

Staples, M.P., Thinks!

By W. D. STAPLES, M.P.

NOTE:—Along with his other numerous duties in the House of Commons, Mr. Staples has constituted himself a committee of one to investigate Mr. Staples, The Guide and the Reciprocity agreement. He has discovered that The Guide is an arch conspirator, in fact a diabolical traitor, endeavoring to betray the Western farmers into the hands of unscrupulous and designing politicians; he has discovered that Mr. Staples is a statesman of exceptional ability who knows more about the effect of reciprocity than any man in Western Canada; he has discovered that one political party is always right and that the other is always wrong, and that the reciprocity agreement will prove the undoing of Canada. All these brilliant discoveries are set forth in the following article in Mr. Staples own inimitable style.—Editor.

House of Commons,
Ottawa, March 27, 1911.

Editor, Guide:—I have just been handed a copy of your issue of 22nd inst., in which, under the heading of "Reciprocity: Then the Rest," you presume to read myself and others out of public life unless we follow your directions by voting with the Dominion government for its reciprocity pact. You seem especially determined that anyone who views the effects of this deal differently from yourselves, and acts on his belief, must be branded a "Betrayal," an ally of "Special Privilege" and all the rest, and you call on our people to vote us out. Have you always done thus, Mr. Editor—Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Henders? Have you always called on the electors to destroy those members who fail to favor such and every plank or partial plank that your organization has asked for? Permit me a little space to enquire and ascertain whether you are what you claim to be or rather the worst form of that species you so loudly denounce—the political partisan.

The Elevator Question

About a year ago the Conservative government of Manitoba adopted the principle of government operation of internal elevators in response to the demand of our farmers. They at once appointed the commission, installed the machinery and got at the business. But because they did not abdicate to your association the naming of and responsibility for said commission, you execrated the existence of that government and demanded that they be hurled from power. On the other hand, the Western Conservatives in this House have for years urged, by speech and resolution, for Dominion government operation of terminal elevators, without the slightest encouragement from the Liberal side. Did you call on the people to vote those Liberals out? Only this session the whole Conservative party here voted for, and the whole Liberal party voted against the following resolution of Dr. Schaffner:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of operating terminal and transfer elevators is detrimental to the interests of the Western grain producers, and that the government should take immediate steps to operate the terminal elevators at Port William and Port Arthur, and the transfer elevators between those terminals and the Atlantic seaboard."

Have you been straining your vocal anatomy, crying to the people to vote the Western Liberals out? Not that I have heard at this distance. And still the above resolution is a full and definite statement of not only a feature of the Grain Growers' demands, but of by far the most important feature as urged by your delegation of December last. The government are appointing a commission to enquire, etc., with power, but no direction to operate and no word or thought of having someone else appoint it. Please send me a marked copy of your issue calling on your readers to vote this government out.

Chilled Meat Resolution

The organization that put you in charge of the "Guide" urged also the promotion by this parliament of a cold storage and chilled meat system—to encourage stock raising—a truly far-sighted policy from a farmers' viewpoint. On December 13 last Dr. Sproule (Conservative) moved the following resolution; the entire opposition supported it; the Liberals voted it down:

"That the agricultural, horticultural and animal industries of Canada would be greatly benefitted by the

establishment of abattoirs and a more efficient system of cold storage under government supervision, so as to secure the fullest development of those industries, a more perfect preparation and preservation of the products, and the transportation of those products to the markets in the best possible condition;

"That, in the opinion of this House, the government ought to give immediate and effective consideration and attention to this very important subject."

After the vote on this resolution where was your "betrayal," "Special Privilege" article? Out of print? Why did you not switch in some of the type you are so free with now and sentence Laurier and the Western Liberals? Personally I have known the "Guide" management long enough to know why, and a lot more are learning fast.

Hudson Bay Railway

The Grain Growers' Association have also asked for government operation of the Hudson's Bay Railway—government ownership of course, but it is the operation that counts. The government refused to accede—the question is shelved by Sir Wilfrid. Mr. Borden

and supported himself so irresistibly that no one has yet attempted an answer, and Mr. Borden has referred to his argument with distinct approval. Two Western Conservatives followed in support and no adjournment was moved, so that the debate was in order to be taken up again the Monday following and pressed to a vote. Sir Wilfrid Laurier then, and twice since, even against his distinct promise, moved the adjournment of the House, notwithstanding Mr. Meighen's protests, in order that the subject might not be pressed. Your very obliging journal comes to Sir Wilfrid's rescue on March 8 by criticising Mr. Meighen, because you say there were eight days on which he might have spoken before he did on January 18. Well, Sir, the data presented in that speech is not collected in a day—Mr. Meighen was, however, ready to proceed before December 16, but at Mr. Borden's suggestion that probably the farmers would desire to present their own views on the question first, he deferred and could not get on until after Christmas recess, and then spoke on the first opportunity. Many other resolutions are standing yet. Mr. Henders and Mr. McKenzie on December 16 stated in my hearing that they would have resented Mr.

city treaties of this kind will pretend to do for him by driving those provinces apart. If you think there is health and healing in the cry of "Special Privilege," why not bark up this tree for a while?

