

WIN-THE-WAR RESOLUTION OF THE WINNIPEG CONVENTION.

THE war resolution of the Western Liberal Convention declares that:

"The imperative duty of the Canadian people in regard to the war is its continued vigorous prosecution. "By the maintenance in unimpaired strength at the front of our fighting forces, and the taking of all steps necessary to secure the reinforcements for this purpose."

While the convention thus pledged itself in unqualified terms to the maintenance of our fighting forces at the front it specifically and definitely refused to commit itself to the conscription measure of the Borden Government. If this resolution had been passed by the representatives of any other section of the Dominion than of the four western provinces, there might have been room for argument as to its completeness or sincerity as a declaration that Canada was in the war effectively to the end. But the actual circumstances forbid any such conclusion in the case of Western Liberals. Assuming that Canada's contribution to the war should reach a maximum of 500,000 men,—and the most vociferous or most irresponsible lip loyalist has not yet suggested a greater number,—each of the four western provinces have already contributed by voluntary enlistment more than their full share in proportion to their population available for service. There is no reason therefore from the point of view of selfish interest why they should refuse to endorse a measure that would require the rest of the Dominion to do what they have already done voluntarily, if that were the purpose of the measure. Nor was there any good reason why they having done their share should presume to dictate how the rest of the Dominion should do its share. The essential thing is that efficient men shall be secured in sufficient numbers. Experience has proven that this can be done in the western provinces without Conscription. The resolution is so worded that it covers Conscription as a means of raising men for the fighting forces, but does not assert it to be either necessary or desirable under existing circumstances or in the form proposed by the Borden Government.

An attempt to stampede the Convention into voting to support the Borden Conscription Act was flatly and promptly turned down. Naturally the supporters of that Government are displeased and as per usual voice their displeasure in accusations against the Convention delegates of having attempted to side step the question of effective participation in the war, or of disloyalty to the humour, as humour or circumstances favour.

The supreme test of loyalty is service and sacrifice. The Liberals who met in convention in Winnipeg are the men who have shown the way in sacrifice for loyalty to the rest of Canada. The West is Liberal by a huge majority, if the most recent elections are to be accepted as a standard. Opportunity in civil life is more available to the young man of military fitness in the West than elsewhere in the Dominion, therefore the average

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young man who volunteered in the West gave up more than the one who volunteered from the East. The West enlisted in larger proportion of men of military fitness than any other part of the Dominion. The majority of the people being Liberal, the majority of enlistments were naturally Liberal, and at the same time under the system of partizan preference upon which Canada's military organization was founded, the large majority of officers were of Conservative organizations. The Liberal majority furnished the majority of the men, while the Conservative minority furnished a majority of the officers. No one complained of this condition, but when the question of the respective loyalty of Liberals and Conservatives is up for consideration is a good time to let the facts be understood.

The loyalty of the Liberal West has been tried out in the fires of sacrifice as the casualty lists show. The men from the West are not the men who are holding down the Safety-First jobs in Canada or in England. They are bearing the brunt of battle to-day as they have ever since the war began. They are looking for reinforcements of volunteers, not of conscripts,—men who freely offer themselves as they have done, and as men are still doing in spite of the discouragements of the military administration of the Borden Government. They look to Conscription as a last resort—a means not to be taken unless and until it has been proven impossible under a proper military administration to keep up the fighting line. Certainly not as something to be undertaken for the purpose of creating a political issue in the hope of keeping in power the Government that the Convention went on record as opposing the resolution.