

## CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER

	Page
<i>The Two Policies (Cartoon) respecting Free Wheat, Free Implements and wider markets</i> .....	85
<i>The debate on Agricultural Implement duties</i> .....	86
<i>The Borden Cabinet-VII. Minister of Agriculture</i> .....	87
<i>Hon. William Paterson—New Liberal Senate Leader—Taxation and the Navy</i> .....	88
<i>Abolition of Duties on Agricultural Implements</i> .....	89-90
<i>The Debate on the National Transcontinental</i> .....	91-92
<i>The Trent Valley Canal Inquiry</i> .....	93
<i>A disgraceful Sequel (Cartoon)—White Phosphorus Matches</i>	94
<i>Diary of the Month—The Purpose of the N.T.R.</i> .....	95
<i>The Peoples' Blackboard (The Increase in the High Cost of Living)—Hon. W. T. White's Budget Confession</i> .....	96

## THE DEBATE ON AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT DUTIES.

ON the 11th of March the members of the Liberal party in the House of Commons following up the advocacy of wider markets and lessened cost of production of food products voted unanimously in support of an amendment moved by W. E. Knowles, M.P. (Moosejaw) setting forth that

**"In the opinion of this House the time has arrived when, in the interests of the farmers, and consequently in the interests of the whole of Canada, the duties on agricultural implements should be forthwith removed."**

The members of the Conservative party voted unanimously against the amendment which was lost by a majority of 38, on a vote of 44 to 82.

Mr. Knowles supported his amendment in a convincing speech, which was supplemented by able speeches by the following Liberal members: Messrs. Levi Thomson (Qu'Appelle), Hugh Guthrie (South Wellington), D. B. Neeley, (Humboldt), Thomas MacNutt (Saltcoats), George E. McCraney (Saskatoon), J. J. Hughes (Kings. P.E.I.), Roch Lanctot (Laprairie Napierville), W. A. Buchanan (Medicine Hat), Hon. H. S. Beland, (Beauce), Michael Clark (Red Deer), Hon. Frank Oliver (Edmonton) and W. H. White (Victoria, Alta). It will be observed that this list, while composed mostly of Western members, is representative of all parts of the Dominion. It was maintained by the several speakers that the rural population of Canada irrespective of party or locality wanted abolition of the duties on agricultural implements, and that from the Atlantic to the Pacific the demand was as broad as the country.

### Liberal and Conservative Attitudes.

The Liberal attitude could not be better expressed than as summarized by Dr. Clark in the course of the debate. "We are" he said, "as one man in desiring larger markets for the produce of the farmers. We are as one man in desiring absolute freedom for production of the implements with which the produce is raised. It is not a policy for the West, the East or the middle. It is a policy for the whole of Canada. It is not a Western question only, it is a national policy."

In striking contrast to the united advocacy of the Liberals was the all but unbroken silence of the government Benches, and the total silence of the entire Conservative following in the House. The Premier, Mr. Borden and the Solicitor General, Mr. Meighen, were the only persons on the Conservative side who rose in their seats to speak, and neither had a word to say in favour of either reduction or abolition. Mr. Borden requested his followers to vote against the amendment as being equivalent to a vote of want of confidence in the government. At the same time, he intimated that he was opposed to the abolition of duties advocated by throwing out the suggestion that abolition of duties might result in Canada being brought under the control of some International Implement Trust. It required little more than a sentence to effectively answer this specious argument of the Prime Minister. It was pointed out that Canadian Implement Manufacturers were, in fact, at the present time, competing successfully with existing trusts of the United States in the free trade market of Britain, and that what could be done there, could be done more effectively here.

### The Solicitor General's Embarrassment.

The Solicitor General's purpose in rising was evidently to extricate himself from the uncomfortable and embarrassing position in which he was placed in consequence of a speech delivered in the House of Commons on January 18th, 1911, at which time he was a member of the Opposition. On that date he strongly advocated a reduction of duty on agricultural implements, and throughout the Reciprocity campaign which followed, advantage was taken of this speech, to have it appear that this advocacy in Parliament constituted a pledge for a much greater reduction of duties on implements; that it meant free implements for the farmers if the Conservative party were returned. Having been confronted with his own arguments, but unwilling because of party exigencies to advocate them any longer, Mr. Meighen sought to excuse himself from all expression of opinion by endeavouring to convey the impression that he was a member of the Cabinet, and as such was obliged to have his views conform to those of the Cabinet as a whole. This he did in the following words: "I think I appreciate fairly accurately the doctrine of Cabinet unanimity. I believe that on all matters of principle, whether as relates to the tariff or to any other subject, it is essential that we should be unanimous, and it is just as essential that the party behind us should be unanimous."

When it is remembered that Mr. Meighen, though Solicitor General, is not a member of the Cabinet, this separation of himself from "the party behind" though ingenious, will appear to have been somewhat premature. What is more to the point, however, is that in talking of principles, Mr. Meighen seems to have lost sight of the first of all principles that should guide a representative in Parliament, and which is that a man owes it not less to himself than to his constituents to regard his own convictions and their needs before all considerations of party, and that the one great privilege Parliament affords a public man is to advocate on every opportune occasion, and sometimes at the sacrifice of position itself, a policy which he believes and knows to be in the public interest.