

The Brain Browsers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 6th, 1914

C.N.R. GETS \$45,000,000

As we have predicted for some time past, Mackenzie and Mann have succeeded in securing a government guarantee of bonds for \$45,000,000. It is true that the government in return for this guarantee has secured more control over the C.N.R. and has made a better attempt than has ever before been made by any government to protect the public. But the essential fact remains that the public credit has been extended to Mackenzie and Mann for another \$45,000,000, and in the very nature of the agreement the Government will have to guarantee further bonds to complete the railway, if needed. On another page of this issue we publish the official statement issued by the Government, showing the details of the deal with the C.N.R. This statement shows that the C.N.R. is in mighty bad shape financially, and but for the timely aid of the government would probably have gone into the hands of a receiver. If the C.N.R. were allowed to go bankrupt it is doubtful if Mackenzie and Mann would lose anything, as there is very good ground for the belief that they never put any money into it. The government has done excellent work in forcing a consolidation of the Mackenzie and Mann railways and bringing them into a position where they can be regulated by the Railway Commission and Parliament, even tho such regulations will not amount to much for the benefit of the people. But it is good to have in case some government, some day, some how and to some extent, may regard the welfare of the people as worth consideration. The Government has provided that all the money must be spent on the C.N.R., but no provision has been made to prevent the C.N.R. (which is Mackenzie and Mann) from letting contracts to Mackenzie and Mann Ltd. (or some other construction company composed of these very estimable gentlemen) at a price about double the actual cost. It is commonly charged that this is one of the chief methods by which Mackenzie and Mann have become rich, and the C.N.R. has become poverty stricken. The Government has provided that Mackenzie and Mann shall not get any rake-off out of any contracts not yet paid for, but has not secured any restitution of any rake-offs that may have been secured by the above methods in the past. The great question in the minds of the people is "How have Mackenzie and Mann become multi-millionaires in a few years, if not by milking the C.N.R. for their personal benefit?" The Government has provided no solution to this enigma. Another question which the people want answered is: "How much money have Mackenzie and Mann, or the C.N.R., contributed to the campaign funds of the two political parties?" But no answer is forthcoming. The contributions must have been larger than we thought. The Government is taking security for the \$45,000,000 upon the various properties of the C.N.R., but these properties are already mortgaged for a large amount, so the security cannot be extra good. The government should have taken security upon the Winnipeg and Toronto street railways, the Mexican and Brazilian street railways, or some of the numerous other private properties of Mackenzie and Mann which it is generally supposed have been acquired by money milked out of the C.N.R. But nothing of the kind has been done. It is abundantly clear that the Government under the new arrangement becomes a partner with Mackenzie and Mann in such a manner that all the money henceforth needed for the construction and equipment of the road must be provided

directly or indirectly by the Government. The government had an excellent opportunity to take over the whole C.N.R. system and operate it as a public utility for the benefit of the people. Mr. Borden has missed the big opportunity of his political career. He had a chance to show himself a statesman.

On the face of the whole proposition it appears that if the \$45,000,000 was necessary the Government has made a better deal with the C.N.R. than ever before, but it is still a long way from a square deal to the public. There is no publicity of the C.N.R.-Mackenzie and Mann system of financing. The people of Canada have been forced to provide hundreds of millions for this concern, and yet they know no more about the expenditure of the money than they do of a railway in Russia.

This method of handling the people's money in Canada has prevailed from the beginning. It is time such things were done in the open. We have a pauper railway on our hands, and every Canadian has been taxed heavily to support it and its promoters. The people have a right to the fullest details of the use to which their money has been put. It is reported that the Liberal party will demand such publicity. It is to be hoped that they will make the fight in real earnest and force the government to use the closure before this "hole in the corner" deal is completed. The Liberal record of dealing with the C.N.R. is not very savory and they will need to make a real fight this time to convince the public that they mean business. We are very much afraid, however, that the Liberals will not press hard to see how much money has been devoted to campaign funds. Let us hope they will. The debate on the C.N.R. deal will take place this week and will undoubtedly disclose more information than is yet available.

