

opment of the West has gotten back ten cents out of his Western business. The same applies to the railways. The immigration policy has not been any charitable scheme. The rush to get human beings—no matter what kind they might be—into the West has not proved an unmixed blessing. The free homesteads that all the opponents of the Grain Growers have harped upon is not the wonderful gift many believe it. Homesteads as a rule have been available only by going long distances from the railways, and have usually been earned by the time the patent is secured and the railways have arrived. On the other hand a pretty fair case could be shown that the East owes the West a great deal from the fact that it has been largely the Eastern plutocrats who have gobbled up all the natural resources of the West and are now making the Western people pay for them with a vengeance. This can be more easily understood when it is seen who owns the coal mines, timber limits, fishing privileges and vast tracts of land. The question of which owes the most to the other between the East and the West is a wise one to drop and to leave severely alone. Nothing can be gained by telling the people of any section of Canada that they should mind their own business and have no voice in national affairs. One debt the West must acknowledge to the East and that is her men and women who came out to this country as pioneers. This is a debt which cannot be collected, but which constitutes a bond of union so strong as to be an insurmountable obstacle to those who hope to stir up strife between the East and West. That bond of union is the chief hope of the future of the Canadian nation.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO

It must be, day by day, more apparent to the people of Canada that our system of government by means of political parties is very weak. The game of politics takes the place that should be occupied by a consideration of the interests of the people. Anyone watching closely the two parties at Ottawa will note that the interest and well-being of the Canadian people occupies but a small place in party warfare. Practically every move made by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party is opposed by R. L. Borden and the Conservative party; any new line of policy initiated by Mr. Borden is usually squelched by the government party. It does not appear to an outside observer that either party looks for merit in the suggestions of its opponents, but merely makes it its duty to oppose. The people of Canada have not elected their representatives for the mere purpose of fighting party battles. On the contrary the members of both political parties at Ottawa have been elected to assist in making laws in the interests of the people who elected them. Up to the present time there has not been devised in Canada any workable system of government in which political parties will not play a dominant part. But even those who maintain that there is no practicable system of government, other than the party system, must admit that the country and the people of the country suffer very severely on account of the party system. The result of partyism is that a few men control all the legislative machinery of the country, which is largely used for party purposes, and the voice of the people is practically never secured upon any question of public policy. As the time approaches for a federal election both parties begin by forming what they are pleased to call "platforms." These are no doubt called "platforms" because they are tramped upon immediately the election is over. As a matter of fact what the political parties call "platforms" are promises—which are usually only promises. There is no good reason why a handful of men at Ottawa should be

allowed to make these promise "platforms" and then go to the people. These "platforms," as a rule, are not what the people want, but they have to decide between one of two things, neither of which is satisfactory. So far as the West is concerned neither party is giving satisfaction. Both parties are playing a game to split the votes of the people of Canada, and each hopes to secure the larger portion. The people of Canada as a whole are not very well represented today in the national legislature. The agricultural class in Canada numbers more than one-half the population and yet there are only eighteen farmers in the House of Commons. The laboring class is also a very large portion of the population in the towns and cities, and yet they are practically not represented at all. It would not be fair to say that no one except a farmer could properly represent the agricultural interests at Ottawa, because there are other than farmers equally interested in the welfare of the country. But it is an indisputable fact that there should be at least a fair proportion of farmer members of the House of Commons, and we do not think it will be denied that there are one hundred farmers in Canada who can do equally good work with the average members of the present House of Commons. The interests of all the wealth-producing classes in Canada are much the same. The interests of the West are largely agricultural and are in sympathy with the agricultural interests of all the rest of Canada. The articulate voice of the agricultural population of Canada made known its wants in Ottawa in December last. They laid down before the government the real platform of their demands. The government party is willing to grant something and the opposition something, but neither party will grant all that the farmers have asked for. If the farmers of Canada ever intend to make themselves felt at Ottawa, they must do it by electing men pledged to work in their interests. Throughout Canada there are a great number of farmers who are thoroughly disgusted with both the political parties, and are anxious to form an independent farmers' party. Many who are in sympathy with this movement do not think the time is ripe and it seems to them that it would not be wise at the present juncture to attempt a farmers' party. The safer plan is to make both parties—so-called parties—responsive to the will of the people. This could be done by pledging every man who comes before the people at the next federal election. The farmers all over Canada should put the "Ottawa platform of 1910" before their candidate no matter what party he stands for. The candidate who refuses to sign that pledge should be defeated. If both candidates refuse then it is time to consider independent action. But both candidates will not refuse. The greatest aim of a political party is to get into power or to remain in power. This subject is one that is deserving of the most serious thought by Western people. They will be called upon to vote at the general election possibly this fall and possibly not till next year. Are they going to vote as they have in the past, for one of two political candidates who support a platform that the people do not want and have not asked for, or are they going to compel the candidates they vote for to pledge themselves to what the farmers have asked for? We believe that the consensus of public opinion in the West is in favor of the "Ottawa platform of 1910" and not in favor of the promise platforms laid down by the political parties.

