

The Farmer's Platform

The following are the Resolutions Unanimously Passed by the Great Farmers' Convention at Ottawa on Dec. 15, and Presented to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on Dec. 16

THE TARIFF RESOLUTION

The tariff demands of the organized farmers of Canada made to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on Friday last were in the following words:

"This delegation, representative of the agricultural interests of Canada, desire to approach you upon the question of the bearing of the Canadian customs tariff.

"We come, asking no favors at your hands. We bear with us no feeling of antipathy towards any other line of industrial life. We welcome within the limits of Canada's broad domain every legitimate form of industrial enterprise, but in view of the fact that the further progress and development of the agricultural industry is of such vital importance to the general welfare of the state, that all other Canadian industries are so dependent upon its success, that its constant condition forms the great barometer of trade, we consider its operations should no longer be hampered by tariff restrictions.

"And in view of the favorable approaches already made through President Taft and the American Government looking towards more friendly trade relations between Canada and the United States this memorial takes form as follows:

"1. That we strongly favor reciprocal Free Trade between Canada and the United States in all horticultural, agricultural and animal products, spraying materials, fertilizers, illuminating, fuel and lubricating oils, cement, fish and lumber.

"2. Reciprocal free trade between the two countries in all agricultural implements, machinery, vehicles and parts of each of these; and, in the event of a favorable arrangement being reached, it be carried into effect through the independent action of the respective Governments, rather than by the hard and fast requirements of a treaty.

"3. We also favor the principle of the British preferential tariff, and urge an immediate lowering of the duties on all British goods to one-half the rates charged under the general tariff schedule, whatever that may be; and that any trade advantages given the United States in reciprocal trade relations be extended to Great Britain.

"4. For such further gradual reduction of the remaining preferential tariff as will ensure the establishment of complete free trade between Canada and the Motherland within ten years.

"5. That the farmers of this country are willing to face direct taxation in such form as may be advisable to make up the revenue required under new tariff conditions.

"Believing that the greatest misfortune which can befall any country is to have its people huddled together in great centres of population, and that the bearing of the present customs tariff has the tendency to encourage that condition, and realizing also that in view of the constant movement of our people away from the farms, the greatest problem which presents itself to Canadian people today is the problem of retaining our people on the soil, we come doubly assured of the justice of our petition.

"Trusting this memorial may meet your favorable consideration, and that the substance of its prayer be granted with all reasonable despatch.

On behalf of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

(Sgd.) D. W. McCUAIG, President.
(Sgd.) E. C. Drury, Secretary.

The other resolutions presented to the government were as follows:

HUDSON BAY RESOLUTION

"Whereas, the necessity of the Hudson Bay railway as the natural and the most economic outlet for placing the products of the Western prairies on the European market has been emphasized by the Western people for past generation;

"And whereas, the Dominion government has recognized the need and importance of the Hudson Bay railway and has pledged itself to its immediate construction, and has provided the necessary funds entirely from the sale of Western lands;

"And whereas, the chief benefit to be derived from the Hudson Bay railway will be a reduction in freight rates in Western Canada,

due to actual competition, which could be secured only through government ownership and operation of the Hudson Bay railway;

"And whereas, anything short of absolute public ownership and operation of the Hudson Bay railway will defeat the purpose for which the road was advocated, and without which it would be in the interests of Western Canada that the building of the road should be deferred;

"Therefore, be it resolved that it is the opinion of this convention that the Hudson Bay railway and all terminal facilities connected therewith should be constructed, owned and operated in perpetuity by the Dominion government under an independent commission."

TERMINAL ELEVATOR RESOLUTION

"Whereas, we are convinced that terminal elevators as now operated are detrimental to the interests of both the producer and consumer, as proved by recent investigation and testimony of important interested bodies, we therefore request that the Dominion government acquire and operate as a public utility under an independent commission the terminal elevators of Fort William and Port Arthur, and immediately establish similar terminal facilities and conditions at the Pacific Coast, and provide the same at Hudson Bay when necessary; also such transfer and other elevators necessary to safeguard the quality of export grain."

BANK ACT RESOLUTION

"Whereas, it is generally believed that the Bank act, forming, as it does, the charter of all Canadian banks for a ten year term, by its present phrasing prevents any amendment involving curtailment of their powers enjoyed by virtue of the provisions of such charter, be it resolved: That this Ottawa convention of delegates desire that the new Bank act be so worded as to permit the act to be amended at any time and in any particular."

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES' RESOLUTION

"Resolved, that in the opinion of this convention it is desirable that cheap and efficient machinery for the incorporation of co-operative societies should be provided by Federal legislation during the present session of parliament."

FARMERS' ORGANIZATION

"That the members of this convention hereby pledge themselves to promote the consolidation and spreading of farmers' organizations throughout every province of Canada."

CHILLED MEAT INDUSTRY

"The government be urgently requested to erect the necessary works and operate a modern and up-to-date method of exporting our meat animals.

"We suggest that a system owned and operated by the government as a public utility or a system of co-operation by the producers through the government, in which the government would supply the funds necessary to first instal the system and provide for the gradual repayment of these funds and interest by a charge on the product passing through the system, would give the relief needed, and make Canada one of the most prosperous meat producing countries in the world."

THE RAILWAY CASE

The organized farmers asked that the Railway act be amended so that the railway companies be compelled to bear a fair share of the responsibility for killing stock and also:

"1. That the principle of fixing the tariffs in accordance with the competition of other roads or the density of traffic or volume of business handled be disallowed.

"2. That a true physical valuation be taken of all railways operating in Canada, this valuation to be used as a basis of fixing the rates, and the information to be available to the public.

"3. That the Board of Railway Commissioners be given complete jurisdiction in these matters as well as in all other matters of dispute between the railways and the people, and to enable them to do this that the law be more clearly defined."