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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE

"Equal Rights to All and Special Privileges to None"
A Weekly Journal for Progressive Farmers.

Published under the auspices and employed as the official organ of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and the United Farmers of Alberta.



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Authorized by the Postmaster-General, Ottawa, Can., for transmission as second class mail matter. Published weekly at 275 Sherbrook St., Winnipeg, Man.
VOL. X August 15 No. 33

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ADVERTISING

Published every Wednesday. Subscriptions in the British Empire \$1.50 per year, except Winnipeg City, which is \$2.00 per year. Foreign and United States subscriptions \$2.50 per year. Single copies 5 cents.

Advertising Rates

Commercial Display—20 cents per agate line. Livestock Display—16 cents per agate line. Classified—5 cents per word per line.

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The Liberal Convention

The great Liberal convention of Western Canada, from which so much was expected, has come and gone. It met in Winnipeg last Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There were over 800 delegates gathered from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The premiers of all four Western provinces were present, as well as nearly all the members of their cabinets. There were also the Liberal members of the House of Commons from the West and the Western Liberal senators. All the Liberal members of the Western provincial legislatures, as well as the defeated Liberal provincial candidates, defeated federal Liberal candidates and new Liberal candidates, were present. These constituted a very large portion of the convention. The balance were delegates selected by Liberal associations scattered all over the province, including about 20 women.

The convention was called to meet in the big banquet hall of the Royal Alexandra Hotel, but was crowded out after the first session and held the remainder of its meetings in the enormous convention hall of the Industrial Bureau. Interest in the convention all over Canada was most intense. There were about 50 press representatives present, representing the papers of Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg and several Western cities. Very complete reports were sent out to every daily paper in the Dominion of Canada.

The Resolutions Committee

At the beginning of the convention a resolutions committee was appointed of about 100 members, including the senators and members of the House of Commons, most of the provincial cabinet ministers of the West and a large percentage of provincial members and legislators. The convention by resolution decided that no resolutions could be brought before the convention unless they had first been endorsed by the resolutions committee. Any member of the convention who wished to have a resolution brought before the convention had the liberty of going before the resolutions committee and presenting his case to that body. The resolutions committee was in session during the entire three days of the convention, and the majority of the members of the committee took no part in the deliberations of the main convention itself. None of the proceedings of the resolutions committee were made public beyond the resolutions that were adopted and passed on to the convention. It was learned, however, that the resolutions committee had a number of very animated sessions, at times being almost stormy. There were great differences of opinion among the delegates as to the action they should take on purely political questions, and the resolutions committee found it a very difficult task to harmonize all the views presented. In fact the resolutions committee was in session until nearly three o'clock on Wednesday morning and sat all night long Wednesday night, breaking up shortly before four o'clock on Thursday morning.

Machine Politics

It was announced at the opening of the convention that there would be no machine politics, but that it would be a democratic meeting in every way. Very little appeared on the surface to be

contrary. It is learned, however, that the Vancouver delegation under the leadership of Fred C. Wade, and part of the Alberta delegation under the leadership of the Hon. C. W. Cross, came to the convention fully determined to support the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier regardless of any other questions. These two delegations made themselves felt very strongly in the resolutions committee, and made certain that the resolutions drafted by that committee dealing with the war and the leadership of the party would be such as would be pleasing to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It was quite apparent that there was very good organization among the delegates of all the provinces. Frequent provincial caucuses were held throughout the convention between sessions in order to harmonize the views of the delegates.

There were two resolutions which were outstanding and which will mark the result of the convention more particularly than any other. One was that which expressed admiration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and endorsed him as the leader of the party. The other was what was called the "Win the War" resolution. These were the two resolutions which occupied most time in the resolutions committee and also occupied the most time and caused the most discussion in the main convention proper. Although the proceedings of the resolutions committee were private, it was learned that there was a great difference of opinion over the resolution endorsing Sir Wilfrid Laurier as leader. The machine politicians were determined to give Laurier their unqualified support at all hazards. Another group in the committee were determined to the contrary. At one time it is stated that a proposition was made in the resolutions committee that no pronouncement be made in regard to leadership or in regard to Laurier, and that this was voted down only by 49 to 47. It was further learned that the resolution in regard to Laurier as finally presented to the convention was only adopted by the resolutions committee after an all night session as the only possible means of maintaining harmony and unanimity. When the Laurier resolution came before the convention it received very strong support from all the Western premiers and a number of other prominent delegates. When the vote was taken on it, however, about six per cent of the delegates opposed it, though it was freely stated that a larger percentage were actually opposed to it though they did not vote against it.

The War Resolution

The "Win the War" resolution was a composite one. The resolutions committee spent a very long time in preparing it, the chief debate being over the question of conscription. As finally presented to the convention, clause No. 2 in the resolution made no mention of conscription and was worded in such a way as to receive the support both of conscriptionists and of anti-conscriptionists. When it came before the convention, J. G. Turriff, M.P., moved an amendment adding the words to clause 2, "by compulsion if necessary." Mr. Turriff made a very strong speech against the decidedly hostile spirit among the delegates. He wanted the convention to declare that the Canadian army at the front would be

maintained by soldiers from Canada, "by compulsion if necessary." The other speakers declared that the resolution as it was worded contained that meaning and that Mr. Turriff's amendment was not necessary. The resolution carried almost unanimously, Mr. Turriff receiving very little support.

No resolution was brought before the convention on the question of organizing the Western Liberals into an independent Western party with their own leader. The question was not discussed in the convention in any way. It is learned, however, that the matter was discussed in the resolutions committee. In that committee the Western Liberal members of the House of Commons and the senators, or at least a number of them, declared that they already had an independent organization by means of a Western caucus and were therefore opposed to the organization of an independent Western group. A number of the machine politicians also felt that this would be a very serious reflection upon their leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and for that reason they opposed it also. There was a strong feeling in the resolutions committee in favor of a Western party, but because it was impossible to make it unanimous it was dropped and no action taken in regard to it.

The Farmers' Platform

The effect of the educational work done by the organized farmers throughout Western Canada for some years past was distinctly manifest in the convention. The greater portion of the farmers' platform was unanimously endorsed by the convention. The delegates present were of one mind in the support of the principles enunciated in that platform. It is learned, however, that there was strong opposition in the resolutions committee to some of the questions, particularly the question of nationalizing all the railways of Canada, but that the opinion was too strongly in favor and the resolution was finally carried and presented to the convention unanimously.

All the resolutions passed by the convention are published herewith, but not in the order in which they were passed. Most of them are given verbatim, but some of them are summarized. The resolutions were as follows:

Admiration of Laurier

"That this convention places on record its admiration of the life and work of the greatest of all Canadians, the Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and of his earnest endeavor to carry out his duty as he sees it in the interest of all Canada respecting our part in the great world struggle.

"We express the hope that his undoubted ability, his long experience and matchless statesmanship may be utilized in reuniting the people of Canada in this great crisis, in the successful prosecution of the war, and in carrying out the platform laid down by this convention."

Win the War

"In this war, for the defence of democratic civilization against a military despotism, the conditions call for the putting forth by each allied belligerent of its full power as the only assurance of victory.

"In times of peril the entire resources of the country, moral and material, man power and wealth, are justly disposable by the state for the preservation of its national liberties.

"The imperative duty of the Canadian

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