According to the report published in our last issue the Hon. Price Ellison, minister of finance and agriculture in the British Columbia government, has grossly libelled the farmers of the Prairie Provinces. He is reported to have made the statement that

the delegation of 500 farmers from the West was sent to Ottawa at the demand of James J. Hill, the great American railway magnate, and that Mr. Hill financed the delegation to the extent of \$50,000. By making such a statement on the floor of the provincial legislature Mr. Ellison has shown the lengths to which the opponents of reciprocity will dare to go. If the statement was a direct one it was a deliberate falsehood; if it was the mere repetition of a rumor, then the man who, holding a responsible position, gave credence to that rumor lowered himself to a level to which even Canada's most biased partisans would hesitate to sink. It is hardly worth while to deny such a monstrous charge, but it indicates to the agricultural and wage-earning classes of Canada how bitter will be the opposition which they must face before they secure justice. Hill and Ellison exercised the same influence in bringing about the Ottawa delegation—nothing. The latter appears to be a new brand of Canadian statesman. It is to be hoped, for the benefit of Canada, that the supply is limited.

We have extended the time for receiving reports of co-operative work done by farmers' organizations till March 15. Will all secretaries kindly see that reports of their work, together with results, are sent to us by that time?

Those eighteen prominent Liberals in Toronto who have petitioned Laurier against reciprocity are all financiers, bankers, railway directors, manufacturers or are identified in some way with the big interests. No matter what they represent they are only eighteen men. Surely the time has come when legislation in Canada will be in favor of people and not merely in favor of property. There are too many pocket patriots talking about the good of the country when they mean their own good.

In the House of Commons last week Dr. Schaffner concluded his demand for government operation of the terminal elevators with the following words: "Today the ship of these farmers is afloat. It is controlled by competent officers and manned by able seamen, and the port to which it is making is the port of the greatest good to the greatest number." This is the real fact of the case. Government operation of the terminals is the only square deal to the farmer.

A full page "Appeal to Laurier" with a huge picture of the premier in the centre has recently been published as an advertisement in many leading daily papers throughout Canada. This appeal originated in the Montreal Daily Star, owned by Sir Hugh Graham. The substance of the article is an appeal to Laurier's patriotism and loyalty in order that he will not allow the reciprocity agreement to go through parliament. Of course the manufacturers and pocket patriots at once decided to reproduce the article broadcast. It costs a lot of money to spread this "patriotism," but it is the kind that may pay. Commercial patriotism is the kind dealt in by these gentlemen who prate their loyalty and propagate patriotism by advertisements.

Opponents of reciprocity say the farmers have asked too much. They seem to forget that for the past thirty years the manufacturers have asked too much—and got it; the railways have asked too much—and got it; the steel industries asked too much—and got it. And so on down the line. Of course it is all right for the special interests to have all they want. But it is a very serious thing for the farmers and working classes to have a square deal.