

later they will compel the House of Commons to recognize them and give them a square deal. This is the most hopeful sign of democracy that has been seen since the time of Confederation.

### THE NEED OF DECIDED ACTION

The arrival of the farmers at Ottawa on December 16 is being awaited with intense interest by the members of the House. The fact that 40,000 Canadian farmers deem it worth while to send seven hundred delegates to Ottawa at the cost of \$50,000 commands serious consideration. It comes home to the members of the House of Commons that if they had been doing their duty as legislators the farmers' delegation would not have gone to Ottawa. There is no other construction to put upon the movement. Representative government at Ottawa has proved a decided failure. The Western farmers have elected men to represent them and to protect their interests in the House of Commons, only to be laughed at and ignored by their members when election day is past. If the Western members of the House of Commons were not absolutely false to the trust reposed in them the present situation would not have arisen. The Western members know full well what the Western farmers want, and they also know that the farmers represent a large majority of the Western people. No person can doubt the justice of the farmers' demands, and yet their representatives have ignored them. There is not a single member in the House of Commons who has publicly expressed his belief in the justice of the organized farmers' demands. This seems incredible yet it is true. Are the farmers too radical? They were not too radical when they elected those gentlemen to Ottawa. If the Western members stood together to protect the interests of their constituents they could force the hands of any government. To the ordinary member of the House of Commons the "good of the party" comes first, while the people in the country care not about party so long as they get a square deal. The organized farmers should not go to the great expense and pains of presenting their case at Ottawa unless they do it in clear and unmistakable terms. It is time to read the "Riot Act" to some of the misrepresentatives at Ottawa. They should be given to understand that their tenure of office is short unless their methods change. In Western Canada every man favors government ownership and operation of the Hudson's Bay Railway and the terminal elevators, and yet some of our members and also members of the Government tell us that they (personally) "do not believe in the principle of government ownership." With all due respect to these gentlemen, they should be most clearly informed that it is the will of the people, and not of two or three men, that are supposed to prevail in British dominions. If the members of parliament and government are not prepared to obey the will of the people then it is time they gave way to men who are true democrats. The organized farmers have nothing to gain by undue humility to the members of the House of Commons or the government. They have right on their side and sooner or later there comes a day of reckoning for all those who openly and insolently refuse to regard the voice of the people.

### HOW TO TAME THE LION

(From the Toronto Sun)

The Manufacturers' Association is exhorted by its friends to give "the plainmen a good time," when they come down to confer with Sir Wilfrid Laurier on reciprocity and tariff reform. The idea is to awe and overwhelm "the plainmen" by the magnificence of the works of protection, so that when he goes back to his cabin set in the dazzling snows of the lonely prairie,

he will be a shorn Samson, an inert and collapsed revolutionist. The Sun hopes that, if the idea is adopted, the Manufacturers' Association will show its best wares in a procession culminating in a climax of wonder and awe. It will first show its material achievements—the factories whose employees, buying the farmer's produce, were to make rural Ontario rich and happy—the mansions, and the great city spreading out over the adjacent fields. It will then show its charities, its university and its meagre cash balances. Next it will show its best inventions, and to that end it could not do better than entertain the wild plainsman and grangers for a whole day in its Toronto Merger Factory, where, at this moment, fifteen mergers are in all stages of manufacture. It might then show a made merger at work, one of the flour milling mergers, for example, in which a property valued by its owner to his bank for borrowing purposes at a little more than a million, was merged and sold for more than three millions. A souvenir block of flour or cement or cotton common would make this part of the show a delightful and profitable entertainment. And last, it will display its moral and intellectual forces. Among these, it will show its Knights. The plainsman, who is to hold his grandchildren spellbound in the chimney corner, ought to hear Sir George Ross and see at least one of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The plainsmen ought on no account to be allowed to board the homeward train without seeing the donkey engine of protection, the Empire Club, puffing and foaming with its fardels of never ending misery and suspense. If this plan of giving a good time be followed, The Sun has no doubt that at the end of the show the Manufacturers' Association may with safety put its head in the lion's mouth.