WHEAT-GROWING A CRIME!

Because the western farmers are demanding a square deal in the way of lower freight rates and lower tariff they are being subjected to the most scathing criticism by the representatives of the Big Interests. On another page of this issue we publish the remarks of four Eastern Members of the House of Commons that are typical of the attitude being expressed by Protectionist Members towards the Western farmers. Practically everyone of these remarks is based upon absolute ignorance and is merely inspired by a desire to misrepresent the Western farmers. It is true that the Western farmer is now in a position where he must accept practically whatever the Big Interests and their satellites desire to impose upon them. But when, in addition to the unjust laws, certain Eastern Members proceed to blackguard them in this manner the situation is becoming dangerous for the development of a national spirit. The Western farmers have asked for a square deal only and have not criticized the Eastern farmers, and have no desire to do so. In the eyes of these gentlemen it is evidently a crime to grow wheat. Western Canada was developed almost entirely by the publicity given to the possibilities of wheat growing. A great many of the largest industries in Eastern Canada have been developed as a result of the wheat grown in Western Canada. All over the United States and Europe the Government of Canada for the past twenty years has been advertising the West as the "Granary of the Empire," and now we are to be told by the big interests and their henchmen that the Western farmers must quit growing wheat

and go into mixed farming. It is the wheat crop of Western Canada that has developed our great railway systems; it is the wheat crop that has developed the big agricultural implement factories; it is the wheat crop that has developed scores of other industries all over Eastern Canada, and now, after plundering the Western farmers for years, the Big Interests and their spokesmen are adopting a method of misrepresentation and miserable abuse.

Let us look at these criticisms. Mr. Morris, M.P., admits that he has never been in Western Canada and yet he has the nerve to criticize the farming methods in Western Canada. He would display better taste if he remained silent until he possessed the facts upon which to make a statement. The western farmers are not all experts but a large number of them come from Ontario and the United States, and probably know just about as much about farming as Mr. Morris.

Whoever wrote the letter quoted by Mr. Smith, M.P., might be well described as a common prevaricator. The farmers' organization has been demanding free wheat for years and practically every one of the leading men in the organization is either from Eastern Canada or from Great Britain. There are, of course, a large number of Americans in the organization, but they have just as much right in this country as Mr. Smith, and they are just as good citizens as he is. We hope to have more of them.

The figures of Mr. Morphy, M.P., showing that Canadian wheat sells at a lower price in Great Britain than foreign wheats, are probably quite correct, and Mr. Morphy is partly responsible for the lower price of Canadian wheat. It has been proven time and again, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that Canadian wheat has no superior in the world's markets. On account of the heavy financial obligations of the Western farmer, and the unjust burden he is carrying, he is forced to dump his wheat on the market just as soon as it is harvested. The result is that the English miller buys it on the bargain counter and pays the lowest price for it. If Mr. Morphy honestly seeks information upon the quality of Canadian wheat, we shall be glad to provide him with it.

Mr. Sutherland, M.P., has the brilliant idea that every farmer in Western Canada can immediately go into stock raising on a scale sufficient to export all his grain on the hoof. Ordinary common sense should tell him that mixed farming develops slowly even under the best of conditions and that a farmer cannot change from wheat growing to stock raising and mixed farming without taking a considerable time and expending considerable money, which too many of our farmers do not have.

Such criticisms as these members have directed against the Western farmers will have no good effect, because it is neither honest nor sincere. It will only accentuate the feeling in Western Canada in favor of a square deal, and, if persisted in, may even disrupt Confederation. These Members were all on the Government side of the House, and on the same side of the House, and very close to them, were sitting Hon. Dr. Roche, Hon. Arthur Meighen, George Bradbury, Dr. Schaffner, W. H. Sharpe, and James McKay, all representing farmers' constituencies in Western Canada, and yet not one of them was sufficiently interested in the welfare of the western farmers to repudiate these vicious attacks. The Western farmers should enquire of these gentlemen why it is that they permit such misrepresentations to pass unchallenged.