

What Our M.P.'s Think

A Number of Members of the House of Commons, at the request of The Guide, give their views on the matters which the organized farmers will take up with Sir Wilfrid Laurier on his Western Tour

SASKATCHEWAN MEMBERS

A. Champagne, M.P. for Battleford, Sask.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter and you can rest assured that anything that I can do in this matter will not be neglected by me.

(Signed) A. CHAMPAGNE

June 1, 1910

R. S. Lake, M. P. for Qu'Appelle, Sask.

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 28th inst., in which you inform me that it is the intention of the organized farmers to meet Sir Wilfrid Laurier at various points in the West, and present requests that his government give immediate attention to certain points of vital importance to the farmers, upon which you tell me you are asking the opinion of the Federal members from the three Prairie Provinces.

I have never sought to conceal my opinions either in or out of parliament, upon the points named, and am glad to repeat for the benefit of your readers the views which I hold, and have advocated in the House of Commons.

1. Reduction of the Tariff.—In my opinion the general average of the tariff is much too high—higher than is justifiable either from the standpoint of Protection or Revenue tariff. There are many items of general importance to consumers generally, and to farmers in particular, upon which a large reduction of duties could be made and still leave a considerable margin of protection to the manufacturers. A notable example of prime interest to the farmers is the case of the larger agricultural implements which are an absolute necessity in modern agriculture, and indeed may be called the raw material of the grain grower. The agricultural implement industry holds a unique position at present in Canada. It is the only large industry in the country whose export trade is larger than the import trade in the same articles. It is an industry which I believe could hold its own without any protection at all.

2. The taking over of the terminal elevators at the Lake Front and operating them as a public utility.—I believe the Grain Growers are perfectly right in the high importance they attach to this proposed measure. The grain at present pays for the operation of the terminal elevators in private hands, as well as interest on the capital invested, and would equally do so under government operation, and there can be no good reason against it from the financial standpoint. While on the other hand it seems to me that government operation is the logical concomitant of our present system of grading. I have advocated this measure in the House of Commons several times during the last two years.

3. The immediate construction of the Hudson's Bay Railway.—I have been a firm believer in the Hudson's Bay route for the last ten years or more, and have not ceased to advocate the building of a railway to the Bay. Two years ago the prime minister promised its immediate construction. A source of revenue in the sale of pre-emptions and purchased homesteads has been created, and earmarked by parliament for this special purpose, and is now sufficient to build the road. There is no excuse for the continued delay in commencing the work. I am, moreover, most strongly of opinion that the road when built must be operated by the government and be open on equal terms to all the railways of the northwest, and must not be allowed to pass under the control of any one company.

4. The inauguration of a chilled meat industry with refrigerator car service for the three prairie provinces under the operation and supervision of the Federal government.—I believe that the inauguration of a chilled meat industry is of the highest importance, and that some such policy as that outlined is necessary if the cattle business of the West is to be maintained at its present level, let alone

the development, as our future as an agricultural community demands that it should be. The question should receive immediate and earnest attention.

(Signed) R. S. LAKE

Grenfell, Sask., June 3, 1910.

D. B. Neely, M. P. for Humbolt, Sask.

Your favor of 30th inst., is before me and in reply I beg to say that I do not see my way clear to accede to your request, as I cannot see the good object that would be attained thereby. Thanking you for your invitation and regretting that I am unable to give you a more favorable reply.

(Signed) D. B. NEELY

Humbolt, Sask., June 3, 1910.

Thos. MacNutt, M. P. for Saltcoats, Sask.

In reply to your letter of the 28th ult., asking for my opinion as one of the Western members, on four matters of great importance which it is the intention to submit to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. I may say that I have no objections but I do not wish to become involved with any newspaper controversy. I hardly know whether you wish just a "yes" or "no," but apparently as you mention that "you

chose. The only decrease in revenue would be to the manufacturers to whom the farmers are now paying exorbitant profits out of the proceeds of their hard and often unremunerative labor. This is a discrimination against the West in favor of the eastern manufacturers and works against the prosperity of all Canada. I do not mean to say that a considerable reduction would make the farmers rich, but it would assist, and would be, I believe, a simple act of justice. There is now a probability of reciprocal arrangements with the United States, but how these will effect agricultural implements remains to be seen.

2. The Terminal Elevator Question.—There appears to be a strong desire for the government to take up the commercial end, but I do not understand that government functions are to do this. Its primary duty is, in my opinion, to govern, control, enact and enforce good laws, keep peace and order, educate, improve transportation facilities, open up markets, encourage the development of the country's resources, and otherwise administer in the interests of the people, and it is the duty and privilege of the citizens to produce, manufacture and transport. If, however, there is no other method of getting a

obtain a government pronouncement last session on the floor of the House, and I am satisfied that Sir Wilfrid will endorse what was then said. Here, again, we have adverse criticism, that only \$300,000 was placed in the estimates towards the "immediate construction", but is this altogether fair?

The first thing is to bridge the Saskatchewan, as otherwise material, thousands of tons of it, would have to be wagoned up and down the steep banks and ferried across the river. There are a number of bridges across the same river higher up, including the South branch, and none of them have taken less than a year to build, while at the Pas the banks are much steeper and the river valley wider. The contract for the bridge is let, but we can hardly expect it to be ready for traffic inside of a year. According to the chief engineer's reports a feasible four-tenths grade has been discovered and surveyed, but he claims that he can get a much less expensive road with same grades, if given more time. So that further necessary explorations can be made, whilst the bridge is building. I expect to see a large sum voted next session, when the work can be proceeded with and completed both economically and rapidly.