### PREMIER ROBLIN FAVORABLE

Direct Legislation is rapidly growing in favor and will most assuredly be on the statute books of Manitoba within a very short time. The chief trouble in securing such reforms is in enlisting the sympathy of men in high places. But in Manitoba Premier Roblin has taken the lead and has stamped with his approval the principles of the Initiative and the Referendum, and has even gone so far as to recommend the same principles to Sir Wilfrid Laurier as a fair and just means of settling the boundary question. In a letter to Sir Wilfrid on October 17, 1910, which Sir Wilfrid read in the House of Commons on December 5, Mr. Roblin said:

"If you will make your proposition and it turns out to be such as I cannot accept I will, with your approval, submit the two propositions directly to the people of this province for their consideration and decision, on the principle of the Initiative and the Referendum."

Thus Mr. Roblin approves of Direct Legislation as the surest way of securing the will of the people. Advocates of Direct Legislation will be glad to know that the premier of Manitoba is so favorably impressed with its fundamental principles. Several members of the legislature are also in favor of Direct Legislation and it merely needs now a strong public opinion in support of it to be enacted into law. The system of popular legislation that has made Oregon such a land of freedom and opportunity has also something for our Western Provinces. True democracy demands that all power shall at all times reside in the hands of the people.

The beneficiaries of the Canadian protective tariff are urging that the government appoint a tariff commission before making any alterations in the present schedule. It has only been four years since a tariff commission toured Can-

ada. The verbatim report of the evidence which they took then is in Ottawa now and comprises 3,500,000 words. This evidence if gotten out in book form would make thirty-five ordinary sized volumes. Surely that is enough information for the government to work upon. The appointment of a tariff commission will be a farce and will be utterly useless as an attempt towards giving the farmers a square deal. The appointment of a tariff commission will be nothing more nor less than a political dodge to stave off trouble until after the next Federal election. If the government at Ottawa on December 16, in replying to the farmers' delegation, promises to appoint a tariff commission it will be tantamount to an absolute refusal to consider the demand of the farmers for tariff reduction.

The organized farmers are to be received by the members of the Government and by members of both political parties on December 16. The hour of meeting is to be from ten o'clock in the morning till one o'clock in the afternoon, giving the farmers three hours in which to make their case. This will be plenty of time to demand a square deal on the tariff (and no tariff commission); government ownership and operation of the Hudson's Bay Railway and the terminal elevators; amendments to the railway act to place a fair share of the responsibility upon the railways for stock killed upon their tracks; the enactment of the co-operative bills, and the investigation of the chilled meat industry with a view of having a complete service inaugurated by the government.

Just at present there is a Bank Clerks' Association of Canada in the process of organization, by which the bank clerks hope to secure better financial recognition from their employers. It is a worthy object, for if any Canadian institution is able to pay but will not, it is the banks. The bank managers are looking very austere and have intimated that the clerks' organization should not be secret. Everything, they say, should be frank between employer and employee. Yes, but the clerks know how soon their heads will go if they are open as their managers want them to be. The "frankness" of the Bankers' Association is probably the example which the clerks have in mind when organizing.

One of the remarkable things about the British election is that such a long time is consumed in polling. Instead of the elections being held on the one day as in Canada or the United States, it is spread over a week or ten days. This system of voting in England is a relic of the days of special privilege. The policy of "one man, one vote," which prevails in this country, does not prevail in England. By having the election on different days an opportunity is afforded for "plural voting," so that one man may poll a considerable number of votes in the one election. Such a system would not be tolerated in Canada, and will probably not survive many years in England.

The argument that protection helps the farmers by providing a home market for their produce is exploded. Farmers now see that the price received for their surplus in the world's markets regulates the home prices.

From the time a man is born until he sleeps beneath a tombstone he pays tribute to the power of special privilege in Canada. But times are changing and right will prevail.

J. J. Hill has been down to New York again shaking up the stock market by his "blue ruin" predictions. He is the prince of pessimists when he gets busy.