

Picnic at Shoal Lake

Grain Growers from far and near gathered at Shoal Lake on Wednesday, July 5, the day of the annual Grain Growers' picnic. This event, held in the fair grounds, in the midst of picturesque scenery, on the shores of the beautiful lake from which the town takes its name, was sufficient to attract a large attendance of farmers and their wives and families, but additional interest was lent on this occasion by the fact that Mr. R. L. Borden, leader of the Conservative party, was the guest of the association at the picnic. The weather was perfect, and the picnic a complete success.

Prior to the arrival of Mr. Borden and his party, a meeting was held in the main fair building, between three and four hundred being present. The chair was taken by Mr. Frank Simpson, president of the Shoal Lake association, and addresses were delivered by Messrs. D. W. McCuaig and R. C. Henders, after which memorials setting forth the views of the Grain Growers on reciprocity and other public questions of the day were presented to Mr. Borden.

Mr. McCuaig Speaks

D. W. McCuaig, formerly president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' association, and now chairman of the Manitoba Government Elevator commission, was first introduced, and was given a cordial reception. Mr. McCuaig spoke of the provincial elevator system, urging upon the farmers to give it their support, and saying they had the failure or the success of the system in their own hands. Last year, owing to the poor crop in Southern Manitoba, the eleva-

tors lost money in that portion of the province, but the commission felt it was only just to those farmers who did have a little grain, that the elevators should be kept open. This year with the prospect of a good crop, it was hoped that last year's losses would be made up, and he appealed to the Grain Growers to regard the provincial elevators as their own elevators, and to give them their support.

President on Reciprocity

R. C. Henders, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' association, delivered an address on reciprocity and the agricultural implement duties. Reciprocity, he said, was not a new question with the Grain Growers of the West. For four years they were on record in favor of reciprocity. For six or seven years at least the thinking men of the Grain Growers of the three Western provinces had been giving careful study and thought to economic questions, and especially their thought had been turned towards the government ownership of public utilities and towards questions of trade and transportation as they affected the producers and from the producers' standpoint. What they would say that afternoon was not, therefore, a snatch verdict, secured on a passing wave of enthusiasm. They were men who had given years of thought to these questions, and when they made a pronouncement upon them through a unanimous vote they claimed that they were taking an intelligent stand. Four years ago in the City of Brandon, the question of reciprocity from the Grain Growers' standpoint was before the convention, and it had been discussed and pronounced upon favorably at every convention since. They claimed that reciprocity would be to the advantage of the farming community. One advantage was that it would open a market to them which was in the near future destined to be the most profitable and valuable in the world, a market that the Canadian farmer was already supplying with a considerable amount of grain, and that would need more as the years went by. Mr. Henders presented figures showing that on the same day the same grade of wheat brought from 10 to 14 cents a bushel more at border towns in the United States than in towns immediately across the line in Canada, and said the same conditions applied to barley, except that in barley the difference in favor of the American side was greater. In May last, he saw No. 3 barley sold at Regina for 53 cents a bushel, and a few hours later, at Neche, N.D., half an hour's walk away, he saw the very same quality of barley selling for 83 cents. Last fall there was very little market for barley in Canada, and the Grain Growers Grain Company came to the rescue of those with barley to sell by buying up a large quantity and shipping it down to the lakes, where they stored it through the winter in a boat. In the spring they sold it in Buffalo to maltsters for \$1.05 a bushel, and thereby disproved the statement which was so often made that Manitoba could not produce malting barley. The fact was they could not get the price for malting barley, and consequently often used only the poorest land to grow barley and only produced feed. These, he said, were some of the facts which had led the Grain Growers to ask for reciprocity.

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"Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread"

and certain competitors from outside, with little or no experience in Hail Insurance business, having no knowledge whatever of conditions in Western Canada, undertake to point out the weaknesses of our system and extol the merits of what they have to offer. They may win a place after a while if they make good, but in the meantime the majority of those who give thought to these matters will decide that what has been tried and proved to be all right is what they want.

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It was with these facts and figures before them, Mr. Henders said, that the Grain Growers had been led in their conventions for the past four years to ask for freer trade relations with the United States. Having come to this conclusion, the farmers had organized a delegation and had gone to Ottawa to lay their case before the powers that be, and they did so with the hope that they would be granted

So far as he knew there was no record of a single word of opposition offered by any of the Western members of either party up to that time. Their surprise could therefore be imagined when, after a short time, a different spirit was displayed, and the men who had been patting them on the back turned against them. This, he claimed, was an insult to the intelligence of the men who had gone to Ottawa, and to the men who had sent them there. No reason had been given yet for this change of mind on the part of the Western members of parliament. One man said reciprocity would divert trade to the south, and before he got through he said there was no market in the south, and prices were not as good there as here. One could go through the whole list of the arguments against reciprocity, and find that there was nothing substantial in them. Then it was said the government had no mandate from the people, but if ever there was a question on which there had been a pronouncement by the people it was reciprocity. There were the resolutions of the Grain Growers' associations for years past, the resolutions of all the boards of trade in this country except perhaps two, there was the farmers' delegation to Ottawa, a representative delegation from the whole Dominion practically, backed up by thousands of resolutions from the Grain Growers' organizations from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains. The unfortunate thing was that reciprocity had gone from where it belonged, and had been thrust into party politics.

Memorials on lines similar to those presented at other points were then read to Mr. Borden, who had arrived while Mr. Henders was speaking. The memorial in favor of reciprocity was presented by R. M. Cherry, of Birtle, on the British preference by C. Burdette, of Fox-

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