

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, November 13th, 1912

DEFINITE TARIFF POLICY WANTED

Nothing must be allowed to overshadow the tariff question in parliament this winter. Naturally the government will take refuge in the enactment of legislation to provide a tariff commission. Tariff commissions on this continent have been in the past merely bulwarks of the protective system. It needs no commission to discover the iniquities of Canada's tariff laws. The government would be better advised to take hold of the evils of the tariff as they did so commendably in the case of the cement duty. But presumably the government is chary of offending the manufacturers and allied interests, whose influence caused the defeat of reciprocity. Aside from the Reciprocity Pact, which is a splendid measure of freedom as far as it goes, the Liberal party has no definite policy of tariff revision downward. The last official announcements came from Hon. Mr. Fielding and Hon. Mr. Mackenzie King on the eve of the last election, and were positive declarations that the protective tariff would be maintained if the Liberal party was returned to power. These declarations were made to the manufacturers publicly, on behalf of the government. During the Macdonald election campaign several prominent Western Liberal members publicly advocated:—

Reciprocity with the United States.

Increase in the British Preference.

General tariff reduction on the necessities of life.

Free Agricultural Implements.

This is very close to the Farmers' Tariff Platform. If the Western Liberals intend to endorse and support this platform through thick and thin, then they are the men that the Western farmers are looking for. But the fact must not be overlooked that the present tariff was made by the Liberal party, and except for the reciprocity agreement, which does not materially affect the tariff on manufactured goods, the Liberal party is still officially committed to the present protective tariff. Acting on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread," the organized farmers gave very strong support to the Liberal party in the last election because of their negotiation of the Reciprocity Agreement. The organized farmers have thus earned the right to ask the Western Liberals, and the Liberal party, for a definite and clear-cut statement of their attitude towards the Farmers' Tariff Platform. Prior to 1896 the Liberal party were near free traders, but abandoned their policy when elected to office. Prior to the election last year the majority of the Western Conservatives declared themselves unmistakably for very material tariff reductions, but in office they have forgotten their promises and allow their leaders to regulate their opinions. In view of these facts it is fitting that the Western Liberals should declare whether their endorsement of the Farmers' Tariff Platform is or is not subject to the approval of their party leaders. The Western people have been fed on pre-election promises and post-election forgetfulness for many years. What is needed now is men who will support the Farmers' Tariff Policy not only when in Opposition, but even more forcibly and effectively when in power, regardless of the attitude of the party with which they are affiliated. Is the Liberal party prepared to endorse the policy advocated by the Western Liberals during the past summer? If not, are the Western Liberals prepared to stand by the policy they have advocated, regardless of party? This is the question that thousands of farmers want answered.

THE PAUPER LABOR HUMBUG

The manufacturers who benefit by the Protective Tariff must of course have arguments of some kind to defend the system which enables them to exact their toll from the long suffering public. If they told the truth and said they believed in Protection because it increased their dividends and made it possible for them to get real money for watered stock, the public might refuse to be robbed for such a purpose. Their arguments, however, are not usually such as will bear inspection. They say, for instance, that they cannot compete with their rivals in other countries because foreign manufacturers have the advantage of cheap labor. "We must have protection," they say, "or our market would be flooded with goods produced by the pauper labor of Europe and we should have to close our factories." And yet our Canadian manufacturers export their goods to Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia and sell them there in competition with goods made right on the ground by this so called "cheap labor," and often against the handicap of hostile tariffs. The fact is that low priced labor is not cheap labor at all. Low priced labor is always unintelligent labor, and consequently it is inefficient and uneconomical. There is an abundance of low priced labor in India and Egypt, and those countries both produce large quantities of raw cotton and use large quantities of manufactured cotton goods. If low priced labor was the cheapest labor the great cotton factories of the world would be in Egypt and India, but instead they are in England and the United States where wages are comparatively high. The countries and the industries which pay the highest wages attract and develop the most intelligent and highly skilled workers, and the result is that although wages are on a higher scale, so much more and better work is done that the cost of labor is actually lowest where wages are highest, provided, of course, that the natural conditions are suited to the industry. In an article on this subject published recently in the Public, and quoted in The Guide, Stoughton Cooley cites the testimony of Wm M. Evarts, a former United States secretary of state, who declared as the result of exhaustive enquiry that: "The average American workman performs from once and a half to twice as much work as the average European workman." The late James G. Blaine, another American authority, a Protectionist, by the way, like Mr. Evarts, after investigating the cost of manufacturing cotton cloth, came to the same conclusion and said: "Undoubtedly the inequalities in the wages of English and American operatives are more than equalized by the greater efficiency of the latter and their longer hours of labor." Examples in support of this will readily occur to anyone who is familiar with methods of labor in Europe and in this country. Farm labor, for instance, is much more highly paid in Canada than in Britain, but the Canadian hired man, receiving the year round \$20 a month and board, worth altogether \$35 a month, does more than twice as much work as the English farm laborer whose wage is only half that amount. It is the same in other occupations. Low waged labor is always poor labor, and when our manufacturers talk about being unable to compete with the "pauper labor" of Europe, they are only talking humbug.