4. The Chilled Meat Industry.—I should think this is more of a provincial than federal matter. But what is to prevent the people themselves organizing, as in the case of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, and undertaking it themselves, with, if necessary, provincial government co-operation and assistance? Another thing to consider is, that there is the probability of the embargo being raised. If so, cattle on foot would likely bring a better figure than chilled, dressed meat from our grass fed cattle; or would the farmers still feed sufficient stock to justify the undertaking and make it pay? I confess, however, that I have not sufficient data to give a decided opinion on this matter.

As this letter has grown to a considerable length, and if you receive replies from all the members your space will be limited, I will close.

(Signed) THOS. MACNUTT.

Saltcoats, Sask., June 1, 1910.

W. W. Rutan, M. P. for Prince Albert, Sask.

In reply to your letter of the 28th of May, I will say that I fully endorse the reduction of the tariff, the Hudson's Bay Railway and government control of terminal elevators. The meat situation I have not yet been able to fully look into.

(Signed) W. W. RUTAN.

Melfort, Sask., June 8, 1910.

J. G. Turriff, M. P. for Assiniboia, Sask.

Owing to my absence I only have your letter of the 28th ultimo today, asking my opinion on four questions to be laid before Sir Wilfrid.

In reply I beg to say that I will be very pleased if I can be of any assistance with your delegates in placing these matters before him. I have no hesitation whatever in giving my views on these subjects. I am now, and always have been in favor of lower duties and shall continue to work along those lines, endeavoring to get reduction whenever possible.

In reference to Hudson's Bay railway, I have faith in its success, and I know that the government is now going on with the bridge over the Saskatchewan river, and just as soon as they can get absolute and definite information as to the best port on the Bay the line will be pushed as fast as possible.

Re taking over the terminal elevators, I am not in favor of government ownership and operation in a general way, believing that in most things they cannot do business of that kind as well as private in-

THE GUIDE'S REQUEST

On May 30 THE GUIDE addressed the following letter to each of the 27 members of the House of Commons in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta:

"Dear Sir:

You no doubt know that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is to make a tour of the West during July and August. It is the intention of the organized farmers to meet Sir Wilfrid at various points throughout the West and present to him requests that the Dominion government give immediate attention to four matters of vital importance to the farmers of Western Canada, namely, the reduction of the tariff; the taking over of the terminal elevators at the Lake Front and operating them as a public utility; the immediate construction of the Hudson's Bay Road; and the inauguration of a chilled meat industry with refrigerator car service for the three Prairie Provinces under the operation and supervision of the Federal government.

In view of this, we are anxious to secure for publication in THE GUIDE the opinions of the Federal members of the three Western provinces and should be very glad if you could favor us with your views on these subjects.

Trusting that you will favor us with a reply at your earliest convenience, we are,

Yours very truly,

THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE.

There have been only sixteen acknowledgements to THE GUIDE's letter and all of them are here published. It will be noted that only eight of the members really give their views.

should be very glad if you could favor us with your views on these subjects, you expect them to be dealt with fairly fully, I will therefore endeavor to comply with your wishes.

1. The Reduction of the Tariff.—I have always been and am now in favor of a low tariff, especially on agricultural implements. A few articles have been placed on the free list and there has lately been a slight reduction on others, but this is not nearly enough. The principles being carried out by the government of giving free or cheap lands to encourage settlement, should, I think, be supplemented by cheap tools to work that land with. The government, however, cannot control that price. If a man makes something it is his own and he can charge what he likes, but it can to a large extent prevent monopolies and combines designed to enhance the price, and which then become conspiracies and do this more effectively by a low tariff which would encourage competition from the United States, than by imposing penalties on the trusts and combines, that are cunning enough to keep out of trouble. I do not believe the country's revenue would be detrimentally effected, but probably increased, as more American goods would be purchased; the farmers would have a greater purchasing power, would no doubt raise more crops, and thus have more money with which they could buy other duty paying articles if they

square deal after all other plans have been fairly tested, it may be advisable for the government to take the matter out of the hands of the untrustworthy parties whose manipulations cannot be controlled, and deal with it themselves. But would the operation by the government be a panacea and be satisfactory? We have the Intercolonial as an example, which seems now to be picking up, but has never been a success. We are also aware that the Grand Trunk Pacific being built by the government, under a non-partisan commission, is subject to much criticism; and is there any reason to expect that the operation of terminal elevators would meet with a better fate? The system, however, which late disclosures prove to be in vogue, of mixing inferior grain with a small quantity of high grade and thus increasing the price to the dealer at the expense of the reputation of the wheat, should be prevented by legislation if necessary, and the identity of the farmers' product preserved so that it can be sold on its merits. I do not think this is beyond the possibility of the principles of government control. At the same time if this should fail to give relief, I would favor the government taking over the handling of the grain and would risk adverse criticism. But the people should not complain if they found that the national debt was increasing.

3. The Hudson's Bay Railway.—I was sufficiently interested in this road to

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