

The Grain Growers' Guide

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THEY HAVE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

In the House of Commons four Western members have not yet indicated their attitude on the reciprocity agreement, namely, Dr. Roche (Marquette), Dr. Schaffner (Souris), John Herron (MacLeod), and M. S. McCarthy (Calgary). It is to be hoped that they will support the agreement in the interests of their constituents and will then join the farmers in their demands for free implements and an increase in the British Preference to 50 per cent. at the present session. If they will follow the lead of Mr. Haultain they will be placing the welfare of the West above possible party advantage. The Western farmers are looking for men who will support them in their fight for justice. If these four men will stand by the farmers they will find the farmers will stand by them. If the West becomes divided against itself, progress will be retarded. These men stand with the farmers for government operation of the terminals and for the inauguration of a chilled meat industry. Their help will be needed to secure government operation of the Hudson's Bay Railway. Let us hope they will not weaken their power to aid the farmers by voting against reciprocity. They are undoubtedly in a hard position, but a man is always safe to place principle before party. A vote in favor of the reciprocity agreement does not approve of any other single plank in the government platform. The farmers in the constituencies represented by these gentlemen favor reciprocity, and their members can help them greatly.

FIELDING AND BORDEN

The Dominion government has refused to grant the demand of the farmers that the duty be removed from agricultural implements and that the duty on goods imported from Great Britain be reduced to 50 per cent. of the general tariff at the present session of parliament. Replying to R. L. Borden, leader of the opposition, on April 12, Hon. W. S. Fielding, Minister of Finance, said:

"It may be necessary, on the completion of the reciprocity agreement, to make some changes in order to be in harmony with the British Preference; but let me say at once that if such changes be made, they will be on small matters, they will not be important, and they will not include an increase in the British Preference to 50 per cent.

We are well aware that the farmers of the West, in their resolutions, have not only asked for a reciprocity agreement, but have also asked for other things. They have asked for free agricultural implements, but we have told them frankly that we cannot comply with their request. They have asked us to increase the British Preference to 50 per cent. We tell them that at the present we do not think that should be done. I may say frankly that we do not think that should be done. I may say frankly that we do not think the manufacturing industries of Canada could be successfully carried on if that reduction in their protection were made. We say to the people all over Canada who would like a larger measure of tariff reduction on agricultural implements and other things, that we are not able to meet that wish, that by this reciprocity agreement we are meeting to a large extent their demands, and we are going to ask that we be not pressed to grant free agricultural implements and an increase in the British Preference to 50 per cent., because to grant these would have a disturbing influence on the trade of Canada, whereas the reciprocity agreement will not create any disturbing influence, but on the contrary will have a good effect, and be accepted by the country generally as something which will work for the general advantage of Canada."

If Mr. Fielding has information to prove that "the manufacturing industries of

Canada could not be successfully carried on" if the British Preference were increased to 50 per cent. then he should give that information to the public. All the information available goes to prove that Mr. Fielding's statement is not well-founded, and if he has more information it is badly needed. If it is merely a matter of "think," the farmers have a far better case than Mr. Fielding. Broad generalities are by no means satisfactory. The farmers have demanded free implements and an increase in the British Preference to 50 per cent., and they are perfectly justified in seeing that no candidates are elected who are not pledged to that platform. Mr. Fielding deserves credit for negotiating the reciprocity agreement, but his attitude on the other phases of the tariff question is entirely unsatisfactory.

On the other hand the attitude of Mr. Borden is not any better. On the same day that Mr. Fielding made the above statement Mr. Borden was asked the definite question in the House by E. W. Nesbitt, M.P., if he was in favor of increasing the British Preference, Mr. Borden replied:

"I shall tell my hon. friend this, that when we come to occupy the treasury benches we shall give a very much clearer statement on that point than we are likely to have this afternoon from his friends who are sitting there now."

