

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, November 16th, 1910

FARMERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Our predictions are being fulfilled by the actions of the local associations throughout the three Prairie Provinces in appointing delegates to go to Ottawa on December 16. The farmers are taking hold of the matter in all seriousness, as becomes such an important situation. When the farmers find it necessary to send a huge delegation to Ottawa to present a Bill of Rights to their duly elected representatives in Parliament it can well be considered that a crisis has arrived in national affairs. Farmers as a class in all countries are the last to resent injustice, but when thoroughly aroused they possess a determination which brings them due consideration from the powers that be. This is the case in Western Canada and Ontario today. For a generation back the farmers have carried certain other classes on their backs and have done it with the hope that at some time these parasites would fulfil their pledge and remove the burden. Now, however, these special privileged classes have been brought face to face with their former pledges and have openly and insolently said to the farmers, "You must continue to carry us whether you want to or not." The farmers are a long suffering class of people, but this is the last straw. They are now demanding a square deal at the hands of Parliament. They will get that square deal. Of that we are assured because the farmers possess the power not only to demand but to secure their rights. They may not secure it all at once, but it behooves Parliament to give a substantial and immediate guarantee of their intention to grant justice to the farmers.

By the time this reaches our readers there will be more than one hundred delegates appointed. Prospects are that there will be at least four hundred from the West and nearly as many from Ontario. These men will represent the agricultural sentiment of all Canada. In the West they presented their case to Sir Wilfrid Laurier last summer, and the fairness, moderation and justice of their demands has excited the admiration of the whole English-speaking world. The only opponents are the beneficiaries of special privilege and those politicians of both parties who consider it wise to cater to the corporations rather than to the people. A further presentation of the farmers' case, carefully elaborated as to causes underlying and supported by the independent farmers' organizations of Eastern Canada, will carry still more weight. Though we do not favor any rabid demands on the part of the farmers, yet we see no reason for any undue humility on their part. They are producing more wealth than all the other classes in Canada put together, and that is all that is necessary to explain when presenting their demands to their elected representatives. There is no attempt on the part of the farmers to embarrass the federal government. The presentation is being made to Parliament and its message is one to be carefully considered by every member.

At the present time ninety-five per cent. of the people of Canada are being taxed for the benefit of the other five per cent. We are told that this makes the farmers prosperous. But when a farmer pays 30 cents tax on every dollar's worth of boots; 35 cents tax on every dollar's worth of woollen clothing; 20 cents tax on every dollar's worth of agricultural implements; and the major portion of this tax goes into the pockets of a few "patriotic" manufacturers,

it is difficult to see where the prosperity comes in for the farmer. If this means prosperity for the farmers then the tax should be doubled at once so that farmers may become wealthy. This nonsense has gone far enough and the farmer cannot be fooled any further.

One thing that should be insisted upon by the Ottawa delegation is that there should be no delay in reducing the tariff. It can be done with ease at this winter's session and it should be done. Any tariff commission that may be appointed will only delay the relief and will accomplish nothing. There has already been a surfeit of commissions. The government is already seized of the necessary facts to work upon and has no excuse for delay. The appointment of a tariff commission will mean that the tariff will not be altered for two years and even then the tariff commission will not likely bring in a report satisfactory to the farmers of Canada. Western farmers have gone on record in favor of a tariff for revenue only. The great majority of our manufacturing industries in Canada are well able to stand upon their own feet now without governmental assistance. The tariff should be completely abolished on these articles. There may be some few industries that will suffer if the tariff protection is removed, and in these cases it is for the people of Canada to decide if it is better to have these articles made in Canada or to get them a great deal cheaper somewhere else. A tariff for revenue can be worked out in only one way, namely, by having an excise duty equal to the customs tariff on each article that is to be taxed. This is the only way by which the whole tariff revenue can be turned into the Dominion treasury where it is intended to go. This is the method adopted in England and the only method by which tariff for revenue can be imposed. It would be a great boon to Canada and would end the system in vogue today by which the government takes money out of the farmers' pockets and puts it into the pockets of the manufacturers. It is real tariff for revenue and that is what the farmers have demanded.

The huge bonuses on the steel and iron industries in Canada expire next year. These bonuses to the extent of \$14,000,000 have enabled these industries to pay big dividends upon their watered capital, and the steel and iron magnates will fight hard to have them renewed. It is just that much found money to them. If Parliament will not renew the bounties then there will be a fight to have a very high tariff placed on steel and iron for the same purpose. This should be fought to a finish by the farmers. Today in Canada there is growing up a system of monopolies similar to those which practically rule the United States. Our tariff and bounty system fosters and encourages these monopolies, and ten years more of the present methods will make representative rule a farce. The classes of special privilege will have the shackles so tightly rivetted upon the necks of the people that nothing short of a revolution will bring relief. Now is the time to remove the trouble before it has become too deep-seated. The farmers should not be deterred from demanding their full rights by the fear that they will not get all they ask for. They are in the midst of a big fight for their rights and it will not be settled for a number of years. They should demand full justice and then see that they get it. Public sentiment is behind them, even though the corporation press and the beneficiaries of special privilege would endeavor to have

them think otherwise. If the farmers have a grievance then redress is worth fighting for; if not, then they should leave things as they are. They can get whatever measure of justice they demand, but they must be firm. The tariff should be reduced this winter and reach a revenue basis within five years.

PROTECTION, LABOR, MONOPOLY

Under the protective tariff monopolies are growing up in Canada at an enormous rate. As soon as the manufacture of any commodity is controlled by a number of capitalists the price of that commodity is immediately advanced. The extra profit goes into the pockets of the capitalists. The manufactured goods are not improved in quality and the laborer receives no better remuneration for his services. By the leather combine, the cement combine and the implement combine the price is steadily increased. The workman receives no better remuneration, because his scale of wages is largely regulated by the unions, and the employers will grant no increase unless threatened by a strike. Should an increase be granted, the workman would be little better off under the present conditions because he would have to pay for everything at tariff enhanced prices. Let us consider who would profit if the price of Western wheat should go up five cents per bushel. Naturally we would say the farmers would be that much better off. But would they? Not at all. The monopolies which now control manufactures in Canada would at once note the prosperity of the farmers. The prices of manufactured goods would go up little by little and the five cents would be eaten up, so that it would practically all go into the pockets of the monopolies. The farmer has no protection for his labor, neither has the workman. There is no tariff against labor. Farmers are being rushed into this country by our government. The manufacturers favor this to increase their markets. Skilled workmen can come from any country in the world and compete with our own. The farmer sells his produce and also his labor in competition with the world. The workmen and the farmers buy in a protected market where the profits, huge and unreasonable, go into the pockets of protected manufacturers. Wherein lies the remedy? It is simply a matter of reducing the tariff, and placing a tax upon monopoly in every form. This system and no other will give "equal rights to all and special privileges to none." The tariff needs only to be understood by the people of Canada and it will be remedied.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION OR NOTHING

While the tariff burden is the heaviest the Western people have to carry, yet the railway and elevator situation appeals more strongly because the robbery is more evident. The farmers have demanded public ownership and operation of the Hudson Bay Railway and also of the terminal elevators. Not a single argument has been advanced against their demands except that the government does not like the principle of public ownership. The people are supposed to be the government. If the people want government ownership then they have a right to it. No other means can be adopted that will make the terminal elevators give a square deal to the farmers and protect the quality of Canadian wheat on the markets of the world. The Minnesota law will not restore the con-