

THE LEADER.

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REGINA, N.W.T., THURSDAY MORNING, MARCH 27, 1902.

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GRAIN BLOCKADE.

Full Text of Mr. Scott's Speech
in the House of Commons.

A COMBINE DOES EXIST.

Unprecedented Size of Crop—Impossibility of Farmers to Provide Necessary Storage—Indefensible Action of C.P.R. in Refusing to Take Shipments over Soo Line—Grain Act a Fair Act.

The following is the Hansard report of the speech delivered by Mr. MacLennan for West Assiniboia in the House of Commons on March 10th on the motion made by the member for East Assiniboia for papers dealing with the grain blockade:

Mr. Walter Scott (West Assiniboia). I agree with most of the remarks made by the hon. member (Mr. Roche, Marquette) who has taken his seat, and with the larger portion of the remarks made by other hon. gentlemen this afternoon. The hon. member for Brant (Mr. Heyd) and the hon. member for Russell (Mr. Edwards) gave some advice to the people of the North-West Territories upon unperfected information. My hon. friend from Russell contended that the farmers of the North-West Territories themselves should provide sufficient warehouses to safeguard their wheat crop.

Mr. Edwards. No.

Mr. Scott. I am referring now to some advice which was given by the hon. member for Russell, if I recollect his remarks.

Mr. Edwards. Entirely wrong.

Mr. Scott. At all events, who ever made the remark, I think it will have to be admitted by hon. gentlemen who were in the House two or three sessions ago, that the contention the member for Assiniboia was making namely, that there were ships given to the farmers of the North-West Territories to build warehouses along the line of railway where they are demanded—

Mr. Edwards. May I be allowed to correct the hon. gentleman? I made no suggestion at all about building warehouses. I merely suggested, that in view of the short time available for moving the crop in the autumn, it was in my opinion detrimental to the farmers themselves to force their crop upon the market. I said nothing at all about building warehouses. I said I considered it advisable, in the interests of the farmers themselves, to make some provision whereby they could hold up a portion of their crop for the market, and not force it so rapidly upon the market.

Mr. Scott. I may say to the House that in my district one farmer and his six sons last season raised a crop exceeding 70,000 bushels of grain, which is not an unusual thing in that country. This fact I think will be sufficient to convince the House that it is unreasonable to expect that the farmers of that country are going to build granaries and barns on their farms sufficiently extensive to house their crops. That is not done in the western States where conditions are somewhat similar.

In western prairie States the land is known as short grain in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. The interest of the farmer lies in moving the grain as much as possible taken directly from the threshing to the elevator on the line of railway. I venture to say that if liberty is given to the farmers to build as many warehouses as they please upon the line of railway, they will take advantage of it to safeguard themselves against such a condition as exists in that country at the present time. The heat, if I may so call it, that has been shown this afternoon by some hon. gentlemen from the west, is in my opinion entirely warranted by the circumstances. The heat exhibited by the hon. member for Macdonald (Mr. Boyd) for instance is surely warranted by the conditions that exist in his district, and would be warranted by the conditions that exist in the district of West Assiniboia, and those conditions are my excuse for speaking on this subject to-day. In my respect, however, I think my hon. friend from Macdonald rather misdirected his remarks. I regretted that he seemed desirous of interjecting a little bit of party discussion into the subject.

do not know, Mr. Speaker, that it would benefit the farmer who had eight or ten thousand bushels of grain on his farm unprotected, which he is unable to get out of the country and obtain the price that it is worth—I say I do not know whether it would benefit him very much to know that the gentlemen who were leaders of the Liberal party twenty years ago admitted, as he seems, to think they should admit, that they had held mistaken opinions at that time.

