

The Grain Growers' Guide

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THE MANUFACTURERS' REPLY

On page seven of this issue we reproduce a speech delivered by the chairman of the Tariff Committee of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. This can be regarded as the official reply of the manufacturers to the farmers. Coming from an expert, the sentiments expressed by Mr. Russell might well be regarded as the foundation of the manufacturers' plea for high tariff. Two features of Mr. Russell's address challenge immediate attention. First, he intimated that twenty years' residence in the West was not sufficient to entitle a farmer to an expression of opinion on national affairs. The second point of interest in the address was that the Western farmers should devote their time to the study of better farming methods and leave the tariff alone. In fact Mr. Russell took it upon himself to hand out a great deal of technical information on agricultural industry for the benefit of Western farmers. We sincerely hope that whatever of merit there is in these remarks—and there is some—the Western farmers will profit thereby. Apparently, in Mr. Russell's judgment, the farmers have no business to say anything about the tariff even though they represent more than half the population of Canada. But on the other hand, the manufacturers, numbering less than three thousand people, feel justified in telling the farmers how to conduct their business. We would respectfully suggest to Mr. Russell that such arguments will not be well received. The case that he made out for the manufacturers is lamentably weak. He has not brought out one strong point in favor of a protective tariff. Not one single reason does he give why the farmer will be benefitted by paying 20 per cent. more than he ought to pay for a binder, or 30 per cent. more than he ought to for woollen underclothing. It is all right to talk in national terms, but Canada does not manufacture; Canada does not buy agricultural implements; Canada does not wear woollen underclothing; Canada does not consume cement. Great confusion is caused by suggesting that Canada does certain things, when in reality Canada does none of them. The individual people of Canada do these things. If a farmer pays \$20 more for an implement of Canadian manufacture than he would be compelled to pay to another manufacturer for the same thing, who is the gainer? The Canadian manufacturer, of course, and the farmer is \$20 poorer. Canada as a nation does not figure in the deal at all, but the farmer will be \$20 out of pocket. And yet the manufacturers would endeavor to make him believe that such an action brings prosperity. Mr. Russell speaks of Western exaggeration, but the Westerners will certainly take off their hats to him. He loves to dwell upon the hardships of the pioneer farmers of Ontario, and is apparently sorry that conditions have improved somewhat since then. Pioneering in the West is no picnic, as thousands can testify who have broken homes for themselves in the prairie sod thirty, fifty and one hundred miles from the railway. The hardships of the Ontario pioneer were very often not so great as upon the Western prairies, though the reward was often not so great. However, this is no argument either for or against the manufacturers. Mr. Russell says the manufacturer's heel is at the foot of the ladder assisting the farmers to mount. The manufacturers need not be so solicitous. Give the farmer a square deal and he will get up the ladder without any assistance. Certainly there is farming by

proxy in the West, and there are a number of very large farms as well as an increasing number of landlords. This class is not deserving of any special attention at the hands of Parliament, and no plea has been made for them. It is the class of men who are working their own farms, who are toiling in the endeavor to make a livelihood for themselves and their families, who are the nation's greatest asset, that are to be considered. The immense rise in land values in the West does not benefit the farmer while living upon his farm. He has to sell it to secure the increase. It is doubtful if the actual farming operations in all Canada today would show any profit aside from this "unearned increment." Land values have certainly risen to a great extent, and farmers in the West who are wealthy are nearly always so on account of this rise in the land values. Very few Western farmers have made wages and interest on their investment through the return of actual labor. They have been hemmed in by conditions which tended to take very heavy toll from the result of their labors. If the manufacturers have an idea that there is a majority of farmers in Canada in favor of protection the wisest plan for them would be to organize these farmers. Because if such a majority of farmers can be organized in favor of high protection the tariff wall would soar like a rocket. This is another specimen of pure manufacturers' bluff. Mr. Russell misrepresented the feeling that led to the manufacturers' invitation at Ottawa being declined. It was not because of any animosity towards the manufacturers that the farmers did not accept the invitation to go through the factories. It was almost wholly a matter of time.

