

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, January 17th, 1917

THE BRANDON CONVENTION

Thousands of Grain Growers have gone to the front "to do their bit" in the struggle for freedom. Thousands of others, too old for enlistment, are represented on the firing line by their sons. Thousands, however, still remain at home doing equally necessary work in the production of food supplies for the Allied armies. The battles of freedom are not all being fought in France and Flanders. They are also being fought at home. The Grain Growers at the Brandon Convention last week made it very clear that altho doing their part in the military struggle, they were determined that the fires of democracy at home should not be permitted to burn low in this great crisis. Despite the depletion of the ranks of the organization thru enlistment, upwards of 600 Grain Growers were present at the Convention, making it one of the largest in the history of the association. It was evident that the war and the problems arising out of the war were foremost in the minds of the delegates present. The spirit of the organization was very well expressed in the following resolution which was unanimously adopted:—

"WHEREAS the British Empire and her Allies are engaged in a life and death struggle in which we believe the interests of civilization are at stake:

"AND WHEREAS the Canadian Government, in order that Canada might render more effective service in the prosecution of the war, has undertaken to make a census of the man power of the Dominion with the expressed view of organizing it to the highest possible point of efficiency:

"THEREFORE be it resolved that this Convention endorse the action of the Government in this regard, but while endorsing it, desires to urge in the strongest possible terms our abhorrence of private profiteering on the part of those engaged in the manufacture or furnishing of war supplies of any kind:

"AND we also urge that a census of the wealth of Canada should be immediately taken with a view of imposing upon it the full share of the burden it should bear in this time of national sacrifice:

"AND further, these resources can only be organized to their full efficiency by a National Government in which the interests of the political parties shall be made entirely subservient to the interests of the State."

The Grain Growers are willing, as they always have been willing, to bear their full share of every national burden and they are determined that the war shall be prosecuted to a successful conclusion. But they have the courage to speak out and express their views on the waste and graft that has characterized Canada's participation in the war and the inefficiency of any purely Party Government to handle effectively our national problems at this time.

FARMERS MEAN BUSINESS

The National Political Platform, prepared and issued by the Canadian Council of Agriculture last month, was discussed in detail at the Brandon convention last week and unanimously adopted without alteration. It was the feeling of the delegates present that the platform crystallized the thought of the organized farmers of the West and that while it had been prepared by the Canadian Council of Agriculture, it was not narrow in seeking the interests of the farmers alone, but represented the best interests of the community at large. As many readers of The Guide may not have retained the platform as it appeared in the issue of December 13, we herewith reproduce it in full:—

THE CUSTOMS TARIFF

Whereas the war has revealed the amazing financial strength of Great Britain, which has enabled her to finance not only her own part in the struggle, but also to assist in financing her Allies to the extent of hundreds of millions of pounds, this enviable position being due to the

free trade policy which has enabled her to draw her supplies freely from every quarter of the globe and consequently to undersell her competitors on the world's markets, and because this policy has not only been profitable to Great Britain, but has greatly strengthened the bonds of Empire by facilitating trade between the Motherland and her overseas dominions, we believe that the best interests of the Empire and of Canada would be served by reciprocal action on the part of Canada thru gradual reductions of the tariff on British imports, having for its object a closer union and a better understanding between Canada and the Motherland and by so doing not only strengthen the hands of Great Britain in the life and death struggle in which she is now engaged, but at the same time bring about a great reduction in the cost of living to our Canadian people;

And Whereas the protective tariff has fostered combines, trusts and "gentlemen's agreements" in almost every line of Canadian industrial enterprise, by means of which the people of Canada, both urban and rural, have been shamefully exploited thru the elimination of competition, the ruination of many of our smaller industries and the advancement of prices on practically all manufactured goods to the full extent permitted by the tariff;

And Whereas agriculture—the basic industry upon which the success of all other industries primarily depends—is almost stagnant thruout Canada as shown by the declining rural population in both Eastern and Western Canada, due largely to the greatly increased cost of agricultural implements and machinery, clothing, boots and shoes, building material and practically everything the farmer has to buy, caused by the protective tariff, so that it is becoming impossible for farmers generally to carry on farming operations profitably;

And Whereas the protective tariff is the most wasteful and costly method ever designed for raising national revenue, because for every dollar obtained thereby for the public treasury, at least three dollars pass into the pockets of the protected interests, thereby building up a privileged class at the expense of the masses, thus making the rich richer and the poor poorer;

And Whereas the protective tariff has been and is a chief corrupting influence in our national life because the protected interests, in order to maintain their unjust privileges, have contributed lavishly to political campaign funds, thus encouraging both political parties to look to them for support thereby lowering the standard of public morality;

Therefore be it Resolved that the Canadian Council of Agriculture, representing the organized farmers of Canada, urges that as a means of bringing about these much needed reforms and at the same time reducing the high cost of living, now proving such a burden on the people of Canada, our tariff laws should be amended as follows:—

1.—By reducing the customs duty on goods imported from Great Britain to one half the rates charged under the general tariff and that further gradual, uniform reductions be made in the remaining tariff on British imports that will ensure complete free trade between Great Britain and Canada in five years.

