

The Grain Growers' Guide

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THE NEW GOVERNMENT

There will be generally a feeling of profound satisfaction throughout Canada that a Union government at Ottawa has at last been consummated. The chief regret is that it is not a truly national government such as it would have been possible to create had it taken place three years ago at the outbreak of the war. It would seem, however, that the new government represents pretty well all elements in Canada except organized labor and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his followers. The latter of course, declined to enter a Coalition or Union government. But organized labor had no opportunity for any representation and it is a regrettable matter that it was overlooked. If the new government works well in harness it should prove one of the best that Canada has ever had at Ottawa. The weaker members of the late government have been dropped and all of the new men promise exceedingly well. Some of them have records of achievement which guarantee a success in their new work, provided full opportunity is afforded them for the exercise of their ability.

The new government is remarkable in that the new members have practically been conscripted to serve their country in the present national crisis. The job has sought the man and not the man the job as usual in politics. It is a distinct tribute to these men who have entered the government in answer to the call of duty, some of them at distinct sacrifices. Much credit is also coming to Sir Robert Borden for bringing these men into his government. It was not necessary to do so in order to win the election. Under the new Franchise Act and with the huge soldier vote it was practically an absolute certainty that the Borden government would come back to power with a good majority.

Despite his mistakes of the past, there is no doubt Sir Robert Borden has been honestly and conscientiously working for a coalition of all the parties before an election. He has even yielded his own position as president of the privy council to one of the new Liberal members, Hon. N. W. Rowell, the Liberal leader from Ontario. The spirit of the leading men on both sides of the government has been excellent and promises well for the future of the Union administration.

Western Canada is fortunate in the men selected in the new cabinet. No man ever has the confidence of all the people, but judging by the recent election, Premier Sifton of Alberta and Mr. Calder of Saskatchewan possess the confidence of the people of their provinces in as large a measure as any person reasonably could expect in the day of party politics as it is played. Both men have records of administration in their own provinces which have demonstrated their ability to administer the departments which they will have charge of at Ottawa. Both of them are imbued with the Western spirit and are radicals in the big policies in which the West is peculiarly interested. It is unfortunate that Hon. A. B. Hudson was not also included.

T. A. Crerar, for the past ten years President of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, and more recently President of the United Grain Growers Limited, will be Minister of Agriculture in the new government. Mr. Crerar had no desire for his new office. He had a larger work to do in the West. He was urged, however, by some of his colleagues as well as by Sir Robert Borden that it was his national duty to enter the nation's service at the present time. Under the circumstances, he felt he could not honorably decline the responsibility. Mr. Crerar has a ten years record of achievement equalled by few men. For the past decade he has been in the thick of the fight which the organized farmers of the West have

waged for better conditions. On every front he has played his part and it can safely be said without disparagement to others that no one individual has contributed to the success of the organized farmers' movement in the prairie provinces in the same measure as T. A. Crerar. If his new position necessitates him leaving the organized farmers, it will be a loss difficult to replace. It will be the hope of the organized farmers that when the war is over he may again return to his work in the West. At this particular time the Minister of Agriculture is second in importance only to the Premier in a federal government. Upon the farmers of Canada devolves the necessity of providing food for the Allied armies, and it is the duty of the Minister of Agriculture to give the farmers every assistance and encouragement possible to produce that result. Mr. Crerar will bring to the Department a wide experience, clear judgment, intelligent sympathy and a genuine democratic outlook. From his past record we may be sure that he will not only assist farmers to produce more, but also to ensure that they will get a reasonable price for what they do produce.

