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Editorial

Christmas Good Cheer

During the Christmas and New Year holiday season the civilized world endeavors to make everyone happy. So has it been for centuries. In the Canadian West there are districts in which agriculturists in 1910 have suffered disappointment. Perhaps some will consider they are not in position to offer words of cheer. However, if they reflect, the conclusion soon will be reached that they might easily be in worse position.

It is easy to make ourselves miserable and unhappy by thinking of disappointments nnd looking on the black side of things. With every effort bent toward making someone else happy troubles are forgotten, and the general result is happiness for all. Selfishness can well be cast aside. It was not intended that man should be selfish. If you have not tried the experiment of making others happy do it this season. You can easily keep it up all year—and throughout the years to come.

Agriculture Stands on the Golden Rule

Agriculture is not asking for the pap bottle. It merely asks that less pap be exacted from agriculture. Agriculture is not claiming any special privilege. It wants lower duties, even to the extent of free trade in farm implements, lumber, fuel and clothing, and it is willing to concede the claims of any other class in the community who want such materials as they buy placed on the free list. Agriculture is not seeking anything unfair. What it asks is that the man who labors on the soil shall retain for himself the largest measure possible of what his toil produces: not an unreasonable demand, not a demand that cannot, without opposition from agriculture, be espoused by any man or class of men who labor with their hands or brains. Agriculture is entirely unselfish in this appeal for tariff reduction. It produces nothing that is benefited materially in selling price by the protective tariff, and it does not propose that the necessities of existence it buys, shall be enhanced in price by reason of the fact that artificial barriers have been raised by certain classes to its untaxed purchase of those things. Agriculture is willing to stand on the principle of the "Golden Rule." Can those who espouse the cause of high protection and class privilege say as much?

The Delegation at Ottawa

Farmers to the number of close to one thousand attacked parliament hill with cool heads and warm hearts, with a united front, and with a determination to show that the entire Dominion needed certain legislation. No one denied that certain classes did not see eye to eye with the sturdy farmers. Some maintain that there are farmers to a considerable percentage of the population who would not vote with them. One thing is certain, too, that when party politics and these questions are mixed on a ballot paper the votes will not all go according to the demands made. But party politics should never be considered when matters such as the construction of a railway to Hudson Bay, or government ownership of terminal elevators, through which grain passes, or a revision of tariff that tends to do away to a certain extent with protection, are being dealt with. These are great problems that demand serious consideration. The effect will be the same on Liberal or Conservative, and all should consider them from a business, not a political, viewpoint. This is what the organized farmers have done. If they are wrong, it is no fault of theirs.

When the resolutions outlined in last week's issue were presented, one to six or eight delegates backed each of them up with carefully prepared memorials, stripped of any taint of class legislation, and bearing only a natural color of justice, which every good citizen recognizes.

The reply given by the premier was one of his masterpieces, as far as careful wording is concerned. It was extremely noncommittal. In fact, it indicated that the government had studied all these problems and knew what best could be done; and, more than that, it hinted that the government would do as it pleased in regard to each, or all, of the matters broached. This attitude shows bravery on the part of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues.

But what of the future? This monster delegation is composed of individuals the greater percentage of whom are determined to bring about remedial legislation in regard to all points discussed. If they stand together, and continue to be reasonable in their demands, they will win. Results are what they want.

The Power of the West

Judging from the personnel of the big deputation that waited on the government at Ottawa it would seem that farmers of the West are true to their reputation of being more enthusiastic in attempts to bring about changes in legislative halls than are those of the East. While the prairie provinces could muster up 500 men to go to Ottawa, the entire East could gather something slightly over half that number to travel a mere jaunt compared with the trip from the West. No wonder Sir Wilfrid Laurier told them that the more radical spirit of the West pervaded the memorials presented.

Be that as it may, it was not shown that the demands are unreasonable. The men of the East were just as eager to have tariff changes as were those from the West. The Hudson Bay Railway and the terminal elevator propositions will benefit western farmers more than eastern, so that more hearty support from our delegates was to be expected. Even with this, however, the delegates were practically unanimous in favor of what was embodied in the resolutions.

Of course, if the government has something better to offer there is no doubt but that the farmers will be quick to see that such is the case. Particularly in regard to terminal elevators will the outcome be awaited with interest. A satisfactory waterway across Ontario and to Montreal via Ottawa would help a great deal. But the question is: How long will it be before such waterway is available for grain traffic? In the meantime, changes in the terminal elevators at the lake ports appear to offer a desired remedy, at least in part.

Farmers and Direct Taxation

Representatives of the organized farmers of Canada in memorials presented to the government at Ottawa, suggested that agriculturists were satisfied to submit to direct taxation in order to provide revenue that may be needed to make up deficiency of cash due to changes they suggested in Canadian tariffs. This is a bold statement. There are many men who would prefer direct taxation, but everyone knows how some would object to seeing a big increase in the annual tax levy. Practically all can be educated to see the advisability of paying higher taxes and getting the necessaries of life at so many dollars less each year. It is possible, however, that trouble would be avoided by having the change made gradually.

But is it necessary to increase tax levies, even if the tariff wall is lowered? Western Canada has plenty of lands to be disposed of in such way as to supply revenue. Then many would welcome a change whereby those holding unimproved lands would pay over something in return for the increased value of them