

EDITORIAL

PRACTICALLY as this paper goes to press the two most significant national conventions ever held in Canada are taking place. The Ontario Win-the-War Congress in Toronto comes first, on August 2 and 3, followed by the Western Liberal Congress in Winnipeg on August 7 and 8.

Those who see Liberal politics only in these conventions are short-sighted. We realize that such Liberal activity is due to the fact that the Liberals are the outs. The Opposition has all the moves. The Government holds. The Government is conducting Canada's war. The Opposition criticizes it.

There is room for criticism. It would be a miracle if not. The present Government's return to the people is politically past due and the redistribution of seats has not yet been effected. One man now represents a division which under redistribution should have three members—and it is not in the west either.

The Premier's recent repeated offer of coalition looks as though he realizes that no one party can expect to conduct such a crisis in a country's affairs without encountering distinctive criticism from the people at large, as well as from professional critics. We assume that the conventions now being held are first of all for criticism; second, for action. If opinions are the bulwark of democracy, Canada seems to be pretty well provided with bulwarks. The West is uniting somewhat against the East. Even the West is divided. The Winnipeg convention will develop three distinct groups of opinions represented by as many leaders. And the convention is excluding British Columbia in spite of the fact that a large body of Liberal sentiment in the Pacific Province expected to be taken in. There may be good strategic reasons. Certainly the war sentiment of B. C. is as strong as that of the Prairie Provinces, or of the Win-the-War Convention in Toronto, or any convention likely to be held in the Maritime Provinces.

But the Western convention was mooted at least a year and a half ago, when war exigencies had not given the prairies and the Pacific a common ground.

We have made special inquiry about this many-headed movement from a man who knows more about it than any other man in the West, because he had been working on the idea for the last eighteen months, long before there was any sign of a split at Ottawa. The original design of such a convention was to make Western Liberalism a bigger independent force in national politics. There was and is no intention to break away from the Eastern Liberals, but "to create a radical vanguard that might lead the whole party out of the wilderness of economic reaction." Several men were lined up as possible leaders of this ginger group. All these men will be at the convention, which is described as "a parliament of the Liberals of the three prairie provinces, organized upon democratic lines." We are told that it will include all the members of the three Provincial Cabinets, about 120 members of Provincial parliaments, 16 M. P.'s, and about 500 delegates chosen by the Liberals of the various constituencies.

Radicalism is sure to prevail. The war would have made the Convention radical now, even though it had been originally called for the purpose of discussing the decline of Imperial Free Trade, or the relative merits of Gladstone and John Bright. Western Liberals are strong on the war. All the Western provinces have paid a big price for their ideas about war. Liberals in the West know as well as anybody who among their electoral rank and file are anti-war; and there are plenty. In one province particularly, there are thousands of voters who vote Liberal in a Provincial election but couldn't be got to enlist.

Conscription, if put to a referendum

in the West, might have a hard row to hoe without any aid from Quebec. Yet the best sentiment of the West is overwhelmingly for war and more war. The convention will be a real war convention. And out of the war will come the biggest battles of the two-days event, because it is on the war that the party has split in the East.

Several names are already prominent in the Western convention. Sir Clifford Sifton favours a coalition government and a repudiation of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, his old chief. Sifton is a brainy man. He is trying to mow a wider national swath than he did in the days when he peopled the plains from Europe. Hon. Frank Oliver, who succeeded him as Minister of the Interior, favours co-operation with Laurier. He has a sentimental supporter in Premier Martin, who has just swept his Province—according to the critics out there, considerably by means of the alien vote. Oliver is a strong man, an old-timer of the '80's and was once a radical. Martin is a progressive, scarcely a Radical, but a clever leader.

Premier Norris of Manitoba favours cutting the painter from Laurier and forming a non-party government for winning the war. As Premier he is entitled to appear as the sponsor of a distinct set of opinions. But we suspect that a busy brain behind this once-farmer Premier is A. B. Hudson, Attorney-General, son of a farmer, an uncompromising reformer, and a resourceful radical who sacrificed a big income in law for the salary of an Attorney-General. We are told also that a strong backer of the Norris group, in some respects its real political leader, is Hon. J. A. Calder of Saskatchewan. He is described by a close political friend who is a shrewd student of men and events as "a true progressive, and the best administrative brain in Canadian public life."

As an exposition of western national sentiment the speeches of these men will be worth recording. They will express a greater variety of opinions under one general head than an average debate in the House of Commons. But we do not believe that the Winnipeg convention will be any more progressive than the Win-the-War Congress in Toronto. In some respects the latter will out-do the western in popular interest. It will be less political in character and will have quite as much directly, if not more, to do with winning the war. The presence of Premier Hearst, Opposition Leader Rowell, and Mr. Hugh Guthrie, M. P., on the same platform, is as radical a line-up as anything Winnipeg can do. In the matter of speeches we may look for as good

clean deliverances from these men as from any of the westerners. For constructive eloquence Rowell has no superior in Canada. In sincerity and patriotic determination nobody east or west out-rivals Sir William Hearst. As an expounder of virile sentiments Hugh Guthrie, about twice a year at real concert pitch, is one of the ablest talkers in Canada.