A considerable number of Canadian newspapers that live on the patronage of Special Privilege are greatly elated over letters that we publish in The Guide criticising our own policy. It seems to agitate these journals that we give our readers the privilege of express-

ing their views, no matter how much they are opposed to our own. We are conducting the Grain Growers' Guide for educational purposes, and for that reason we publish both sides of every question. We want our readers to see what their opponents think and from the multiplicity of advice decide upon the right. The subsidized press publishes only one side of the question and therefore sees only one side. But the day of the subsidized press is passing. The people are demanding the truth.

RECIPROCAL DEMURRAGE

A self-contained community being a thing of the past, stagnation and death would speedily follow the stoppage of external and internal trade. England would starve in three weeks, if her food supply from overseas were cut off. In a country so far inland as the Prairie Provinces, our problem is with the railroads, that these arteries of our life do not get clogged up. It is only fair to note that sometimes the freight congestion is increased by causes for which the railroad companies are not responsible, such as the snow blockade or because consignees prefer to use box cars as store rooms, finding it cheaper to pay the demurrage charge of \$1.00 a day until these goods are wanted, than to provide other storage accommodation. No objection could be urged against making the demurrage so high that this practice of withdrawing freight cars from their proper use would not pay. But the onus of the grain congestion rests upon the railways more than upon anyone else. While they exact \$1.00 a day from the farmer who fails to get his car filled within twenty-four hours, however far he may be from the railway, the company may move it as slowly as it likes once the car is filled. Many farmers' grain took from six to ten weeks last winter to reach the head of the lakes. Thousands of bushels spoiled before reaching the terminals, yet the farmers had no remedy. As shown in a recent issue fourteen of the American States have enacted Reciprocal Demurrage laws. The railways are taxed up to five dollars per car per day for failure to move freight once it is loaded, and the car must be forwarded at least fifty or sixty miles per day or the railway is again taxed up to five dollars per car per day. This is simply justice, making both parties to a shipping contract equally responsible for needless delay. It is more than time that Canadian railways were brought under demurrage penalties. Why should the farmer be taxed for slight delays, delays for which there is very good excuse while the railway goes unpunished for a constant series of wearisome, wilful and damaging delays? The general opinion of Canada, perhaps fostered by railway influence, is that the Board of Railway Commissioners would be exceeding its powers in bringing the railways to time by means of reciprocal demurrage. But the 1908 amendment to the Canada Railway Act, clearly gives this power in the following section:—

"The Board may make regulations, applying generally or to any particular railways or any portion thereof, imposing charges for default or delays by any company in furnishing accommodation, appliances, or means as aforesaid or in receiving, loading, carrying, unloading or delivering traffic and may enforce payment of such charges by companies to any person injuriously affected by such faults or delay."

That is very plain, as laws go. They have the power. The need is urgent. It is up to the Railway Commission.

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