

The Grain Growers' Guide

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PATRIOT AND STATESMAN

John Bright was one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived, and as long as British institutions exist, Anglo-Saxon people will owe a debt of gratitude to this great and patriotic statesman. It is true that no title adorned his name and that his record is not written along with that of the "High and Mighty," nor is his monument to be seen alongside those erected to kings and potentates. He was a man of the common people, who loved his fellow men, who had faith in human nature, and what was greater than all, had the courage to be honest. For forty years he fought the fight of the common people in the British House of Commons, and had the great joy of seeing many of the reforms for which he contended enacted into legislation. When he entered politics as a young man, both the Whig and the Tory parties were completely in the hands of the special interests and were dying of dry rot. The sincere and impassioned oratory of Bright, buttressed by the irresistible arguments of Cobden, won the support of the common people and broke the power of the two old parties. John Bright had the courage to stand up in the House of Commons, a plain common Quaker, and tell the nobility, the plutocracy and the aristocracy the truth about England and the English people. He was spurned by the classes, reviled by the privileged controlled press and mobbed by the henchmen of the plutocracy, but he was loved by the common people, and in their behalf he fought one of the noblest fights ever recorded in history. He did more to educate the people of England in the cause of Democracy than any other man who lived in the nineteenth century. He never sought a public office, and never by his bitterest enemies was he ever accused of any dishonorable act. The British race has produced no greater man than John Bright, and it is due to the noble and self-sacrificing efforts of such as he that Democracy still forges ahead in the Old Country. Canada today needs a few John Brights.

ONLY ONE PARTY

For some years it has been becoming more and more apparent that there is no fundamental difference in policy between the Liberal and Conservative parties, and today it may be said that the distinction between them has entirely disappeared. They have now become two factions of the one party, each faction striving by fair means or foul to secure control of the Government, and the "spoils" and "honors" which that control places in their hands. Neither party is animated by any honest desire to improve conditions, and neither party has made any honest effort to curb the rapacity of the privileged interests. Both parties when in power have, in utter disregard of the public welfare, given the railways, bankers, manufacturers and

other privileged interests practically everything they have asked for, and (with the happy exception of the Reciprocity Agreement) have absolutely ignored the demands of the farmers of Canada for relief from the burdens they are carrying. Each party accuses the other of corruption, graft and dishonesty, and we believe that both of them are right in their accusations. It is about time that these two old parties were united into one as The Party of Special Privilege, and that the nauseating spectacle of mud-slinging politics should be brought to an end. It is absolutely hopeless for the farmers of Canada to expect any relief or redress by electing members to Parliament who will march under the banners of the two old Special Privilege parties. It is time for independent action.

ROYAL COMMISSION GRANTED

The announcement that a royal commission is to be appointed to investigate the alleged scandal in connection with the erection of the new Manitoba Parliament buildings, has been received with great satisfaction by all who are anxious to see justice done and public affairs honestly administered. Manitoba is undoubtedly in need of new buildings in which to carry on the legislative and administrative affairs of the province, and it was agreed, therefore, that the government adopted a wise course when it awarded contracts, amounting to nearly \$3,000,000, for the erection of buildings worthy of the province both in size and in beauty of architectural design. The plans were drawn by an eminent British architect, Mr. Simon, and were selected on the advice of Mr. Stokes, the president of the Institute of British Architects, from a number of plans submitted by leading architects in many parts of the world in an empire-wide competition. There were two tenderers, Peter Lyall and Co. and Thomas Kelly and Sons, and the contract was awarded to the latter firm, which submitted the lower tender. No sooner had the contract been signed, however, than important alterations were made. The original plans called for foundations of concrete piles, for which the government was to pay \$64,054, but this was changed to concrete caissons resting upon bed rock, at a cost of \$844,000. This variation in the contract was made by a verbal agreement between the contractors and the provincial architect, with the approval of the government, the experts on whom the government relies for advice being of the opinion that the nature of the soil and the weight of the building made the change necessary. Changes were also made in the superstructure, steel grillage, covered with concrete, being substituted for re-inforced concrete in some portions of the building. These and other changes enormously increased the cost, and Hon. Dr. Montague, Minister of Public Works, has made the statement that the building will probably cost \$4,500,000 before it is completed. The opposition in the legislature, suspecting that the increased cost was not justified, and that the public funds were being misapplied, endeavored in the public accounts committee to make a searching investigation into all the details. They were prevented by the government majority on the committee from securing a great deal of the infor-

mation they desired, but sufficient was discovered on which to lay the charge that there had been a systematic violation of contracts connived at by the government, and that, as a result, the province had been defrauded of sums exceeding \$800,000. This charge was made on the floor of the House on Tuesday, March 30, by A. B. Hudson, one of the Liberal members representing Winnipeg, who moved a resolution demanding the appointment of a royal commission consisting of three judges to fully investigate the matter. This demand was refused, and after the debate had continued for two days the opposition members addressed a memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor, asking him not to prorogue the House until provision had been made for the appointment of a commission. This memorial was presented to the Lieutenant-Governor on Wednesday night, after Premier Roblin had made it clear that the government would not appoint the commission. Next morning, however, the Premier announced that the government had decided to appoint the commission and in the afternoon the legislature was prorogued. While it has not been officially stated, it is well known that the government's swift reversal of its decision was the result of the action of Lieutenant-Governor Sir Douglas Cameron, who informed Sir Rodmond Roblin that he insisted on either the appointment of a royal commission or a general provincial election. Every fair-minded person will now await the outcome of the inquiry before judging the merits of the case. It is unfortunate, however, that the government did not at once grant the investigation asked for. Its evident desire to avoid investigation has increased the suspicion of the public that its actions would not stand the searchlight of truth.

GRAFT IN WAR SUPPLIES

Canada has earned a most unenviable reputation in other countries by the exposure of graft in the purchase of war supplies. When war broke out the politicians were loud in their protestations of loyalty to Great Britain, and on the public platform they gave utterance to noble sentiments. Our soldiers were enlisted and sent to the front and more are being prepared every day to sacrifice their lives in defence of democratic institutions and ideals. And then came the exposure! Our patriotic boot manufacturers had supplied our soldiers with rotten boots, and it is charged that in some cases there was a rake-off to political heelers. In the purchase of hospital and medical supplies for the care of our wounded it has been proven beyond dispute that there was a very carnival of graft. Now it is being charged that there was more graft in the purchase of horses, field glasses and motor trucks. It is enough to make any honest citizen bow his head in shame. Our soldiers at the front need the very best of everything and plenty of it. The enemies with whom our soldiers are now fighting in the open are far more honorable than these grafters here at home, who are working under cover. The penitentiary is altogether too good a place for men who will take advantage of their country's hour of necessity to line their own pockets at the expense of the lives and comfort of