In dealing with the Reciprocity question Mr. Russell elaborates upon Canadian purchases from the United States, and vice versa. Does he for one moment believe that the individual people of Canada would buy from the people of the United States if it were not profitable to do so? If the special interests in the United States are able to keep the tariff wall high and thus rob the United States people, is that any reason why we in Canada should permit our special privileged class to do likewise? His view of the stagnation in Canada and the sacrifice of the manufacturing interests which would follow reciprocity is pure buncombe, as is his talk of political union with the United States. There are few if any factories in Canada today that cannot live and flourish under complete free trade, and this will be admitted inside of two years. Direct taxation has no terrors for the Canadian farmer even if, as Mr. Russell says, he is a very much "misinformed" man. Under direct taxation the farmer will know what he pays and to whom he pays it. Despite the manufacturers' protest there is no principle of political economy which will show any appreciable value in the home market where there is a large exportable surplus. That is from the farmers' standpoint. Of course when it is turned around and looked at from the manufacturers' standpoint it is different. They have the home market for their produce walled up completely, and the farmers have to buy from them. But the farmers have no such cinch for the sale of their produce and do not ask for it. The manufacturers' home market is a good one, but the farmers' home market is such a small one that it is unworthy of serious consideration. Mr. Russell is enthusiastic over the fact that he was reared upon a

farm and he thinks the manufacturers should take the farmers by the arm. That certainly is a good argument on the manufacturers' side. But so long as the manufacturer is enabled by law to put his hand in the farmers' pocket he will need to be careful about placing his hand on the farmers' arm. The farmer is an exceedingly patient man and he will stand a great deal before he protests, but he has reached the stage where patience is no virtue now, and we would suggest that the manufacturers would negotiate in terms of man to man rather than handing out sugar-coated words and patronizing sentiments to the farmers, even though, as Mr. Russell says, they may be a very ignorant class of people. Canada, says Mr. Russell, is very prosperous today. Now we should like to know, what is Canada? The prosperity of Canada is merely the prosperity of the individual citizens of Canada, and it is well to study the prosperity of the individual farmers. If the individual farmer in Canada can become more prosperous by paying 25 per cent. more for his commodities than he should pay, then we will grant that Canada is a prosperous country, by having a legalized system that takes from the many and gives to the few. The manufacturers must advance better arguments than they have before they can convince the farmers.

IS IT WORTH WHILE?

Now that the farmers of Canada have made their demands known throughout the world it is necessary to increase their forces in order to ensure that their demands are acceded to by parliament. The delegation to Ottawa cost the farmers of Canada in actual cash very nearly \$50,000. It was money well spent. If proper conditions are secured in Canada it will mean that the farmers will secure at least twenty per cent. more for the product of their labor. It will mean millions of dollars yearly in the pockets of Canadian farmers and will spread happiness and contentment where dissatisfaction now reigns. Would it not be well to devote an equal amount of money this year to an educational campaign which will reach from the Atlantic to the Pacific and carry the gospel of the square deal to every corner of the Dominion? An educational fund of \$50,000 would enable the placing in the hand of every farmer in Canada of literature in his native language that would open his eyes to the existing conditions. It would bring every independent farmers' organization under the banner of the Canadian Council of Agriculture and would render possible the sending of missionaries to every citizen. Truly it is a stupendous project, but is it not worth the cost? If democracy is to be enthroned in Canada it must be done before special privilege is so firmly entrenched that it cannot be unseated without a revolution.

TAKE THOUGHT TOGETHER

It is continually being brought home to the leaders of the organized farmers' movement in Canada that much more effective work could be accomplished by having a definite program for study during the winters. There are a number of questions that are common to the provinces of the West. Meetings of the local branches are held monthly or semi-monthly. If a certain number of meetings during each winter could be held on the same afternoon or evening in every local community to discuss the same question there would be great benefit gained thereby. If a certain program were laid