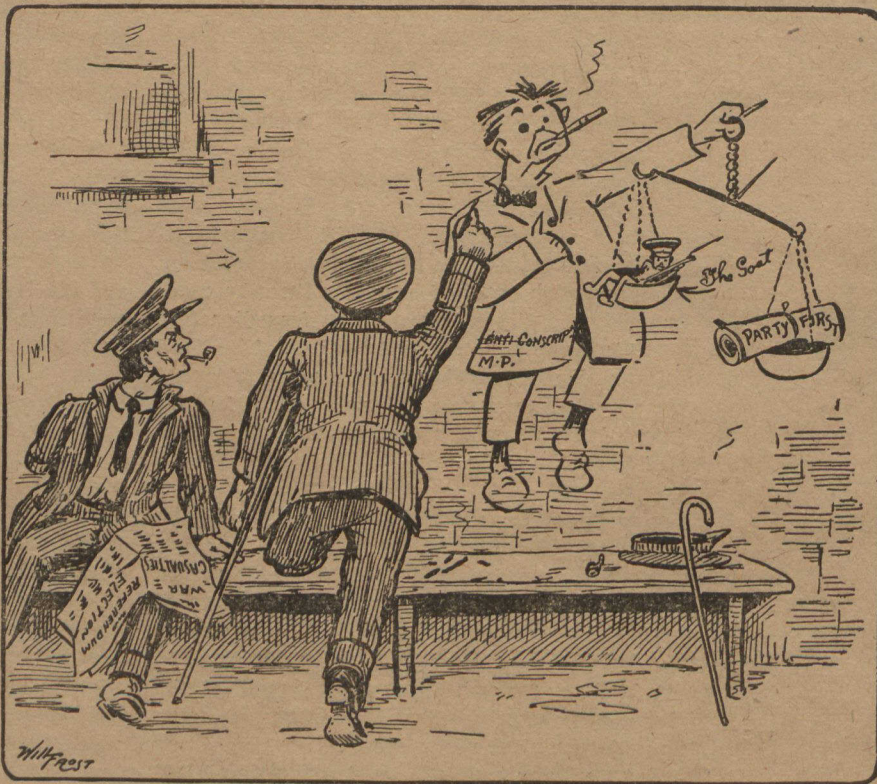
It has been predicted before this that the next Liberal leader must come from the West. The convention in Winnipeg will be one very good way of demonstrating what the West has to offer as a successor to Sir Wilfrid when he decides to step out. The man who at the head of his group can capture the convention independent of Ottawa should be a good prospect. We shall see. There never has been a western Premier of Canada. If the convention adopts the platform of any independent group and fuses western Liberalism on a progressive ticket coupled with an aggressive war policy, that organization will be a power in the next election.

NEXT to direct efforts at winning the war by means of mending our army with men, any government that proposes to conduct the affairs of this country for the remainder of the war should make a chief item of—Who gets the country's money? Most of us get only what we work for by keeping ourselves extra busy. No one should object to this. Any man who is not busier now in a more productive way than he was before the war should learn how to be. The man who is making easier money now, even if he makes no more than he used to, should consider it his business to work harder that he may return more to the general good of the country.

But the man who is making both easier and bigger money than he did before the war is an enemy of his country and of his fellow-man. No matter how he may juggle his economies, the man who is getting rich or even better off by means of the war is doing it at the expense of other people. He is robbing the soldiers at the front. He is swindling his fellow-citizens at home. We can call him "profiteer" without hurting him much. He is a thief and in no sense a citizen. If he has no conscience he should be dug out by the Government's detective agencies and labelled as such. This country has an economic problem on its hands such as it never had. With a world-wide scarcity of food, what use is it to teach most of us how to avoid waste, to eat less and wear less and cut down our pleasures, if some people eat as much, wear more and take more pleasure, and even put away profits?

WE again respectfully commend to the attention of our Food Controller the wisdom of eliminating the ice-cream bar. If substitutes for beer and whisky have been found in two and a half per cent, surely a reasonable substitute for ice-cream would be water ices, which are quite as refreshing and do not consume the precious commodity known as cream, which is so badly needed for the manufacture of butter and cheese.

A DIFFERENCE of \$1,000 between the war tax exemptions of married and single men seems to be a discrimination in favour of bachelors. Any bachelor who requires \$2,000 a year in order to live is a spendthrift. More than half the families of Canada are supported on much less than \$2,000 a year. Of course a man may be a widower with a family. That is different. If it takes \$2,000 a year to support John Jones, single, how in the name of arithmetic can John Jones with a family to keep up, support a wife and children on half of \$2,000? Any economizing John Jones bachelor, who can tell John Jones, married, how to feed, clothe, house and warm even a small family on half what it takes to do a similar business for John Jones himself, should make big money as an economic expert giving advice to heads of families on how to live cheaply when nothing in the world is cheap except matches, water and air.



What the new cartoonist (Returned Soldier) thinks of some phases of our Win-the-War Politics.

(Sketched from Observation.)