

the chosen leader in the House of Commons of an independent group of members, known for a time as "cross-benchers," and subsequently as the National Progressive Party. At the annual conventions of the different provincial associations, held between the month of December, 1920, and February, 1921, Mr. Crerar was unanimously endorsed as political leader in the federal field of the organized farmers' movement.

A word should be said as to the intent of the organized farmers in connection with their platform. In the first place, the opinion has been strongly held by the leaders of the farmers' movement for years that Canada's basic industry, agriculture, has not been justly dealt with in the federal legislation of this country during the past four decades. In 1916, when the first Farmers' Platform was drafted, it was designed with that conviction. It was designed also in the belief that such a policy as that advocated by the Canadian Council of Agriculture would place the country on an economic, political and social basis that would be in the interest not only of farmers, but of the citizens of Canada generally. The members of the Canadian Council of Agriculture realized then, as they do now, that the wage-earners, artisans, professional men and tradespeople are affected equally with the agricultural classes by the fiscal system which prevails in Canada, and they are just as much involved as the farmer in economic and social reforms. Because the organized farmers have initiated and promoted a federal programme of reform which they believe will benefit the Dominion as a whole, they have been accused of endeavoring to create class conflict, and to gain selfish ends through class legislation. Such a charge is entirely wrong and unjust, as the most cursory glance at the text of the Farmers' Platform will prove.