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The Grain Grower's Demands.

Hon. George E. Foster, in the Canadian Century.

The grain-growers' deputation has visited Ottawa and presented its case with great fulness to the Government and Parliament. It was large in numbers, excellently well organized, thoroughly disciplined, intelligent and business-like, and did its work with precision and skill.

Its resolutions were tersely put, its speakers well chosen and clever, and they made their points with a clearness and closeness which may well have been envied by more practiced orators. The deputation impressed one as sincere and very earnest, and so far as outward appearances indicated, was entirely unanimous.

Altogether it was a notable gathering, and easily ranks as the largest of the kind ever known at Ottawa. Few who witnessed it will soon forget the scene and its unique settings in the old historical House of Commons.

And now that it has come, delivered its plea and dispersed again to the four corners of Canada, we have time to muse over the spirit, the matter and the merits of the great demonstration.

What They Wanted.

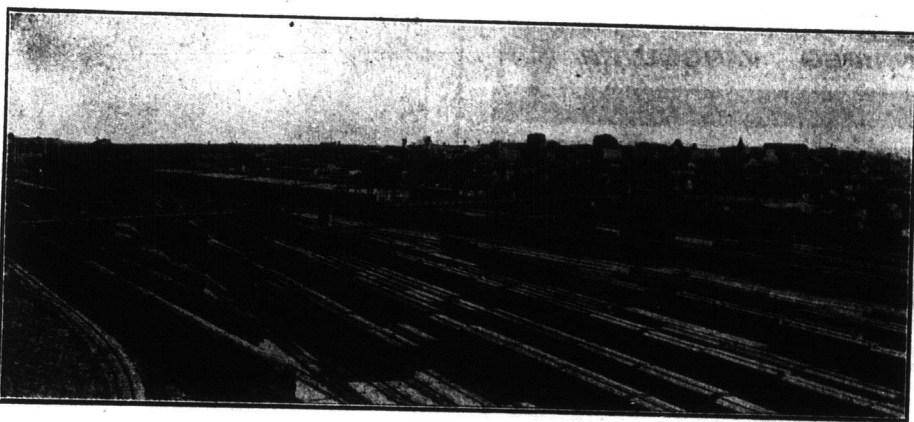
Outside of the Railway Act, Bank Act Amendments and Co-operative Society legislation asked for, none of which were at all startling, their demands were comprised in four propositions—few in number it is true, but so far-reaching that their full realization would involve little short of a revolution in principles and methods at present followed.

1. The Government was asked to in-

tion, having gone so far, must go farther, and insist upon a line of steamships, established and controlled by the Government, to connect the railway with the European markets. To ensure a correct basis for one-half the route and neglect to provide for similar safeguards on the other, would risk the efficiency and defeat the purpose of the whole project. This involves a vast initial outlay by the State, and a continuing complex and expensive operative system also financed by the State.

3. The Government was asked to provide, by purchase and construction, for terminal elevators, and to operate them by means of an independent commission. It was urged that, in order to obviate suspicion and ensure confidence, the grain grower must be assured that his product, paid for on its grade inspection at the elevator, is not only properly graded, but that the elevator shall fulfill its trust of cleansing, storing and delivering the grain true to grade and free from manipulation of any kind. On the absolute fidelity of the elevator to this trust depends the price to the grower, the quality to the buyer, and the reputation of Canadian grain in the ultimate market.

There seems little doubt that the temptations and opportunities afforded the elevator companies for private gain at the expense of the grower and the millers are so great as to constitute a grievance of magnitude, and one which must be effectually remedied. Can this be done by supervision and control? If not, then how? It appears to be up



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stitute and operate a national chilled meat industry, to find the money therefor and conduct it either solely as a Government business or on some co-operative plan, paying all expenses out of the proceeds and returning the profits to the sellers. Provision was asked to be made to pay off the first capital cost by setting aside a portion of the profits annually. This means that all the capital shall be first provided and all the risks run by the State, and that all the profits shall accrue to the producers of food animals. It means also that, if undertaken by the State, it must be State-wide in its operation, and not confined to a section of this class of producers. The principle once adopted and carried to its logical conclusion must be extended to all classes of producers, and would, when fully embodied, socialize the entire economic system of the country. To confine it to one class, however important, would mean the taxation of all to provide a marketing mechanism for one, which is contrary to the Grain-Growers' doctrine as respects tariff and transport.

2. The Government was asked to build and operate the Hudson Bay Railway—an extension of the principle of public ownership and operation which now obtains in the I. C. R. and the canals. In this the deputation had a strong case. More even than the Intercolonial is this route peculiarly a common highway for the national benefit, defeated in its purpose and futile in its results unless it be built with all possible economy and operated at lowest cost and absolutely barred to private or corporate exploitation.

But it would appear that the deputa-

to the Government to solve the problem. If it can be done only through State ownership and operation here if ever is a justification for the exercise of such powers.

But here again the cost of elevators on both oceans and at many ports, and also on the lakes involves the pockets of every taxpayer in Canada. It is State aid that is invoked, and State aid for the profit and advantage of a class.

If any doubt existed in the wording of the resolution it was wholly removed by the elaborate reasoning with which the speakers supported and enforced it, culminating in the dramatic and wildly applauded assertion of one of their advocates that "They had this day flung wide a flag which would not be furled until it had been planted on the ruins of protection."

The Effect Upon Canada.

Without disparaging for a moment the sincerity and conviction of the Grain-Growers' Association, one may question whether they have taken into account other interests and other phases of development and the effect thereon if their tariff demands were complied with.

The foreign trade of Canada runs over \$650,000,000, and its internal traffic is vastly greater. This has been gradually built up to its present dimensions on a certain fiscal basis, supported by 35 years of public sentiment and legislation. Vast systems of transport at immense cost have been developed to accommodate and extend this trade, in to which pours the product of many great industries and occupations. Never were progress and expansion more gratifying throughout Canada than now, and

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