

DIRECT LEGISLATION CAMPAIGN

It will be most gratifying to the friends of Direct Legislation to know that arrangements have been completed for a campaign that will cover the entire province of Manitoba during the next four months. The Manitoba Federation for Direct Legislation has been organized and is supported by the Grain Growers' Association, the Trades and Labor Council, the Manitoba League for the Taxation of Land Values and by the Royal Templars of Temperance. Practically every popular organization in Manitoba that has the interest of the people at heart and is working for the principles of democracy is behind this movement for Direct Legislation. As an organizer the Federation has secured Frank E. Coulter, from Oregon. Our readers will all be familiar with the wonderful progress that has been made in Oregon since the people of that state have been rulers instead of being ruled. The same condition of affairs is what we want to see today in the West. Direct Legislation will give the people complete control over all legislation that is enacted, and will consequently arm them in their struggle for justice from the federal authorities. It is singularly fortunate at this time that Premier Roblin has given public expression of approval of the principles of the Initiative and Referendum. It is evident that Mr. Roblin has seen the progress that has been made in other countries where the Initiative and Referendum are in use. With the first minister of the province in favor of Direct Legislation it will only be necessary to secure a strong public opinion to support him in order to have Direct Legislation placed upon the Statute Books of Manitoba. When this reform has been accomplished in Manitoba it will follow very quickly in the other Prairie Provinces. Direct Legislation will prove to be the instrument by which Equity and not Privilege will rule in Canada.

TERMINAL ELEVATOR SITUATION

One of the matters which the farmers took up with the Dominion Government will be dealt with during the present session of Parliament. Sir Richard Cartwright is preparing the bill dealing with the terminal elevators. According to reports sent out from Ottawa the new legislation will provide a commission to have control over the terminal elevators but will not affect the present ownership and will but slightly affect the present operation of the elevators. The government does not wish to take over the terminal elevators and operate them as a public utility, simply because the government, or some members of the government, are opposed to the principle of public ownership. Just how much benefit can be secured by having a commission instead of the present system for controlling elevators is difficult to say. Government inspectors and officials have been very plentiful around the terminal elevators during the past two years, but they were powerless to prevent the graft on the part of the operators. The farmers of the West, the millers of the East, and the grain exporters of both the East and the West have no confidence in the present owners and the present system of operation of the terminal elevators. The reputation of Canada, insofar as the quality of Canadian grain is concerned, is in the hands of the operators of the terminal elevators. These operators, or some of them, have been proven to be criminals and have been fined for taking toll out of the farmers' grain. The government proposes to restore the feeling of confidence in the operators of the terminal elevators by changing the system of control, but not by exercising any more control. Those who deal with the terminal elevators will never believe that the elevators are honestly operated so long as they are in private hands.

If the Dominion Government sincerely wishes to protect the interests of the Western farmers and to inspire them with confidence in the laws that are passed by the Dominion Parliament, then it must be done through government ownership and operation of the terminal elevators. It is evident that the bill to change the system of control will be passed at this present session unless public opinion is strong enough to induce the government to take over the terminal elevators and operate them. The Dominion Millers' Association is working for the same end in Eastern Canada. A very wise move for the Western farmers would be to write letters to their Member of Parliament at Ottawa and also to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Every farmer in the West who is interested in the grain trade could not do better than write a letter to his representative in the Ottawa Parliament, and another to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Now is the time to send those letters, because the members will be returning to Ottawa in the course of a week. These letters should point out very clearly what the farmers think about the terminal elevator question and should call upon the Premier and the Members of Parliament to remedy the situation in a practical way.

OUR WESTERN MEMBERS

Some of the Western members of the House of Commons have objected to the criticisms which we have made of the political situation. Some of these members consider that our statements have been unfair to them. We have condemned the system by which the leaders of both political parties "stand pat" and hold out no hope of improving the conditions of the common people. The members of the West are all party men and stand behind their parties. We have good reason to believe that there are members of both parties from the West who have talked very plainly in their party caucuses at Ottawa. The next best thing for them to do is to make their statements publicly. There is no move that would secure more general approval on the part of the Western farmers and the Western people than to see the Western members revolt against the present political methods. No Western members can advocate high protection and still represent the interests of the West. We believe that at heart a great many of the Western members are low tariff men or free traders. But in order to help the struggling masses in the West the Western members will find that their fights in caucus will not accomplish very much. A revolt in caucus is merely an incident, but open rebellion is feared by all political leaders. The Western members represent the Liberal party and the Conservative party. At least they go under these two names. But if the Western members can understand what difference there is between the two parties, they are the only people who do understand it. If our members at Ottawa who represent these Prairie Provinces will quit the foolishness of partisanship and stand out like men, they will get the most hearty support of all the Western people, and the West will get a square deal at the hands of the Dominion Parliament, which it has not had for the past thirty years.

Rumor is persistent that there will be a general Dominion election before the end of 1911. The way is being paved for it now by both political parties, but we hardly think that the politicians will so far forget the interests of the people as to call on an election in 1911. Such an action would be tantamount to the disfranchisement of several hundred thousand voters of Western Canada. The census of Canada will be taken next June and the Western provinces will be entitled to probably twenty new members. Such an addition as this in the voting

power of Western Canada will have considerable influence in the House of Commons. An election in 1911 will not be a square deal to Western Canada.

ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE

Never before have the farmers had such an incentive to organize their forces as they have today. The forces arrayed against them are sleepless in their determination to maintain all their special privileges. The farmers can only get their rights in one way, namely, by organizing and educating themselves so that they will be able to take a full share in legislative work: Not only must there be numbers in the organization, but the central offices in each province must be more highly organized than at the present time. More money will be needed, but money is the easiest thing to get if it can be shown that its use will secure redress for the farmers. There should be an immense addition to the ranks of the organized farmers during the next three months. The farmers do not need to spend money to corrupt legislatures and parliaments. All the farmers need to do is to use their votes intelligently and unitedly and then they will wield the power. The forces arrayed against them have only money. They have very few votes.

Over in Great Britain there is a government that believes in free trade and in the rule of the people, and does not believe in the rule of special privilege. The government has had the moral courage to take its life in its hands twice within one year and appeal to the people. It has gone out and preached the truth to the people and has been sustained on each occasion. We have a government here in Canada that, according to its own word, is thoroughly convinced of the benefit of free trade and of democracy. Would our Canadian government dare follow the example of Great Britain and stand or fall by the principle which it claims to believe in, but which it fails to practise?

Nothing has stirred up the politicians so much during the last few years as has the demonstration which the organized farmers made at Ottawa on December 16. This is due, not so much to the fact that the Western provinces have a representation of twenty-seven seats but to the fact that ten years from today they will have one hundred seats or more.

The Toronto Globe explains that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is opposed to public ownership and operation of public utilities because he is of the great British Liberal school of which Gladstone and Bright were the great leaders. This may be so, but Sir Wilfrid was a mighty poor pupil if he hasn't learned the free trade doctrine of that school any better than he practises it in Canada.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier seemed to make a great deal out of F. W. Green's statement that the 30,000 organized farmers in the West represented \$300,000,000 of wealth. Mr. Green should have qualified his statement by adding that the loan companies and mortgage companies owned about three-quarters of this amount. Sir Wilfrid would not then have discussed the matter.

Don't forget to write to your member at Ottawa and also to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and tell them both that government ownership and operation of the terminal elevators is the only thing that will put an end to the graft that has been practiced upon them.

It cost about \$100,000 to send the big delegation to Ottawa, but the farmers will spend that and more, if need be, to show our legislators that the time has come for a change.