

Another Obstacle to be Removed.

There is another question which must be satisfactorily settled coincident with the one to which I have referred, the elimination of the restrictions upon trade by the operations of the North Atlantic steamship combine. This ring sits overseas, fixing the freight rates which you must pay, and keeping them up to the last point of endurance which the trade will stand. It is one of the most heartless of all the world's combines. It raised the emigration rates above pre-conference times, until it accumulated in fourteen years, in excess charges alone, over eighty million dollars, (\$80,000,000) from struggling emigrants coming to the United States and Canada. Twenty years have passed since I reported its existence to Ottawa. It is a tremendously powerful organization, having its representatives on the floor of the Canadian Parliament. Every increase in ocean freight rates takes so much directly out of your pockets. In pre-war times the freight on apples overseas was fifty cents. Now it is \$2.50 and \$3. The rates upon wheat, cheese flour and everything else which you export is correspondingly increased.

An Offer of Ocean Competition.

In 1913, because the millers complained that ocean freight rates almost put them out of overseas business, the government sent Sir Henry Drayton (now Finance Minister) to London to see what he could do towards getting matters in better shape. He secured conclusive evidence of the existence of the combine, and was assured of its deterrent effect upon Canadian trade, but he could do nothing. He then made it known that the government would consider offers for the establishment of a new Atlantic service. And he received an offer

through the London solicitor of a

wealthy syndicate containing the following provisions,—

An anti-combine ocean service.

Control of rates by the government.

To cut the then freight rates on natural products in one-half.

Government to have control of any changes in the rates.

Company's profits limited to 7% on actual cash invested.

Government auditors to have free access to the Company's books.

Company's representative prepared to go to Ottawa at once.

Turned Down by Borden-Foster-Meighen.

The Syndicate making this offer consisted of millionaire shippers, ship-owners and one of the great ship-building companies of Great Britain. The government of which Hon. Arthur Meighen and Sir George Foster were the principal members never deigned to reply to the solicitor's letter. But the government stood in with the ocean combine, regardless of the effect of their action upon vital interests of this country.

A Farmers' Policy Worth Considering

The proposition which I now make to you is to enter into a contest with these interests for your own protection. (Hear! hear!) You can win, if the rural vote of this Province is in earnest. (Hear! hear!) It means commitment to a public policy of—

Anti-Combine ocean transportation.

Control of ocean rates by the government.

Reasonable freight rates on natural products.

Erection in Great Britain of cold storage accommodation.

Distribution of natural products overseas under a system whereby the enormous profits now retained abroad shall be returned to the Canadian producers.

It is to this policy I ask for public approval. (Applause.) This should