Possibly some of the leaders of the Liberal party, 20 years ago did not realize the great prospects before the North-West Territories and Manitoba, but during this intervening period, 1878 to 1898, neither the opinions held by the leaders of the Liberal party nor the platform of the Liberal party had much to do with the government of affairs in that country. It was the opinion of the hon. gentlemen opposite which governed during that time. I think every person who understands what took place from 1878 to 1898 and who understands thoroughly the conditions in that country, is bound to admit that such a series of blunders in government never was seen in any country under civilised government. These blunders in government and the shackles that were put upon the trade of the country, together with the iniquitous railway bargains that were made has kept progress back so that the prophecies which the leaders of the hon. gentlemen opposite made in 1880 and 1882 were impossible of fulfillment. It is only today, after five years of Liberal administration, when some of the shackles have been taken off, when some of the injustices have been removed, not to as large an extent as we had hoped to see, but even now, when some of the shackles have been removed and some of the injustices cancelled, these prophecies are commencing to be fulfilled. It is perfectly true that the subject which I have mentioned for West Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) brought before the House this afternoon is exciting a very great deal of interest throughout the country west of Lake Superior. This is possibly the most serious question that has confronted the settlers in that country for a great length of time and I am sure the House will see the force of the statements made by the hon. member for East Assiniboia and by other hon. gentlemen who have addressed the House on the subject. My hon. friend said in his remarks that probably no country ever had a greater crop from that with which the North-West Territories was blessed last year, but I do not think that statement is correct. I think it is that the liability of their grain to destruction that the farmers have been losing. They have not, of course, lost in that way yet, but there is a great likelihood that the farmers will lose very largely by the spoiling of their grain in the spring when wet weather comes, because very much of it is stored in places not weather proof. In several ways there have been serious losses. One of the most serious has been the depression of the price, about which there has been so much talk this afternoon. There cannot be any doubt at all about this depreciation in price. The existing conditions have enabled a grain buyer to be farmed out. I have agreed with the remarks made by the hon. gentlemen opposite to the effect that there was this year a hard and fast grain buyers combine in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. Had the Canadian Pacific Railway been ready to handle the crop, because as hon. gentlemen will recollect last year there was a long strike on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the trackmen's strike, the grain was ready and had harvesting and threshing gone on at the usual time, it is possible the company would not have been able to handle the crop. At all events, my opinion is that the company's facilities were fully taxed just as soon as they had these facilities really and commenced to handle the crop. It very soon became apparent that there was going to be some difficulty in getting the crop to market. In my opinion we have no very great right to complain against the company on account of its lack of facilities to entirely cope with the conditions of the North-West. Referring to the remarks that fell from one hon. gentleman, I would say that I do not think any company or government or person who had studied the crop conditions realised before the month of September that there was going to be as large a crop as was turned out to be the case. Some time in August, I recollect the Winnipeg Free Press, which had a commission around for several weeks made the estimate that there would be about 50,000,000 bushels of wheat in the whole of the North-West. The actuality was something like 63,000,000 bushels. I recollect, also, that the premier of Manitoba, Mr. Roblin, was in Ontario at the same time as the Manitoba Free Press grain estimate came out. It was his opinion that the Free Press estimate was not too large and some of the Ontario papers and some of the North-West papers as a matter of fact, drew attention to the position the Manitoba Free Press had taken and advised that he should not endeavour to excite expectations that could not be realised. So, I think it may be taken as a fact that there was no person up to the month of September who realised that we were going to have such a large crop.

Mr. Boyd. May I ask the hon. gentleman (Mr. Scott) if he is not aware, and if the country is not aware that a month before the date he mentioned, the Manitoba Government had advertised for 20,000 men to take that crop out?

Mr. Scott. I believe that is a fact and that of the 20,000 men, or whatever number of the men came, were required and that more could have got work had they come. Even had everybody known that we would have had that amount of grain, I think it is quite likely that the Canadian Pacific Railway would have found it impossible to provide more facilities than they did when they came to handle the crop. But, this is the complaint we have against the Canadian Pacific Railway: up to the close of navigation they did the best they could with their facilities. Navigation closed some time about the end of November, or early in December, and before the first of January every terminal elevator and grain elevator in the west was full to the brim of wheat and since the first of January the blockade has been complete.

Practically everybody in the wheat section, boards of trade, town councils and governments, have been exercised over that question and have been passing resolutions. I have received a large number of these resolutions but I will not detain the House by reading them. In these resolutions it is urged that pressure shall be brought upon the Canadian Pacific Railway to do whatever is possible to relieve the situation. One suggestion made by the Minister of Agriculture in the Terri-

torial Government was that grain might be taken over the Soo line via Minneapolis and Duluth. At Duluth they had storage capacity open for 10,000,000 bushels during January and February, but the Canadian Pacific Railway refused to take any grain over the Soo line and refused also to handle grain from the Canadian Northern railway at Port Arthur. It might have been said that it was open for the farmers to ship over the Soo if they desired to do so, but the grain rate from Moose Jaw to Port Arthur is twenty cents a bushel, while to Duluth they are only fifteen cents a bushel so it would be unreasonable to expect the farmers on their own account to endeavor to ship their grain over the Soo line. The fact that this suggestion was a feasible one is proved by a telegram which was published in the Toronto Globe a few days ago, and which is as follows:

"Wheat shipments in the west are again lively. Along the C.P.R. points yesterday there were 110,000 bushels of wheat marketed and the company claim that they will ship from now on, so that wheat can be stored at country points at the rate of over 100,000 bushels a day, or 1,000,000 bushels a week." Shipments have increased over this route to Duluth. The freight department have discovered that it is a good policy to allow shipments to go over this route to Duluth. There is an enormous amount of wheat still in western farmers' hands, which will have to be delivered at elevators at stations along the C.P.R.

