

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 10th, 1911

GUESS WHO OWNS CANADA

The Dominion government on May 8 announced that it would provide \$2,000,000 towards the construction of the Hudson's Bay Railway this year. At this rate it will be twelve years before the road is completed. The government is plainly playing with the question. On the same day the same government announced a bond guarantee of \$35,000,000 to Mackenzie & Mann to build a road from Port Arthur to Montreal, and the government is not even asking them for any control of freight rates. A million people in the Prairie Provinces are unanimous in demanding the Hudson's Bay Road; nobody but Mackenzie & Mann are clamoring for the Port Arthur to Montreal line; \$2,000,000 for the people, \$35,000,000 for Mackenzie & Mann. And Canada is a democracy?

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

Parliament is to stand adjourned from May 23 till July 18 by arrangement between the two parties in the House. Sir Wilfrid Laurier will attend the Imperial Conference, and the parliamentary contingent will also attend the coronation with the premier. It is satisfactory to know that Canada will be represented at both these important functions. By an adjournment instead of prorogation the reciprocity agreement can be taken up just where it is left instead of beginning over fresh. Reports from Washington indicate that the American Senate will have decided the fate of the agreement by the time that the Canadian parliament resumes. If the agreement is ratified at Washington, and the Opposition prevent its progress at Ottawa there is only one thing left—election. If it were possible to have an unbiased expression of opinion from the people of Canada upon the reciprocity question, such an expression would be desirable. In the event of an election, however, there would be such a number of questions before the people that it would be impossible to say that any outcome would be a decided expression upon reciprocity alone. If the Initiative and Referendum were in force in federal affairs a Referendum could be held on this question alone and it would be settled. Naturally both the political parties are opposed to the plain people ever securing such power as the Initiative and Referendum would give them. Party rule as we have it in Canada has not worked out in the best interests of the people. Under present conditions it is the caucus that rules rather than the people. The caucus is probably the worst feature of our political life. It is an instrument for the smothering of independent thought on the part of the individual members of parliament. By means of the caucus the members of both parties have been induced, either willingly or otherwise, to support the policy of their leaders. It is not possible to conceive that all the members of parliament see eye to eye with their leaders upon the great questions which have come before them. Why then do they support their parties in the way that they do? It is because of the caucus and the influence that is exercised over members to get them to stay with their party. Let us see how the parties stand today in regard to the demands made by the organized farmers, the most representative and influential deputation that ever waited on the government. In regard to the tariff both parties are officially supporting protection, though individual members have demanded that certain specific reductions should be made; on reciprocity the government and Opposition are bitterly

opposed to each other. The government has undertaken to build the Hudson's Bay Railway, though very slowly, and is leaving the matter of operation in abeyance; the Opposition has declared for public operation also. The government favors greater control and supervision of the terminal elevators, while the Opposition is definitely committed to government ownership and operation. The Opposition favors investigating the chilled meat situation, while the government will do nothing in the matter. The co-operative bill was allowed to be suffocated in the House without a word of protest from the leaders of either party. Bills have been introduced from both sides of the House with the intention of placing more responsibility upon the railway companies for the killing of stock, but neither party has declared for the control of freight rates. This, in brief, we believe is a fair exposition of the standing of the two parties at the present time. So far these questions have been practically party questions. There has been no instance of any individual member standing out against his party for the whole demands of the farmers. Neither has there been any member who has shown that there is injustice in these demands. The action of the parties will be to divide the country on matters which are economic and not political. It must be apparent to thinking men that the operation of political machinery is detrimental to the welfare of the country. There are times when opposition is not only justified but urgently needed for the protection of the people, but unfortunately on such questions there is usually no difference of opinion between the two parties. We have endeavored to review the situation without prejudice, and now let us look to see if there is any justification for the members of the two parties adhering blindly to their parties regardless of the interests of their constituents. Is there not a considerable responsibility in this matter resting upon the people who elected these men to parliament? If the majority of men in Canada vote regularly for their party without regard to the issues before the country, how can the members of parliament be expected to do otherwise? In Western Canada the party ties are not strong as in the East. But if we knew the exact number of men who vote regularly for their party we could then ascertain at once how much blame is attachable to the members at Ottawa. Why do so many men, who are in other respects excellent business men, highly intelligent, and leaders in their community, always vote for their party regardless of the issues at stake? That is a question which can well challenge the consideration of the best minds in the country, for it is at the bottom of the political evils of our nation. The only thing that has distinguished one party from the other for the past fifteen years has been the names. If men are going to continue supporting one party all the time and let that party do as it likes, how can the members elected be blamed for doing pretty much as they like without regard to the best interests of the people? But at Ottawa the matter narrows down to a few men and the searchlight of publicity is turned upon them so strongly that it is easily seen what a farce party loyalty makes of democracy. But the same thing works out in exactly the same way among the electors of Canada. It can hardly be expected that the members will rise very far above the example that is set for them by the people. When a man is dealing with the business of his school

district, his local church, his municipality, his agricultural society or any of a score of important local matters he exercises his best judgment and decides upon matters according to their merit. Then why, when it comes to provincial or federal matters, should not these same men act in the same business-like manner? That is the question. Why should a little bunch of politicians prepare what they are pleased to call a "platform," which at best is never more than something to fool the people, and then ask the people to cast their votes upon this "platform?" There will be a general election in Canada, by the look of things, before Christmas. The two political parties at Ottawa are preparing for it now. They are loading down the mails with all kinds of campaign literature upon which no postage is paid; they are holding caucuses and getting "platforms" ready. What is the chief object which each of the parties has in view? Is it to make Canada a great nation where every citizen shall have a square deal and where no person shall be privileged to prey upon any other person? Is it to provide equal opportunities for all? Not a bit of it. The great and paramount aim with both parties is to win the election. When the election is over, and they are safe for another five years, party "platforms" will be relegated to the background as they have always been in the past. Barnum, the great circus man, once said that the people liked to be fooled. But the people can only be fooled so long as they are willing to be fooled. Just now is the time for the people of Canada, particularly of Western Canada, to decide if they are willing to be fooled any longer. Are they going to allow two political parties to play them off against each other and against the welfare of the country? Are they going to accept any politician-made "platform" that does not contain what they want, or are they going to make their own platform based upon the real needs of the country and elect men who can be depended upon to carry that platform into execution? This is the matter which must come up for consideration in the mind of every thoughtful man today.

MANUFACTURERS IN THE OPEN

Last week we showed how immense sums of money were being spent to "educate" the farmers of Ontario and the Maritime Provinces against reciprocity. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association, which the president says has no politics but the politics of protection, is doing its best against reciprocity. Here is an extract from the May issue of Industrial Canada, the official organ of the Manufacturers' Association:

"The farmers of Canada accept the reciprocity agreement only as part of their demands," says the Grain Growers' Guide in a recent issue. That is plainly the attitude of the Grain Growers, who that paper represents. The present agreement is in their view far from satisfactory. It is only a step in the right direction and a short step at that. * * * The whole principle of protection is under fire. * * * Experience has shown beyond a doubt that a protective tariff is essential to the establishment and development of manufacturers. Therefore the agitation which is being carried on by the Grain Growers' Guide, and those whom it represents, must be combatted from the outset. The reciprocity agreement is but a beginning of a movement which, if it were successful, would wipe our manufacturers off the slate."

The manufacturers are determined that there shall be no freedom of trade. Are the people of Western Canada willing to submit to the rule of this selfish bunch of men in a few Eastern cities? The capitalists, the railways and the manufacturers are working