

The Grain Growers' Guide

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THE ELECTION RESULTS

The people of Canada have spoken. They do not want reciprocity with the United States and they do not want the Laurier government. They have settled both these important questions in a most definite manner. The result of the elections has been a surprise to the English speaking world. Probably not five per cent. of the people of Canada anticipated that reciprocity would be rejected. Nothing could illustrate more forcibly the wisdom of submitting important matters of national policy to a real referendum of the people than the election of September 21. Had each elector be given two votes, one for his candidate and one upon reciprocity, the trade pact would undoubtedly have been ratified and the people of Canada would have been at liberty to deal with the government upon its record. As it was the reciprocity agreement became an impossibility because of the load it was compelled to carry as the issue in a political battle. But despite all handicaps the Maritime Provinces registered their approval of reciprocity; Quebec also spoke for freer trade even in the face of the Nationalist movement; the Prairie Provinces went overwhelmingly for free trade even to the extent of offsetting a clean sweep for protection in British Columbia. Against all this the people of Ontario said "no," and they said it so emphatically that the rest of Canada must bow to their decision. Ontario is the most powerful province, politically, in Canada, and when the Ontario people decide as they have done they are dominant. Ontario is the home of protection and has within its borders the major portion of Canada's manufacturing industry.

The protected interests made a tremendous fight in Ontario. They knew that reciprocity was the beginning of the end of protection. But even with this fact before them they feared to fight openly for their own selfish gain. Rather they cloaked their scheme in the garb of loyalty. Special Privilege financed the loyalty campaign in Ontario very largely and most successfully. The general result has been a victory for Special Privilege and those farmers who opposed reciprocity will be fortunate if they do not pay well for their indiscretion. The chief appeal of the Special Privileged and anti-reciprocity forces during the campaign was not to reason but to sentiment. Emotion and not intellect was worked upon by the anti-reciprocity forces. The Ontario people feared the loss of their home market. The strong anti-American sentiment in that province also resented anything savoring of bargaining with the United States. The appeal to the flag undoubtedly played a very strong part in the decision. No matter in what way we may analyze the result of the election by sections, the verdict was undeniably for protection. The forces of Privilege and protection were practically all opposed to reciprocity and with their aid reciprocity was rejected. The protected interests rightly regarded reciprocity as a blow at the citadel of protection. The stock markets, during the campaign, showed this apprehension, and on the day following the election they reacted with the view of a continuance of tariff protection. The stock of the cement trust, the flour milling companies, the Canadian Pacific railway and practically all industrial stock went up with a bound. The price of wheat in the Winnipeg Grain Exchange dropped immediately two cents per bushel when reciprocity was rejected and the price in Minneapolis jumped six cents. Every Western farmer can understand what that means when he gets his returns from his wheat. Oats on the Winnipeg market dropped nearly two cents and barley slumped five cents. The rejection of reciprocity will mean the loss of several millions of dollars to the Western