This is a most peculiar attitude for Mr. Borden to take. We know that Mr. Fielding is opposed to giving the farmers their due, but Mr. Borden has apparently no policy at all on the matter. As to agricultural implements, Mr. Borden supported Mr. Meighen's resolution asking for a "substantial reduction" in the duties on agricultural implements. This may mean anything and may not mean any more than the 2½ per cent. and 5 per cent. reduction granted in the reciprocity agreement.

It is clear enough to the farmers of Canada now who dictates the tariff laws of Canada. Are the farmers of Canada willing to sit by and accept the statements of Mr. Fielding and Mr. Borden as final? If any relief is to come to the farmers it must be secured by electing men who will protect their constituents no matter what their political leaders may say. It would be interesting to have Messrs. Staples, Campbell, Sharpe and Meighen explain their tariff attitude in view of Mr. Borden's policy. If they are prepared to stand by their constituents regardless of Mr. Borden's attitude, then they are the men the Western farmers are looking for. It will be also of interest for the Western members of the government party to explain their tariff views in the light of Mr. Fielding's statement. There is a lot of explaining to be done in the near future.

TERMINAL ELEVATOR SITUATION

At the present time the special Senate committee dealing with the new Grain Bill is divided in regard to the terminal elevator remedy. Two reports have been presented by the committee as published in last Week's Guide. It is evident that there are powerful interests at work at Ottawa in favor of the terminal elevator owners, who desire that present conditions shall continue with little if any change. The government in its endeavor to secure redress of the grievances in the terminal elevators will find that nothing short of actual government operation will give satisfaction. There are minor details in connection with the operation of the terminals as public utilities which cannot

be worked out in the bill, but if the elevators are operated by the government under a satisfactory commission these details can be arranged with less difficulty. The farmers of the West who are the people chiefly interested in the terminal elevators, have repeatedly demanded government operation, and in view of present circumstances they are more justified than ever in holding to their demands. A goodly number of letters addressed to the government and the Western members at the present time in favor of government operation of the terminals would have a splendid effect.

A GOOD EXAMPLE

In United States many farmers oppose the reciprocity agreement because they declare that it discriminates against them in favor of the manufacturers. The Democrats at Washington are not opposing the agreement but are determined to remove the discrimination. They have already introduced a bill putting over 100 articles, including all kinds of farm implements and machinery, on the free list. If the American Senate passes this bill it will afford great relief to the consumers who have been tariff-taxed for half a century. Why cannot our members at Ottawa do likewise? The placing of farm implements on the free list in Canada would be a boon to the farmers and can well be stood by the manufacturers. The same applies to a number of other items.

OUR FRIENDS ARE HELPING

We have had a generous response to the appeal to our readers to help us increase our subscription list. Here is a typical letter from one of our Saskatchewan readers:

Seeing your offer in The Guide of last week to send The Guide for the balance of the year for 50c, I thought I would look around and see if I could not get a subscription or two. I am pleased to say I got four. I don't think there are many farmers here but what take The Guide. If I can find any that don't I will do my best to induce them to take it. I sent you one two weeks ago. He could not see where the reciprocity part was going to be of any benefit to the farmers. I asked him what papers he read. He said the Herald and Star. So of course I knew where the influence was. I gave him my Guide to read and got his subscription right away. I venture to think he will soon change his mind, as he has also joined our association.

This is the kind of work that helps to make The Guide a success. No person can understand the work The Guide is trying to do for the farmers until they read a few copies. If our friends will do as this one has done The Guide will take its place as THE great Western journal and will command the advertising revenue that will set it upon a sound financial basis. We are offering The Guide to new subscribers from now till January 1, 1912, for 50 cents. No agents are paid a commission for taking these subscriptions. It is an appeal purely and simply to those friends who believe in the cause for which The Guide is fighting. A recommendation from them means much. We appeal to them again to help us along. We will publish the numbers of subscriptions sent in by our friends in reply to this special offer.

Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Bank of Commerce, and the greatest living patriot, has just been in Winnipeg and says that reciprocity is a "cloud" hanging over Canada. It is not half so dangerous a cloud as is the selfish system which this great patriot is trying to bolster up.