We believe there will be a widespread feeling throughout Canada in favor of supporting the new government in every possible way. Naturally, the hidebound members of both the Liberal and Conservative parties were not in favor of a Union government. Canada is exceedingly fortunate that Sir Robert Borden was large enough to rise above mere party politics and bring to his government the best he could find on both sides. Our rotten party politics in Canada has been the curse of this country and never has the curse been greater than since the war began. Patronage should become a thing of the past under a Union government and profiteering should be brought to an end. If the Union government is what we hope for, it will be devoted to the cause of the people and to the support of the Allied armies in the winning of the war. It should no longer cater to the big interests who are able to supply the campaign funds. The new government is full of promise. The only wise patriotic thing to do now for every citizen is to judge them entirely on their records henceforth, and not by the past. They will not find it difficult to improve on the record of both the old parties and set a high water mark for national administration of the affairs of Canada.

What the line-up for the election will be is impossible to see at present. Laurier and his section of the Liberal party outside of Quebec have not announced their plans. Sir Wilfrid will no doubt carry Quebec almost solidly and some seats in Ontario. It may be that an understanding has been arrived at. The early future will tell us.

MANITOBA SHORT TERM CREDITS

Prairie farmers are this year experiencing in a minor degree results of the long and aggressive fight they have made for better credit facilities. In two provinces they have a long term loan or mortgage system in operation and in Manitoba and Alberta a system of short term rural credits was provided for at the last session of the legislature. In this issue of The Guide is told what has been accomplished under the Manitoba Act to date and it is worthy of the closest study by every reader. The main objects of the act in Manitoba was to provide credit for a longer period than usually allowed by our banks, and to many worthy men who could not secure the necessary banking accommodation. That the Manitoba system does this seems amply demonstrated for none can gainsay the immense value it has been in one small constituency this year, while others are

asking for an application of the system to their districts. It has greatly increased the possibilities of grain production in 1918, has decreased production costs, has increased the number of livestock and created a stronger community spirit. It is but fair to state that perhaps the credit accommodation provided by the banks is generally better than existed where the work has commenced in Manitoba. Many believe farmers will not co-operate in providing such mutual credit facilities and that recent prosperity has made any further credit instruments unnecessary. The experience in Manitoba is a complete refutation of both these theories.

But the Manitoba system has linked up with it a system of rural education under agricultural experts or county agents that has marvellous possibilities, indeed possibilities which have been proven out in hundreds of places in the other parts of Canada and United States. These men have been able to create a spirit of community co-operation between town and country and among agricultural, industrial, financial and commercial classes that is very marked indeed. It is a movement that should have every encouragement from all classes and the strongest of support from the government. Initial expense in establishing it is a small consideration; efficiency is the great thing.

GET READY FOR ELECTION

The formation of a Union government does not do away with the necessity for a general election. There is no parliament in Canada today. It passed out of existence two weeks ago and election must be held some time within the next five months and will probably be somewhere around the new year. It is the paramount duty of the people of the prairie provinces to get ready for this election. It is no time for sickly sentimentality. The new government is composed of the strongest men that could be pulled together from both parties. The Western representatives are three of the best men in the West. It is highly important that the candidates who are elected in the three prairie provinces should be of the highest type possible and truly representative of the Western spirit.

No milk and water fusionist candidate nor anything of the nature of a rubber stamp "win-the-war" candidate can truly represent the spirit of the Western people. The phrase, "win-the-war" candidate, sounds really so good that it has led a large number of ordinary clear thinking people widely astray. The promoters of this "win-the-war" candidate business seem to think that no candidate is a real and true patriotic supporter of the Allied cause if he has any red blooded ideas on any other important national subject. If the West sends down to Ottawa a large group of "win-the-war" candidates who have no policy on any other subject, it will be the biggest blunder this country ever made.

There never was greater need than at the present moment for an independent, progressive, intelligent and capable Western party. There never has been a better platform, nor in fact as good a one, prepared and drafted as what is known as the "Farmers' Platform," put out by the Canadian Council of Agriculture. We need in this country the largest possible number of candidates elected on that platform. It is not necessary that these men go down to Ottawa prepared to wage an immediate fight for the complete fulfillment of that platform. If there is to be a spirit of give and take in the new parliament, the Western people are prepared to do their part and to accept reasonable conditions. But the work of the Western