

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, November 6th, 1912

IS THE NEWS VANQUISHED?

The Toronto News has not yet replied to our challenge of September 11. We hereby formally challenge The News to debate with The Grain Growers' Guide the question of the Protective Tariff in Canada, from every standpoint. The farmers have contended for some years that the protective tariff is founded on no just principle and is nothing more or less than a scheme by which a few interested people are enabled to plunder the rest of the population. The News is the leading journalistic advocate of the protective tariff. We thought The News big enough to debate the question, but after one shot that journalistic warrior has hidden in the bush and refused either to return our fire or come out into the open, where we can get another shot at him. If there are any readers of The Guide who believe in Protective Tariffs the precipitate retreat of The News should open their eyes.

ROUGH LUMBER STILL FREE

The Supreme Court of Canada has decided that rough lumber shall still come into Canada duty free under our present tariff law. It is now announced that the British Columbia lumbermen will take their appeal to the Privy Council, to see if they cannot get a favorable interpretation of the tariff, and thus prevent rough lumber coming into Canada free. It is about time that such appeals to the court of another country should cease. The tariff law is made in Canada and should be interpreted in Canada. The Privy Council has not acquired a very good reputation in Canada during the last few years, when dealing with cases between big corporations and the people. The tariff is a Canadian question purely and simply, and if it is not right parliament should make it so very promptly. Just why the homesteaders and farmers in the Prairie Provinces should be plundered for the benefit of a handful of lumbermen in British Columbia cannot be clearly understood. The cost of living in the Prairie Provinces is high enough now, and the farmers can imagine what it will be if they have to pay 25 per cent. additional on all their rough lumber. It is such a decision that the British Columbia lumbermen are anxious to get from the Privy Council. If the Privy Council interferes in such a matter and hands over the Western farmers to the tender mercies of the British Columbia lumbermen, it will but hasten the day when there will be no more appeals to the Privy Council. It will also put the Dominion Government in a position where they must definitely declare the intention as to their attitude towards the Prairie Provinces on the lumber question.

SIR EDMUND'S INTERVIEW

The views of a man in the position of Sir Edmund Walker are of vital interest to every man in Western Canada. He is a commanding figure in the financial and industrial life of the country. His views and the views of his financial and industrial associates have a great influence in Canadian politics. His viewpoint is, of course, that of the financier, and could not be expected to coincide with that of the Western farmers. A financier's environment generally leads him to regard private property as a matter of first consideration, and deserving of particular care at legislative hands. It is important to know that Sir Edmund approves of amendments to the Bank Act permitting loans upon the security of grain and cattle in the farmers' hands. There is little doubt that these amendments will be made at the

coming session of parliament and that a measure of relief that will thus be afforded to the farmers, depending, of course, upon the bankers' willingness to loan the money. It must be patent to Sir Edmund's keen mind, that there is something wrong in the system that provides the least assistance to those most needing it. The well-to-do farmer has little trouble in securing credit upon fairly reasonable terms, but the homesteader on the fringe of civilization, without capital and without security, pays the very highest rates for everything. Yet the homesteader is the man we are encouraging to come to Canada and surely he deserves better treatment. State loans as operated in Australia and New Zealand, seem to be about the only available remedy for this most deserving and needy class among our farmers. Sir Edmund's opposition is but natural, yet when the public credit has been pledged to the extent of hundreds of millions for the benefit largely of a handful of railway magnates, it does seem as though little further harm would be done by providing only a few millions more for these men we have mentioned who are making the country but who themselves are continually struggling between success and failure. But as Sir Edmund says very frankly, the banks are trying to make as much money as they can. It is significant to note Sir Edmund's attitude towards real estate speculation. He sees the evil and rightly condemns it, but has no remedy. Yet speculation in land is taking tens of millions out of the pockets of the Western people, and at the bottom of practically every evil of the country is found the land question. Taxation is the only constitutional method for eradicating the speculation parasite. Sir Edmund's contention that the Western farmers pay only a small portion of the cost of the government is rather droll. He must know that whatever is paid towards the cost of the government by financial, industrial and transportation institutions is shifted to the shoulders of those who patronize these institutions, while the farmers cannot shift their burden to any other person. We are glad to see Sir Edmund favorable to tariff reduction. If the tariff were brought down to a 15 per cent. level (his minimum) it would be something like a millenium compared to the present conditions, but we cannot understand why he should favor tariff on binder twine, when the binder twine industry in Canada is already flourishing without protection. The same applies to the steel industry, as regards increased protection. However, we are exceedingly glad to have the views of a man of Sir Edmund's standing, because it will enable the Western men to conduct their labors with more intelligence, and with a better appreciation of the viewpoint of those who do not see eye to eye with them.

