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THE COLONEL HAS SPOKEN

(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Press Gallery, Ottawa, April 14

Up to date four free traders have been discovered among the 221 members of the House of Commons—Dr. Michael Clark, of Red Deer, Alta., Ralph Smith, of Nanaimo, B.C., W. E. Knowles, of Moose Jaw, who announced himself as a Coldenite in the discussion of the resolution on the duty on agricultural implements a few weeks ago, and M. Y. McLean of South Huron, Ont., who declared his belief in free trade when speaking in favor of the reciprocity agreement on Tuesday.

"I believe," said Mr. McLean, "that the best fiscal policy for this country is absolute free trade, the public revenue to be collected by the simplest and most inexpensive method of direct taxation that can possibly be devised. Under such a policy many leaks which now exist, and which will always exist under the present policy, no matter what government or party may be in power, would be stopped."

Mr. McLean knocked something off the value of his profession of faith, however, when he added "But I am also free to say that I do not think, at the present time, such a policy is practicable. There is a peculiar feature in human nature which induces most people to prefer to pay a dollar and a half through the circuitous methods of the custom house, to paying a dollar directly into the public treasury or to the tax collector." He advocated, however, as practical politics for the immediate future, further reciprocal reductions of duties or reciprocal free trade with the United States, and the free admission of British goods to Canada.

Mr. McLean's Views

Mr. McLean made an able exposition of the benefits which will accrue to this country from reciprocity and administered a telling rebuke to Hon. Clifford Sifton, when he said that although he was considerably older than the member for Brandon, he had never heard of anyone who became a millionaire by farming, though he had known a good many manufacturers, a few merchants, and one or two politicians who commenced life in a very humble way thirty years ago, who were now ranked as millionaires.

Col. Sam Hughes, who followed Mr. McLean, made one of the longest speeches of the debate, speaking for nearly four hours. He said less about reciprocity, however, than almost any other speaker. One-half of his four hours Col. Hughes spent in describing what he called "the wooing of Miss Canada by Uncle Sam," reciting Uncle Sam's poetry, and describing how Miss Canada would throw a kettle of hot water over the unwelcome lover, and the greater part of the other two hours he devoted to abusing the Grain Growers. Quoting a statement which appeared in a Detroit paper in 1878, to show that Sir Wilfrid Laurier privately favored commercial union with the United States, Col. Hughes said: "Then it goes on to say that Mr. Barron tells of how enthused the farmers are. Why, sir, you would actually think it was this gang of leaders; this Grain Growers' Association from the Northwest that came down here, the same sort of fellow we find popping up in blacksmith-shop statesmanship. Everyone of them a Grit organizer and heeler; not the rank and file of the farmers of Canada, but the men who try to push themselves to the front and whose wives are at home wearing long boots and cleaning out the cow stables and the horse stables, while these fellows are hanging around the blacksmith shops spouting statesmanship for the world over. It is the same type of chap we find then as we find today."

Drew a Distinction

The colonel drew a distinction, however, between the rank and file of the farmers and their leaders and spokesmen. The men who formed the delegation which waited on Parliament on December 16, he said, were as fine a class of men as could be found in the world, but the impression vanished as soon as they opened their mouths. The leaders of the Grain Growers' Association he pictured as "chaps with a stand up collar representing J. J. Hill," and he warned the farmers to beware of "Free Trade Sheldons or Bill Miners" or other hold-up men from the United States. He also read an article on the Grain Growers' Grain Company from a second-class Winnipeg journal, and said that company was like the management of the Farmers' Bank, a lot of financial buccaneers, trading on the name of Grain Growers and endeavoring to get the farmers of the Northwest engaged in speculation.

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