

The Farmers' Platform, 1918

3. Whereas Canada is now confronted with a huge national war debt and other greatly increased financial obligations, which can be most readily and effectively reduced by the development of our natural resources, chief of which is agricultural lands;

And whereas it is desirable that an agricultural career should be made attractive to our returned soldiers and the large anticipated immigration, and owing to the fact that this can best be accomplished by the development of a national policy which will reduce to a minimum the cost of living and the cost of production; . . .

And whereas Agriculture—the basic industry upon which the success of all other industries primarily depends—is unduly handicapped throughout Canada as shown by the declining rural population in both eastern and western Canada, due largely to the greatly increased cost of agricultural implements and machinery, clothing, boots and shoes, building material and practically everything the farmer has to buy, caused by the Protective Tariff, so that it is becoming impossible for farmers generally, under normal conditions, to carry on farming operations profitably;

And whereas the Protective Tariff is the most wasteful and costly method ever designed for raising national revenue, because for every dollar obtained thereby for the public treasury at least three dollars pass into the pockets of the protected interests, thereby building up a privileged class at the expense of the masses, thus making the rich richer and the poor poorer;

And whereas the Protective Tariff has been and is a chief corrupting influence in our national life because the protected interests, in order to maintain their unjust privileges, have contributed lavishly to political and campaign funds, thus encouraging both political parties to look to them for support, thereby lowering the standard of public morality;

Therefore be it resolved that the Canadian Council of Agriculture, representing the organized farmers of Canada, urges that as a means of remedying these evils and bringing about much needed social and economic reforms, our tariff laws should be amended as follows:

- (a) By an immediate and substantial all-round reduction of the customs tariff.
- (b) By reducing the customs duty on goods imported from Great Britain to one-half the rates charged under the general tariff, and that further gradual, uniform reductions be made in the remaining tariff on British imports that will ensure complete Free Trade between Great Britain and Canada in five years.

(c) That the Reciprocity Agreement of 1911, which still remains on the United States statute books, be accepted by the Parliament of Canada.

(d) That all foodstuffs not included in the Reciprocity agreement be placed on the free list.

(e) That agricultural implements, farm machinery, vehicles, fertilizers, coal, lumber, cement, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils be placed on the free list, and that all raw materials and machinery used in their manufacture also be placed on the free list.

(f) That all tariff concessions granted to other countries be immediately extended to Great Britain. . . .

4. As these tariff reductions may very considerably reduce the national revenue from that source, the Canadian Council of Agriculture would recommend that, in order to provide the necessary additional revenue for carrying on the government of the country and for the bearing of the cost of the War direct taxation be imposed in the following manner:

(a) By a direct tax on unimproved land values including all natural resources.

(b) By a graduated personal income tax.

(c) By a graduated inheritance tax on large estates.

(d) By a graduated income tax on the profits of corporations. . . .

7. A land settlement scheme based on a regulating influence in the selling price of land. Owners of idle areas should be obliged to file a selling price on their lands, that price also to be regarded as an assessable value for purposes of taxation.

8. Extension of co-operative agencies in agriculture to cover the whole field of marketing, including arrangements with consumers societies for the supplying of foodstuffs at the lowest rates and with the minimum of middleman handling.

9. Public ownership and control of railway, water and aerial transportation, telephone, telegraph and express systems, all projects in the development of natural power, and of the coalmining industry.

10. To bring about a greater measure of democracy in government, we recommend:

(a) The immediate repeal of the War-Time Elections Act.

- (b) The discontinuance of the practice of conferring titles upon citizens of Canada.
- (c) The reform of the Federal Senate.
- (d) An immediate check upon the growth of government by Order-in-Council, and increased responsibility of individual members of Parliament in all legislation.
- (e) The complete abolition of the patronage system.
- (f) The publication of contributions and expenditures both before and after election campaigns.
- (g) The removal of press censorship upon the restoration of Peace and the immediate restoration of the rights of free speech.
- (h) The setting forth by daily newspapers and periodical publications, of the facts of their ownership and control.
- (i) Proportional representation.
- (j) The establishment of measures of Direct Legislation through the initiative, referendum, and recall.
- (k) The opening of seats in Parliament to women on the same terms as men.