

mileages. Across the line the railways allow these articles to be reshipped out from local supply points at the remainder of the through rate from the original shipping points. Not so the railways in this country.

The following are the figures for mixed carload shipments, as mentioned above, each car carrying 15,000 pounds of implements, the same of binder twine, and 3,000 pounds of gasoline engines:

	Miles	Freight Bill
From Fargo to Fleming, N.D.	25	\$ 6.60
From Brandon to Souris, or Griswold	25	25.50
Rate from Brandon \$18.90 (or 286 per cent.) higher		
From Fargo to Absaraka, N.D.	31	6.60
From Brandon to Oak Lake, or Switzer Junction	33	29.40
Rate from Brandon \$22.80 (or 345 per cent.) higher		
From Fargo to Page, N.D.	46	9.90
From Brandon to Virden, or Lauder	50	40.20
Rate from Brandon \$30.30 (or 306 per cent.) higher		
From Fargo to Finley, N.D.	73	19.80
From Brandon to Kirkella, or Elva	74	54.30
Rate from Brandon \$34.40 (or 174 per cent.) higher		
From Fargo to McVile, N.D.	98	36.40
From Brandon to Carievale, or Red Jacket	98	69.30
Rate from Brandon \$42.90 (or 162 per cent.) higher		

Just consider what these figures mean. They enter into the cost of living of every man, woman and child in the country. Is there any wonder that the farmers of the West are not wealthy? Yet our governments make no effort to rectify this matter. The railway commission is apparently satisfied to allow this tribute to proceed. But are the people satisfied? Are the people willing to donate so much of their hard-earned money to a few railway magnates? This huge toll does not go to the employees. It goes into the pockets of the big shareholders and speculators. How long must the West remain as the milch cow to fatten the privileged few? How long?

POLITICAL PROGRESS

Noah Webster, a man of much wisdom, insists that the true definition of "Politics" is "the science of government." We wonder how he would define what is known as "politics" in Canada today. He would require a microscope of great strength to discover much science in our politics. With us it is the greatest game in the world. Every intelligent man in Canada knows that the chief legislation on our statute books is not in the interest of the people. The door of opportunity is partially closed to 95 per cent. of the population by laws enacted for the few. Yet we have representative government, so-called. Therefore these laws prevail by the consent of the people. These laws are skilfully designed to make an unequal distribution of wealth. They operate to the end that the greater part of the wealth created by all the people is gathered in by a few. This is no mere theory. It is an indisputable fact. Every man knows it. But, by keeping the people divided against themselves by appeals to prejudice or passion, Special Privilege remains continually in the ascendant. Suppose that a masked highwayman stood at the door of every store in the land, at every railway depot, at every market place, in every quarter section of land, and on every town lot, and, at the point of a woman and child to drop into his hat in cash the equal of 25 per cent. of their purchases or sales. How long would it be tolerated? But the highwayman is there just the same. He is unseen, but his toll is levied with unerring precision. Every man pays the

tribute, no matter whether he be a Conservative or a Liberal. And it is just because so many men are tied to party that this relentless highwayman is allowed to stalk through the land. If just for five years all men could forget that they ever belonged to a political party and would remember only that they were being plundered, the scene would change. No matter under which of the old political parties a man allows himself to be fooled, it costs him just as much. Every great reform has originated with the people and it will always be so. There is no use to look to our governments for relief until popular opinion is strong enough to compel action. Politicians always have their ear to the ground. Let us take care that they hear something from the West, and hear it plainly.

WHY NOT CHANGE IT?