Had the Canadian Pacific Railway been ready to make shipments to Duluth during January and February, if this statement is true that from now on they can remove 1,000,000 bushels a week by that route, they might have taken 8,000,000 bushels more wheat out of the country and the congestion of bushels would have been relieved to that extent. It is not alone the loss of the liability of their grain to destruction that the farmers have been losing. They have not, of course, lost in that way yet, but there is a great likelihood that the farmers will lose very largely by the spoiling of their grain in the spring when wet weather comes, because very much of it is stored in places not weather proof. In several ways there have been serious losses. One of the most serious has been the depression of the price, about which there has been so much talk this afternoon. There cannot be any doubt at all about this depreciation in price. The existing conditions have enabled a grain buyer to be farmed out. I have agreed with the remarks made by the hon. gentlemen opposite to the effect that there was this year a hard and fast grain buyers combine in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. Had the Canadian Pacific Railway been ready to handle the crop, because as hon. gentlemen will recollect last year there was a long strike on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the trackmen's strike, the grain was ready and had harvesting and threshing gone on at the usual time, it is possible the company would not have been able to handle the crop. At all events, my opinion is that the company's facilities were fully taxed just as soon as they had these facilities really and commenced to handle the crop. It very soon became apparent that there was going to be some difficulty in getting the crop to market. In my opinion we have no very great right to complain against the company on account of its lack of facilities to entirely cope with the conditions of the North-West. Referring to the remarks that fell from one hon. gentleman, I would say that I do not think any company or government or person who had studied the crop conditions realised before the month of September that there was going to be as large a crop as was turned out to be the case. Some time in August, I recollect the Winnipeg Free Press, which had a commission around for several weeks made the estimate that there would be about 50,000,000 bushels of wheat in the whole of the North-West. The actuality was something like 63,000,000 bushels. I recollect, also, that the premier of Manitoba, Mr. Roblin, was in Ontario at the same time as the Manitoba Free Press grain estimate came out. It was his opinion that the Free Press estimate was not too large and some of the Ontario papers and some of the North-West papers as a matter of fact, drew attention to the position the Manitoba Free Press had taken and advised that he should not endeavour to excite expectations that could not be realised. So, I think it may be taken as a fact that there was no person up to the month of September who realised that we were going to have such a large crop.

Mr. Boyd. May I ask the hon. gentleman (Mr. Scott) if he is not aware, and if the country is not aware that a month before the date he mentioned, the Manitoba Government had advertised for 20,000 men to take that crop out?

Mr. Scott. At six o'clock the House took recess.

After RECESS.
House resumed at eight o'clock.
Mr. Scott. Mr. Speaker, when you left the chair at six o'clock, I was pointing out the serious losses entailed on farmers of Manitoba and the Territories during the past season by the want of transportation facilities—the loss through the depreciation in price and through the degradation of the grain. This was alluded to by my hon. friend from East Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas), who stated that the elevator men were obliged to buy No. 1 hard wheat. At Regina and other points with which he familiarised me in regard to the elevator men stated that they were not buying No. 1 hard wheat; but what did occur was this: When a farmer arrived at the elevator with a load of wheat, which would grade No. 1 hard, or possibly No. 1 northern, he was told by the elevator manager that the bin for that grade was filled. If he was willing to sell it for No. 2 northern at a loss of three or four cents a bushel, then, there was serious loss occasioned to the farmer, and the elevator manager, and during the months of January and February by their total inability to sell their grain. A farmer might have 3,000 or 4,000 bushels, and he might be obliged to purchase some articles in town. If he was unable to dispose of his grain, he had to borrow money at a high rate of interest to go into debt to the merchant, in which case he was obliged to pay interest to the wholesaler. In this way serious loss was occasioned to the whole country; and this condition of things made money tight and business not as good as it otherwise be.