2.—That the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911, which still remains on the United States statute books, be accepted by the Parliament of Canada.

3.—That all food stuffs not included in the Reciprocity Agreement be placed on the free list.

4.—That agricultural implements, farm machinery, vehicles, fertilizers, coal, lumber, cement, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils be placed on the free list.

5.—That the customs tariff on all the necessities of life be materially reduced.

6.—That all tariff concessions granted to other countries be immediately extended to Great Britain.

TAXATION FOR REVENUE

As these tariff reductions will very considerably reduce the national revenue derived from that source, the Canadian Council of Agriculture would recommend that in order to provide the necessary additional revenue for carrying on the government of the country and for the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion, direct taxation be imposed in the following manner:—

1.—By a direct tax on unimproved land values, including all natural resources.

2.—By a sharply graduated income tax upon all incomes over \$4,000 a year.

3.—By a heavy graduated inheritance tax on large estates.

4.—By a graduated income tax on the profits of corporations over ten per cent.

OTHER NECESSARY REFORMS

The Canadian Council of Agriculture desires to endorse also the following policies as in the best interests of the people of Canada:—

1.—The nationalization of all railway, telegraph and express companies.

2.—That no more natural resources be alienated from the crown, but brought into use only under short term leases, in which the interests of the public shall be properly safeguarded, such leases to be granted only by public auction.

3.—Direct legislation, including the initiative and referendum and the right of recall.

4.—Publicity of political campaign fund contributions and expenditures both before and after elections.

5.—The abolition of the patronage system.

6.—Full provincial autonomy in liquor legislation, including manufacture, export and import.

7.—That the extension of the franchise to women in any province shall automatically admit them to the federal franchise.

After the platform had been discussed and adopted, some discussion took place as to the ways and means of giving effect to it. A committee was appointed to draft a resolution covering this matter and the convention adopted it unanimously in the following terms:—

"That the National Political Platform prepared by the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and adopted by this convention, be referred to the local associations, with a request that it be thoroughly discussed in each local and be voted upon not later than February 15, and that the result be forwarded to the central office promptly.

"And, further, we would urge that every member of the association who votes for the adoption of this platform should use every legitimate means at the next Dominion election to secure the election of the candidate who can be depended upon to use his best efforts to have the principles of this platform enacted into legislation.

"And, further, as this platform represents the best interests of the entire community, both urban and rural, we would recommend that if a favorable vote is reported by the local district officers be notified to that effect by the central office and be requested to take the initiative in making the necessary arrangements for a plan of campaign in support of the platform."

It was announced that the Canadian Council of Agriculture is preparing a handbook of information on every plank in the platform, which will be issued in the course of another month to the local associations thruout the three provinces. The great need is educational work in order that the great mass of the people of Western Canada, both urban and rural, may be encouraged to support candidates in favor of this platform. It should be a matter of pride to the Western farmers and all others in support of this platform that for the first time in their lives they will know definitely upon what they are voting. Ordinarily the issues in an election are so confused that no man knows what he votes for. This time there will be something definite.

SAVE OUR SOLDIERS

Over a year ago Mr. Lloyd George in speaking of the production of war munitions declared that "every lathe, every hammer is as useful as a machine gun or rifle." To show still further the importance of munitions in the present war, Dr. Christopher Addison, the Minister of Munitions in the new British cabinet, speaking at Bedford recently, said:—

"I doubt if there is one of the great powers now fighting which if asked whether they preferred to have at their immediate disposal an additional 1,000 guns with the necessary ammunition, or an additional five divisions of infantry, would not at once prefer to take the guns and ammunition. What has happened in Roumania only strengthens me in that opinion."

Sir Robert Borden, after visiting the battle-front, made a public address in London in regard to the supply of munitions, in which he declared "that the whole power of the nation must be consecrated to the task." The Toronto News, chief journalistic mouthpiece of the Borden government, in its issue of December 23, 1916, said:—

"The Allies are still greatly concerned to secure in the shortest possible time an adequate supply of munitions. Only with an abundance of munitions can they obtain a complete victory over a