The protected manufacturers, the railway magnates and all the Big Interests of Canada vie with each other in the emphasis with which they declare that the farmer is "the backbone of the country," that upon the prosperity of the farmer depends the prosperity of the nation, and that consequently everything should be done to promote the agricultural industry. We agree with them. At the same time we disagree with them when they maintain that a protective tariff is in the best interests of a "young country in the development stage." The pioneer of every country that is of any use is the farmer, then it is certainly advisable to encourage the farmers to come into the West and to remain here. If farmers really were encouraged in Canada the census returns would not be such sorry reading. What would be the result if the Canadian government could truthfully say to desirable people the world over:

"Welcome to Western Canada! There is vacant land in abundance. Select any land not in use that suits you. You will be asked to pay into the public treasury an annual tax upon the value of your land for public purposes, but no further taxes will be levied upon you. You are free to purchase your implements and the necessities of life in any part of the world where you can buy them cheapest; every assistance will be given to help you place your produce in the best markets under the sun. Your produce and your purchases will be transported to and from the world's markets at cost, and you will be assured of the full value of the product of your labor. Everything in reason will be done to assist you to a prosperous, contented and permanent home for yourself and your family, and it is hoped that you will freely exercise the full duties of citizenship and thus aid in building up the greatest and most prosperous nation the world has yet seen."

What an invitation that would be! What a rush there would be to the land! Homes would spring up everywhere and town and country would develop in proper proportion. But what are the facts? We want men and women on our land. We want them to stay there. How are we encouraging them? Is it not something like this:

"Welcome to Canada! You may have 160 acres of land free of charge—from 25 to 75 miles from the railway—if you have the courage and physique sufficient to remain there for three years. There are millions upon millions of acres of idle land much nearer to the railways, but this land is held out of use by speculators to be increased in value by your labors. You cannot have this land unless you pay the price set upon it by the speculators. You must buy all your implements and practically all the necessities of life in Canada and pay about 25 per cent. more than they are worth; if you purchase these in any other country the government will fine you 25 per cent. upon such purchases. This is what we call our 'protective tariff,' and we have it to make our people prosperous. The railways

in Western Canada will charge you higher rates than anywhere else in the world; forty per cent. higher than in Eastern Canada or in the Western States. The express companies will charge you sixty-six and two-thirds per cent. higher than in Eastern Canada. The greater portion of what you buy or sell will be controlled by a combine that will prevent you from securing anything like the full value of what you produce. If any improvements are made in these conditions you must make them yourself. You must not complain, however, or you will be criticized. Aside from this everything is splendid. The land is fertile and rich and cheap and the air is absolutely pure and quite free so that you can use all of it you may wish. Of course you may not like these conditions, but if not you can move into the cities and do worse, or you can leave the country. Many others have been compelled to do this before now."

Isn't this about how the matter stands? Yet in the face of this truly absurd condition of affairs we are supposed to be building up a great and prosperous country. Just as long as Special Privilege is able to perpetuate this protective system, and all that it involves, just so long the farmer will have to be content with a mighty small portion of the true return for his labor. We would not by any means discourage farmers from taking up land in the West. We believe these conditions will be remedied. There is no better country in the world than the Prairie Provinces, but many unscrupulous human agencies have combined to withhold from man the bounties provided for him by Nature. Even despite all these burdens many farmers in the West are making good every year, but prosperity would be far more general if these unjust burdens were lifted. If anyone disputes the truth of the above statements, we shall be glad to have their corrections.

If the politicians in the House of Commons should, with one accord, devote their labors for only one session to legislating for the benefit of the common people, what a welcome change there would be. If the eternal sordid and disgusting struggle for personal aggrandizement could be replaced by a sincere regard for the welfare of the people, how quickly the millennium would approach. The curse of partyism overshadows all else. Egotism reigns supreme. If any other man but a politician—and even he must be a loyal party man—should go about the country boasting of his ability, the public would become nauseated. But this is what they expect from a politician.

If the farmers in the West were allowed to use the vacant land that is being held out of use by speculators, there would be no person living more than ten miles from a railway, whereas some are now one hundred miles away. This dog-in-the-manger land policy is making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Now watch the steel trust get another bounty from Ottawa. It would be cheaper to pension all their employees on full salary for life, but that's nothing. The steel barons want the graft and they probably know how to get it.

We have received from the Cockshutt Plow company a reply to our letter of October 24. It arrived too late for publication in this issue, but our readers may look forward to it for next week.

The fact that the railways are bleeding every consumer in Western Canada by extortionate charges has no effect upon our politicians at Ottawa. We wonder why!