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To the Delegates of the Western Liberal Convention

Winnipeg, August, 1917

You have been called together to prepare a progressive national platform. The time is opportune. There are many momentous questions facing the country which must be met very soon. Serious problems will arise after the war, such as the re-organization of industry, the question of employment, providing for an enormous public debt, land for soldiers, the very urgent railway problem, etc. There is grave danger of a very serious period of depression following the sudden relief of the war strain and the general re-organization and re-adjustment of our commercial, financial and industrial life which will immediately become necessary. You will remember that about the time the war was so suddenly forced upon us, unemployment prevailed to an alarming extent throughout Canada. Every city was crowded with unemployed men and women and great poverty and distress prevailed. A similar situation after the war is greatly to be feared. Wise action now in planning for the future will greatly mitigate these unfavorable prospects. Indeed, we believe it is possible to adopt a policy which will largely prevent the development of these serious consequences and speedily restore the nation to a sound and healthy basis. The situation is therefore urgent. The progressive men of Eastern Canada are looking to the west to take the lead. Shall we prove equal to the occasion?

Foremost among the great problems which must be immediately faced is that of

Financing the Nation.

A long period of extravagant and unwise government, such for instance as that in connection with the railway policy, had already placed a heavy load of debt upon the country previous to the war. Since then it has expanded at a tremendous rate. It is evident that there will have to be a complete reorganization of our system of taxation. It is absolutely necessary, in order to avoid placing a burden upon the country that will prove disastrous, to provide for necessary revenues in a way that will be the least op-

pressive to the people. We believe that all necessary revenue can be provided in a way that will not only be less oppressive than by our present system, but that will not be at all oppressive. Indeed, we believe it can be provided in a way that will have a buoyant and stimulating effect upon the industry and development of the country.

The Power of Taxation.

Taxation is the most important power which a government may possess. The system of taxation in effect will always exert a tremendous influence upon the condition of the country. Industry and production may be encouraged by wise taxation, or oppressed by burdensome charges to such an extent as to cause wholesale unemployment and poverty. By taxation we may open unlimited avenues for the profitable production of wealth, or we may so restrict opportunity for the production of wealth as to bring distress and misery upon the people. By unwise taxation we have created monopolies that have plundered the people and concentrated vast wealth in the hands of a small privileged class. By taxation we can abolish privilege and monopoly and cause an equitable distribution of wealth. If we are to become prosperous after the war and avoid the depression which seems imminent, we must cease our system of taxation which is so burdensome to production and which has led to such vast concentration of wealth, and adopt a policy which will encourage production, break up monopoly and diffuse the profit of production among the people, instead of having it go to make huge fortunes for a small privileged class.

The Foundation of Prosperity.

Our chief resource is land. We have great areas of agricultural land, suited to wonderful diversity of production. Grain lands, stock lands, fruit lands, etc. Our timber and mineral lands are among the richest in the world. These lands, with our fisheries, water-powers, etc., give us unlimited opportunity for the employment of labor in the production of