STEEL BARONS PLAN COUP

There is good reason to believe that several members, if not indeed a majority, of the Dominion cabinet are determined either to renew the bounties to the steel interests or to give a very decided additional tariff protection. Several indications point unerringly to this end. The letter in another column from the Sarnia Fence company, is a direct statement that Major Currie, M.P., has declared that wire for farm fencing will be taken off the free list. The letter states:

"The Major endeavored to strike terror to our hearts by stating that before the end of the present year the government would take wire for farm fencing off the free list and place a duty on it which would result in the

steel interests getting control of the wire market, and in that event our life would be very short and we had better accept his offer to take us into the merger."

Major Currie has not denied making this statement. His assurance of protection on wire must have come from no less a person than a member of the Cabinet. In an interview in this issue of The Guide, Sir Edmund Walker also declares for protection on steel wire. Further, there are rumors abroad in Winnipeg emanating from a member of the government party that it will be advisable to purchase steel stock shortly, which can mean nothing else than that the government intends to increase the duty on steel. The representatives of the steel interests have been steadily demanding renewed protection, or a renewal of the bounties, or both. The steel brigade invaded Ottawa and waited upon the members of the cabinet only a few days ago and no shrewdness is required to guess the object of their visit. Last year it is well known that the government had decided to renew the bounties, and was only deterred from such action by the determined resistance in caucus of some Ontario rural members, as well as some of the Western members. As far as we can learn the chief credit for blocking this iniquitous deal is due to Arthur Meighen, member for Portage la Prairie. An increase in the duty on steel and wire is one of the most serious and iniquitous changes that could be made in the Canadian tariff law. As Cobden truly said many years ago, iron is the "daily bread of all industries." With an increase in the duty the selling price of iron and steel and their products will steadily advance and the result will be to cut down the profits of every industry using iron and steel. There will then follow a wholesale and resistless demand upon the part of the manufacturers for general increase in their own tariff protection. The steel industries do not need further protection either in the way of increased tariff or bounties. The history of the steel industry of Canada is one of the most sordid and shameful tales ever told. The big industries at Sidney and the Soo were developed by American financiers, who by stock watering and manipulation accumulated millions. The proposal to give one single additional cent either in bounties or tariff to the steel industries of Canada cannot be characterized as other than an outrage. The Sarnia Fence company has declared that if galvanized wire is left on the free list that they can manufacture fencing as economically in Canada as any place on the continent, and they are not in the least afraid of American competition. This surely is conclusive proof that there is no need for any further gifts to that little group of financiers who have already plundered Canada to the extent of more than \$20,000,000 through the steel industry. If Arthur Meighen is prepared again to lead in the fight for the protection of the common people of Canada against these financial pirates, he will have the people of the West behind him.

MANUFACTURERS READY TO CONFER

"The Canadian Manufacturers' association will meet the Grain Growers' association to discuss the British Preference, or any other important national question."

This is the announcement in the last issue of Industrial Canada, the official organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' association. The policy of the organized farmers on the British Preference is well known. It was laid down by the great Ottawa delegation on

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