisfied to have the Hudson's Bay Railway built in thirty years or do they want it in four years. If the Hudson's Bay Railway is to be saved for the people of the West they must make it so understood at Ottawa. Hon. George P. Graham is minister of railways. He should get a letter from every man in the West telling him what they think about the \$2,000,000 vote.

## MR. BORDEN'S WESTERN TOUR

Mr. R. L. Borden, M.P., the leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, has arranged to tour the West by special train during June and July while parliament is adjourned. He has arranged to speak at the following places in Manitoba: Winnipeg, Carberry, Brandon, Birtle, Minnedosa, Grandview, Dauphin and Portage la Prairie; in Saskatchewan at Weyburn, Moose Jaw, Indian Head, Regina, Maple Creek, North Battleford, South Battleford, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Rosthern and Yorkton; in Alberta at Medicine Hat, Macleod, Lethbridge, High River, Calgary, Lacombe, Red Deer, Wetaskiwin, Edmonton, Vegreville and Lloydminster. Mr. Borden on this tour will appeal to the people of the West to support him for the premiership of Canada at the next general election. Sir Wilfrid Laurier did the same thing last summer. Sir Wilfrid painted the glories of the Liberal party, and Mr. Borden will no doubt extol the virtues

of the Conservative party. Sir Wilfrid was met wherever he stopped by representative delegations of the Western people and was informed of the views of the Western people. That was perfectly right and proper. Mr. Borden is now asking that the people of Canada elect him to the highest place of honor and power in the gift of the nation. He is coming West to tell the people why it will be to their benefit to give this power into his hands. Experience with past governments in Canada, and particularly during the past fifteen years, has convinced the people of Canada that no government will protect the interests of the people unless the people are fully alive to their own needs. If the people do not know what they want and what they need, then it is hopeless to expect political parties to take much interest in such things. Sir Wilfrid Laurier today is fully aware of the wishes of the people of Western Canada. The people told him last summer more plainly than any statesman was ever told by any people. Some of these demands Sir Wilfrid has met, but others he has ignored. The Western people should ascertain from Mr. Borden at first hand just what he proposes to do in regard to these important matters in the event of his becoming premier of Canada at the next election, which may be held at any time during the next twelve months. The British North America Act, which is Canada's constitution, provides that the voice of the people shall prevail in government. No one man, nor set of men, is entitled to state what the people of Canada shall or shall not do. Heretofore this has been the custom, but this practice should be terminated at once and for all time. Mr. Borden is coming to meet the Western people on their own ground, and to tell them what he considers the best for Canada. Now, the people in turn should tell Mr. Borden what they consider to be best for the country. If Mr. Borden and Sir Wilfrid know better than the people of this country what is needed to make conditions right and the voice of the people is not to be considered, then Canada is not a democracy. The people of the West should tell Mr. Borden what legislation they need and what they expect at the hands of a leader or a party that hopes to secure their support for the treasury benches. If neither the Conservative nor the Liberal party will protect the interests of the Western people, then it will be for the Western people to elect men to office who will afford them some protection from the rapacity of Special Privilege. As leader of the Conservative party Mr. Borden practically dictates the policy of that party, and once he becomes premier he will be as Sir Wilfrid Laurier is now, practically absolute ruler of Canada. Last summer the Western people presented a number of specific demands to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Today they know how far the Liberal party, led by Sir Wilfrid, is prepared to go in those matters. Mr. Borden should be asked to give specific statements as to the exact legislative program he is prepared to bring before parliament if he is elected to power. If the farmers of the West are true to themselves they will act in a business-like manner without party prejudice and will have a clear understanding with Mr. Borden upon these matters.

**TARIFF.** The Western people have repeatedly declared for lower tariff and greater freedom of trade immediately. No protective tariff is of any benefit to Western Canada. The government is only prepared to go as far as the reciprocity agreement. The Opposition has opposed the agreement.