

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, June 14th, 1911

WANTED—THE LIBERAL PLATFORM

Hon. Frank Oliver, in the replies he has made to the Grain Growers' delegations which have waited upon him in Manitoba during the past week, has laid considerable emphasis upon the importance of all who favor the reciprocity pact sinking their other differences and uniting to secure the passage of the agreement.

In other words Mr. Oliver says that if an election is held prior to the ratification of the agreement, it is the duty of every believer in reciprocity to vote Liberal regardless of all other issues. This means that on the strength of the reciprocity agreement, the government is asking the people of Canada to place them in power for another four or five years with carte-blanc for whatever they please on all other questions.

Mr. Oliver has hinted that if the government is given a new lease of power it may go further than it has yet done to meet the demands of the farmers of the West, but he is not authorized to make promises on behalf of the government and is careful not to go further than hints. This is on a par with the attitude of the minister of the interior when he tried to put the Grain Bill through the House of Commons just before the adjournment, and when he said that if the Opposition would allow the bill to go through provision **MIGHT** be made in the estimates for a sum of money to acquire or lease terminal elevators. Dr. Schaffner on that occasion "called the bluff" and said the Opposition would allow the bill to go through if the minister would **UNDERTAKE** that the money would be provided, and Mr. Oliver then had to back down.

With regard to the Hudson's Bay Railway, which the farmers of the West are unanimous in demanding should be both owned and operated by the government, Mr. Oliver last week said, "Better cinch the building of the railway before you divide in the question of operation." But if the government is given four more years of power it will during that period have time to complete the construction of the railway and dispose of it as it likes without permitting the people to have any say in the matter. The same applies to the increase of the British Preference and to the general tariff reductions which the Western people have asked for, and we do not consider it a fair proposition to ask the farmers to give the government another five years of power merely on the strength of the reciprocity agreement, and without having a definite understanding as to what the government is going to do about the rest of the farmers' platform. It is quite conceivable, especially in the province of Saskatchewan, that candidates will offer themselves who will support the reciprocity pact and the reduction of duties on agricultural implements and other manufactured articles, but who would in other respects support the Conservative party. It is up to the Liberals to announce their policy in definite and unmistakable terms.

GRAIN GROWERS ON THE JOB

Hon. Frank Oliver, minister of the interior, addressed meetings last week in Portage la Prairie, Brandon and Virden on the reciprocity question. At each of these points the Grain Growers' Associations took advantage of the presence of the minister to reiterate the stand they took last summer when Sir Wilfrid Laurier toured the West. The announcement is made that when the minister addresses meetings later on in Alberta and Saskatchewan he will also be

met by the Grain Growers' Associations at the points at which he delivers public addresses. The significance of this move on the part of the Grain Growers is that they have at last wakened up to the fact that if their interests are to be conserved by governments they will have to get next the powers that be themselves. It is a new departure in Canadian politics to have organizations of farmers present their views on economic questions to members of the government. As the farmers continue the good work they have commenced, so will public men pay attention to their demands. On another page of The Guide we give somewhat full reports of the cases presented by the Grain Growers at these points.

At Portage la Prairie the directors of the association interviewed the minister. The Grain Growers of Brandon called a general meeting of their association, prepared a resolution and presented it to the minister at a meeting arranged with him in the afternoon. We commend to our readers the address given by Mr. Johnston, the president of the association, both at the afternoon and evening meetings, as an accurate expression of the attitude taken by Western Grain Growers generally towards the reciprocity agreement. Representatives from some ten or twelve associations in the Virden district, to the number of upwards of fifty, met the minister at Virden and reiterated the demands made to the government last December and expressed their unqualified support of the reciprocity agreement.

The key note of these gatherings was disgust at the opposition to the passing of the reciprocity agreement and severe criticism of the source of this opposition.

MEET MR. BORDEN AT BRANCON

The directors of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association have completed arrangements to present the views of the association to Mr. R. L. Borden, leader of the Opposition in the Canadian House of Commons, at Brandon on June 29. Circulars have been issued to all the branches to send in delegates. These delegates will meet in the afternoon in the City Hall, Brandon, at 3 o'clock. It is to be earnestly hoped that the Grain Growers will be seized of the importance of making a demonstration to convince the leader of the Opposition that on the question of freer trade the Grain Growers are determined to stand by the attitude they have taken, regardless of any other issue. At the meeting of the directors to make preparations for this interview, Mr. J. W. Scallion, Honorary President of the association, was appointed to prepare a statement on the reciprocity question; J. S. Wood, vice-president, to deal with the tariff; R. M. Wilson with the meat trade and amendments to the Railway Act, and Peter Wright on the terminal elevator question. These papers will be submitted to the meeting at Brandon in the afternoon before they are presented to Mr. Borden, in order to receive the endorsement of the delegates.

This meeting is second in importance only to the delegation which met Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The Grain Growers at that time built better than they knew. They made for themselves a reputation. That reputation can be very materially enhanced if they make as good a demonstration in Brandon on June 29. There are great issues at stake, the solution of which depends on the energy and unanimity with which the organizations of farmers continue to press for the reforms which they have demanded of the Dominion government.

When dealing with the customs duty, the Grain Growers, in addition to emphasizing the increase of the British Preference to 50 per cent. of the general tariff, should impress upon Mr. Borden the necessity of placing on the free list such articles as sugar, which every man, woman and child in Canada uses every day, and coal, iron and steel, which enter so largely into the raw material of manufacturers, and impress upon the gentleman the desire for a decisive answer to those demands.

JAS. J. HILL WELCOME

A writer in the Minneapolis Tribune who professes to be in the confidence of the associates of Jas. J. Hill, states that the Great Northern Railway magnate is planning the invasion of the Canadian West on a large scale and the building of branch lines to compete with the Canadian railways throughout the Western Provinces. More railways, and especially more competing railways, are badly needed in this country and we do not think the people of Western Canada will have any objection to J. J. Hill building all the railways he likes. His object no doubt is to secure traffic for his lines in the United States as well as on those to be built in Canada, but the people of the Canadian West need not trouble themselves about this, for both the Canadian Northern and the Canadian Pacific have their lines into the United States, and traffic will not be secured by the Hill lines unless they handle the business more cheaply than the so-called Canadian roads. More competition between the Hill lines and the C.P.R. and C.N.R. will undoubtedly tend to reduce freight rates all round and the public will reap the benefit.

As far as the public are concerned it really makes little difference whether a line running through Canadian territory is owned by a Canadian or an American company, except that when a Canadian company builds a line it usually goes to the government for either a subsidy or a bond guarantee, or both, whereas J. J. Hill is in the habit of financing his undertakings himself. The capital expended on the construction of the Hill lines will be spent in Canada, the employees will live in Canada, and if the dividends go to the United States they might as well go there as to finance some of Mackenzie & Mann's South American enterprises.

The Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern, however, are not likely to suffer any serious loss by the invasion of their territory by the Hill road. We do not anticipate that there will be any cut throat competition between the rival lines, and the increase of settlement and the extension of the cultivated area of the Prairie Provinces will keep ahead of the railway construction for many years to come. Every new railway opens up new sections hitherto idle for want of a means of reaching the market, and so every new railway makes business for itself.

POLITICAL PLATFORMS

Both political parties evidently realize that the West will be the key to this situation at the next general election, and both parties are sending their orators through the West to endeavor to secure the support of the farmers who make up the bulk of the population of the Prairie Provinces. The object of the touring politicians is not to find out what the people want, but to convince them that their particular platform is what they really need. The farmers, however, through their own independent thought, and through the discussions which