farmers this year. It will also mean a loss of at least one million dollars per year in the price of agricultural implements to the west alone. We merely point out these things that there may be a clear understanding of what the rejection of reciprocity means. We also want to drive home to every thinking man the necessity of having national questions submitted to a Referendum of the people separate and distinct from the vote of the people for the selection of their representatives. The Guide still believes that reciprocity would have been of inestimable value to the people of Canada despite the result of the election. The offer will, no doubt, remain on the American statutes as it did on Canadian statutes, for nearly twenty years. There will yet be free trade in natural products between Canada and United States. The only hope for relief from the burden of protection for the present is for independent action by the Canadian Parliament towards tariff reduction. Strong public opinion is the only power that will bring the tariff down. The result of an election cannot by any means be taken as a definite and final pronouncement upon the principle of protection. Both parties prior to the election announced themselves as irrevocably committed to the maintenance of the protective tariff. Just three days prior to the election Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking in Ottawa, said: "Our policy with regard to the manufacturers will be the same as it has always been." This was held out to the manufacturers to keep them in line, but they preferred to have an avowedly protectionist government in power and now they have one. For years the manufacturers have dictated the prices the farmers must pay for what they buy, and where they must buy it, and now they have even dictated where the farmer may and may not sell his crop. We must wait to see what policy the government will adopt towards the tariff before jumping at conclusions. Until the recent campaign the strongest protectionists in the opposition were satisfied with the protectionist policy of the government and there has been silence on tariff matters on the part of both parties in order to secure the favor of the protected interests. The recent campaign has been the first opportunity since 1896 for the people to have the tariff question discussed before them. Even this time the evils of protection were not set forth by reciprocity candidates throughout Eastern Canada. This is where the mistake has been made. What is needed in Canada is a radical party with the courage of its convictions. Even though the forces of protection are at the present in the ascendant the supporters of the new government are not by any means all high protectionists. Many of them favor tariff reduction rather than increase. All that is needed to force even the new government to lower the tariff is to continue the campaign of education. The protected interests never sleep. They never cease their campaign even though they meet with temporary reverses. They are an example to those who believe in equal rights for all. There will be no serious increases in the tariff until the new government has time to look around. We will now see how much the loyal manufacturers are desirous of having closer trade relations with the Mother Country. We will venture the assertion that the manufacturers will put their foot on anything that tends to lower the Canadian tariff. There is another factor to be considered. The voice of the rural parts of the Prairie Provinces in the present election was overwhelmingly in favor of reciprocity. That vote for reciprocity was not as much an endorsement of the Liberal government as it was the endorsement of the principle of reciprocity and freer trade. There are only twenty-four seats in the Prairie Provinces in which the rural vote controls. The redistribution bill which

should have been passed before the election, and which will be passed at the next session of Parliament, will give at least forty rural seats. The voice of the rural West will always be for freer trade. With forty rural seats in the Prairie Provinces and with a considerable low tariff sentiment throughout the rest of Canada the powers that be must reckon with it. The result of the election, except for the loss of reciprocity, should not in any way discourage the Western people. The government had been in power for fifteen years and its time had certainly come to go. No government should be permitted to remain in power for more than two terms on principle. They are bound to become infected with corruption and fall into incompetency. More frequent changes would compel governments to keep themselves clean and free from undesirable entanglements. We have a new man at the helm and new blood. Let us all join in extending to him every good wish for a statesmanlike administration of the affairs of Canada in the interest of all the people. He is the man we, as a whole, have chosen to guide the destinies of our nation. He needs the co-operation of every man whose interest is Canada's interest.

THE FARMERS AND THE ELECTION

By a very large majority the actual working farmers of the Prairie Provinces have endorsed the principle of reciprocal trade with the United States. It was the organized farmers who forced the question of reciprocity into the forefront and when it became an issue they stood to their guns in a manner that challenges admiration. They did not stand for a party but for a principle, and they endorsed that principle in the Prairie Provinces in nearly every rural seat. They were not fighting to have the Liberal government sustained but to have the tariff wall broken down. The farmers of the Prairie Provinces demonstrated their power in a way that will compel every government and all Special Interests to give them careful consideration. Had the question of reciprocity been submitted to a Referendum in the Prairie Provinces without being handicapped by appeals to party loyalty the farmers would have endorsed it to the extent of ninety-five per cent of their number. The farmers in the West who voted against reciprocity did so chiefly because their party called. They wanted reciprocity but they wanted party more. If the Initiative and Referendum were in force they could vote for the principle they believed in and still vote for their party. Others considered that Mr. Borden had pledged himself to concessions equally as valuable as reciprocity. Both parties set out to capture the farmers' vote by promising a part of the Farmers' Platform. This shows the imperative need of having the Initiative and Referendum become a part of our lawmaking machinery. It is the only way to overcome the curse of the party system. As a rule every strong party man votes against his best judgment upon some issue every time he votes, while with the Initiative and Referendum he could exercise his best judgment on every individual question. It has been remarked that the farmers might as well drop their organization. If the farmers in the rest of Canada had fought their fight as they did in the Prairie Provinces reciprocity would have been endorsed. But why should the farmers of the West be discouraged now? Why should they cease their efforts? They are stronger and more influential today than ever and the government in power is solemnly pledged to grant a larger percentage of their demands than any government ever granted. Not often before have the farmers been able to secure concessions from the federal government. In 1906 the Liberal government had all arrangements made to raise the tariff still