Mr. Scott. There is no question that up to the present time they have not made provision for storing grain on their farms, and it is my opinion, from what I know of the conditions in our North-West, and from what I have found the conditions to be in the western States, that this will never be feasible in the west, as it is in Ontario. Imagine such an instance as I mentioned this afternoon—that of one family that raised 70,000 bushels of grain. Imagine their making provision for the storing of the grain in the straw, or even the threshed grain, on their farm, some miles from the railway. The conditions of farming in the west are such that to carry on the business, the farmers are obliged to get their grain from the nearest railway point as quickly as possible. The usual plan is to draw it from the thresher to the warehouse on the line of railway. Then, there is the danger of

ASSEMBLY OPENED.

The Fourth Session of the Fourth Legislature Begun.

SPEECH BY HIS HONOR.

Large Attendance at the Opening Ceremonies—Correspondence With Federal Authorities re Provincial Autonomy—Increased Representation in the Assembly—The Select Standing Committee for Session.

The fourth session of the fourth Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories was opened in a most auspicious manner by His Honor Lieutenant Governor Forget last Thursday afternoon. The crowd in attendance was unusually large and very great interest was manifested in the proceedings. The public schools were dismissed in order that the scholars might be enabled to be present and thereby get an insight into some of the methods of procedure under our system of government.

Shortly after three o'clock Madame Forget, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, accompanied by her sister, Mrs. Dr. Mount, and Madame Frechette of Montreal, and Mrs. Gauthier of Elie Mills. The Lieutenant Governor drove in a four-in-hand carriage from Government House escorted by a squad of the N.W.M.P. under command of Inspector Taylor. His Honor was accompanied by Colonel Macdonald, D.S.C., as aide-de-camp, and Commissioner Perry, Surgeon-Major Bell, M.D., Captain Gilpin Brown and A. W. G. Bourget, private secretary. He was received by Premier Haultain, Hon. A. L. Sifton and Hon. G. H. V. Bulyea, members of the Government. Having been conducted to the Speaker's chair His Honor read

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.
Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:—
It is with much pleasure that I welcome you to the fourth session of the fourth Legislative Assembly. The time at which you meet is one characterised by great and unexampled prosperity in all sections of our country. New settlements with bright prospects are springing up in every direction, and the succession of excellent crops during recent years tends to encourage the continuation of the immigration movement so noticeable at present.

During the month of September last the Territories were honoured by the presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, now the Prince and Princess of Wales. Every effort was made to make the royal reception a success, and the result was most satisfactory. The hall was decorated with hundreds of green paper shamrocks. The proceeds of the entertainment amounted to about one hundred dollars. Supper was served from half past five until after eight o'clock. The tables were nicely and appropriately decorated, large bunches of real shamrocks being conspicuous on each of the seven tables which were presided over respectively by Mrs. Rothwell, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Carmichael, Mrs. Morrison, Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. Young and Mrs. Ross. The menu included such dishes as baked and roast beef, roast pork, ham, baked beans, baked Murphy's (with their jackets on), cabbage, beet and potatoes à la Mayonnaise, tea, (green, of course), jellies, pies, cakes, etc.

A dairy kitchen in full operation, in charge of Mrs. Patton assisted by Miss F. Rothwell and Miss B. Donahue, was a unique feature and here honors were done to the day in refreshing glasses of buttermilk or delicious dishes of ice cream, while many wended their way homeward with a Berkshire or Yorkshire pig under their arm which had been purchased while feeding at the trough. The fair was presided over by Mrs. McLean and Miss Bennett who was stripped of all its articles of beauty and usefulness before the evening was over. Miss Childs, Mrs. Landers and Miss Lauske supplied the cravings for sweets at the candy booth and catered to a brisk trade.

The concert programme opened with a selection on mouth organ, autoharp and violin by Messrs. Charles Dawson and Martin Weist entitled "St. Patrick's Day in the Mourning." In response to an enthusiastic encore they rendered "The Irish Washerwoman." This was followed by a promenade, which in turn gave place to a hard drill by twelve companies, each in white flowing dresses decorated with shamrocks having long loose sleeves. The drill was very effective and pretty, and called forth hearty applause. The chorus "Three Leaves of Shamrock," sang at the close, while green lights were burned and showers of shamrocks poured upon the singers was very fine. The ladies who took part in the drill were Misses Donahue, Beatty, F. Rothwell, L. Rothwell, Telfer, McRae, McAlmond and Morrison, and to them and to Mrs. Patton who had charge of this item of the programme, and Mr. W. White, who acted as drill instructor, went a hearty plaudite of appreciation.

Statements of receipts and expenditures of the past year together with estimates of the public requirements during the present year will be laid before you.

I now leave you to your deliberations confident