Likes to Be Watched

You keep imploring the farmers to watch us—watch us. That is what I, for one, desire. And being a farmer myself, I know they will watch us in fairness and broadness of spirit, and not with the whining, warped prejudice you have tried so hard to instill. We also, as you will observe, have been watching you.

Don't Like The Guide

As respects the present reciprocity treaty, you run all over the garden to tell me that my constituents are for the government policy and that I really must be that way too, whether I like it or not. In the next column you say Mr. Staples should "do his own thinking" and not "allow others to do his thinking for him." Between these two contradictory principles I choose the latter—and will ask to be excused if I do not permit even Messrs. Henders and McKenzie to do my thinking for me. My constituents are for the most part farmers like myself. Many of them read your paper because it claims to be a farm journal. They have trusted you to present fairly both sides of all questions that affect them. In this you have betrayed their trust—betrayed it flagrantly and meanly. There must be an open, fair and full discussion of this pact—after that I will gladly leave myself and all to the people—but that duty, unfortunately, we cannot confide to you.

Has Not Space for Views

It would be impracticable within the limits of a letter to argue out the various phases of this treaty. That must be done from the platform and face to face with the people. I, as yet, know of no one who, at first, opposed the deal and afterwards became convinced in its favor; but I can name hundreds, especially among the farmers of Ontario, who were favorably disposed a month ago, and are now its firm and earnest opponents. I will just refer to a few considerations that bring about this result.

Some Tariff Arguments

Consider the treaty first as if the United States and Canada only were affected.

Farm products and natural products—just as grown—are free both ways. Not very long ago the members of the government said protection was a curse to everybody—manufacturers and farmers and all. The Conservative party said that moderate protection for both alike was necessary if we were to build up a nation, in competition with the great republic and the far advanced communities of the old world. By this doctrine the Conservative party still stands—and as the country advances, insists that each duty be lowered and adjusted as the industry gains in strength, but that no injustice be done to any class. The responsibilities of office forced the Liberal party, though, to alter their doctrine. They were forced by the necessities of our existence as a nation, by the stern face of facts to continue the national policy. We have prospered. In some cases we claim, I think rightly, that they have not reduced the duty on manufactured goods as the circumstances warranted, and I instance farm implements, cement and oils. I will never consent to a duty for the purpose of paying dividends on

Warning to the Politicians

On Dec. 16 last the organized farmers of Canada went to Ottawa 800 strong. They were intelligent men and knew what they wanted. They were tired of the bickerings of political parties and of the reign of Special Privilege. In the House of Commons chamber on that beautiful winter morning those farmers told the politicians what they wanted; what they were going to have. The whole story of the trip and of what the farmers did and said is published in the book entitled "The Siege of Ottawa." It cannot be obtained anywhere else. Every farmer should have a copy and should see that his friends have a copy. They will be sent to any address by return mail postpaid for 25 cents each. Five copies for \$1.00. Lower prices for orders of twenty-five or more copies.

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has absolutely committed the Conservative party in the following words, Hansard Page 3314, February 9, 1911:

"I think the government ought to have regard to the wishes of the West as to the operation of that road. It should not be placed under the absolute and sole control of any one transportation line, but it ought to be operated by means of a commission so as to give to every one of the great railways of the West equal rights over it, and to give the people of this country complete control of rates."

Had the Western Conservatives anything to do with bringing their party to this position? You, Mr. Editor, have been skilful to conceal the fact—to keep out of discussion the difference between the parties on this great question. I am tired asking why.

The Tariff

Every move in the House since I have been a member (1904) looking toward a lowering of the duties on manufactured goods has been made by a Conservative. Dr. Schaffner in 1907 moved to reduce the larger farm implements to 10 per cent. This was supported by 80 per cent. of the Conservatives, and every Liberal present voted against it. Again, this session, Mr. Arthur Meighen moved for a substantial reduction on all farm implements,

Meighen presenting his argument before the farmers arrived to present theirs, and yet they, through you, Mr. Editor, now shield Sir Wilfrid by condemning in Mr. Meighen what they then so clearly approved.

Railway Commission

Still again our Western agriculturalists have felt that they have not got full justice at the hands of the railway commission and have urged that they be represented in that body by a practical farmer. On March 15, 1909, I myself moved this very plank in the following words:

"That, in the opinion of this House, the vacancy on the board of railway commissioners caused by the death of the late Hon. Mr. Greenway, should be immediately filled by the appointment of an able and practical farmer of the West in order that the best interests of the agriculturalists may be protected."

This was supported on vote by the entire opposition and voted down by all the Liberal members. From that date on you seemed to quite forget this necessity. The vacancy still remains and no farmer on the board. In my judgment an effective exercise of control of railway rates and rules would do more to help the Western farmer by cementing our provinces together in cheap transportation than ten recipro-