

Borden at Brandon

The reply made by Mr. Borden to the Grain Growers at Brandon on June 20 is of such importance that it is here given in full. His later addresses throughout the West will only be regarded as they contain new matter.

Two hundred delegates, representing all the branches of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, waited upon Mr. R. L. Borden, leader of the Opposition in the Dominion Parliament, at Brandon on Tuesday evening, June 20, and presented to him the views of the organized farmers of the province upon the various questions which are at present exciting public interest, especially in the West. The representations of the Grain Growers were made in the form of a series of papers, which were published in the last issue of The Guide, and which were first submitted by their respective authors to a meeting of the delegates in the afternoon and unanimously approved of. The requests of the Grain Growers were practically identical with those made of the government and Parliament at Ottawa on December 16 last, embracing government ownership and operation of the terminal elevators and of the Hudson's Bay Railway, the establishment of a government system of chilled meat plants, the amendment of the Railway Act to compel railway companies to compensate the owners of cattle killed on the track through the fault of the company, the reduction of the customs tariff, the increase of the British preference and the passage of the reciprocity agreement with the United States.

The delegation was received by Mr. Borden in the City Hall prior to the public meeting, and the proceedings were presided over by R. C. Henders, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association. Mr. Borden, in his opening remarks, said the farmers of the West were not prepared to sit at the feet of the magnates of the East and to receive from them information and advice respecting agricultural and transportation problems. There might be Gamblets in the cities, but the farmers of the West objected to the statement that the farmers did not know what they wanted. They did know what they wanted, and he thought they would be able to convince Mr. Borden of that fact. They hoped, moreover, to convince him so fully that when he went back to Ottawa he would be in a position to ally himself with any interests that would give the farmers what they felt they so much needed.

The paper of J. W. Scallion, asking for the passage of the reciprocity agreement and the increase of the British preference to fifty per cent, was first read and was loudly applauded by the delegates. Papers by Messrs. J. S. Wood on the tariff, Peter Wright on terminal elevators, R. J. Ayson on the Hudson's Bay Railway, R. M. Wilson on the chilled meat industry and C. A. Burdette asking that no election should be held until after the redistribution of seats in the Dominion Parliament, and the increase in the representation of the West, were also accompanied by hearty applause from the delegates.

Borden's Reply

Mr. Borden was received with hearty cheers when he rose to reply and first expressed his great appreciation of the welcome which had been extended to him and of having an opportunity to meet the Grain Growers and by comparing their views ascertain by discussion what was best in the interests of the country. Continuing, he said:

"Mr. Henders has voiced the aspiration of the farmers of this country in that they are not prepared to sit at the feet of the magnates of this country. I am entirely with you there. Neither am I. I never have sat at their feet and I never intend to sit at their feet."

"My friend, Mr. Scallion, and other gentlemen have referred to what is called reciprocity with the United States of America. Now that is a very large subject and I am going to speak upon it tonight and therefore you will not expect me to deal with it in detail here this evening."

Opposes Reciprocity

"All I have to say about that agreement is that I am absolutely opposed to it and that if you gentlemen in the West were prepared to make me Prime Minister of Canada tomorrow if I would support that agreement, I would not do it and I would not be fit to be Prime Minister of this country if I said anything else to

you than that, having the convictions upon it that I have. I will go into the question somewhat fully tonight. I went into it somewhat fully the other evening at Winnipeg and I will go into it more fully tonight. You have spoken of trusts and combines in this country. I told the manufacturers of this country at an opportunity that came to me at Montreal six or eight months ago just about what I am going to tell you now, that mergers and combines were doing more against such a policy of protection as would develop the natural resources and industries of this country than any other thing and that it was an infinite mistake to allow them to go on. I have a policy with regard to these matters which I will disclose to you very briefly after a few words, but which I will discuss more fully tonight. You have complained of the high prices of the various articles that you, as farmers, consume, but how in the name of all that is sensible you can expect lower prices by interlocking your

tariff with a country that has the highest tariff in the world I cannot for the life of me understand. How you expect to get rid of trusts and combines by interlocking your tariff with a country that is now ridden by trusts and combines than any other country in the world I cannot understand.

Tariff Commission

"I would endeavor to go about that in a business-like and effective way through a permanent tariff commission charged with the duty of investigating business conditions, but I am not prepared to endeavor to get rid of trusts and combines in this country by interlocking our fiscal system with the fiscal system of the United States where trusts and combines oppress consumer and producer alike, and have done so to the infinite disadvantage of every interest in that country. Of course, you have to compete in the world's markets, but when the United States of America produce a surplus of every one of these things that you produce for export and that surplus has to be sold in the world's markets, it seems a little astonishing to me that you expect to get a better price in the United States. The British market has been the best market for Canada in the past and I believe it will be the best market for Canada in the future, and the United States of America, as far as I understand



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Production and Consumption

"One gentleman has referred to the increased production and decreased exports of the United States. We have had exactly the same thing in Canada. Mr. Fisher, the minister of agriculture, in December last, went into the latter question and we asked him how it was that some years ago millions of pounds of butter were exported by Canada and that now the exports were very much less.

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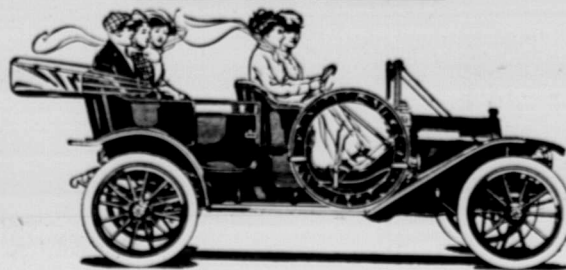
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