

The Brain Growers' Guide

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THE UNION GAINS STRENGTH

All signs indicate that throughout English speaking Canada public opinion is rallying strongly to the support of the new union government. Only a very small portion of the press remains antagonistic, together with a minority of the old hard-shell party veterans. Public opinion has been for many months demanding with ever increasing insistence that a national government or a union government be organized for the prosecution of the war. Canada can now hold up its head along with Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The personnel of the new government is remarkably strong. Sir Robert Borden has succeeded in bringing together the very cream of the brains of the Liberal, Independent and Labor elements of Canada outside of Quebec. Impartial observers must agree that never since confederation has there been a cabinet at Ottawa containing the brains, force and executive ability represented in the new union government. What looked to be an impossibility has become an accomplished fact, and Canadian citizens generally are gratified with the result.

The news that the union government is finally in office will be pleasant to our soldiers on the firing line. Canada has now over 300,000 soldiers within the sound of the enemy's guns. Some have paid the supreme sacrifice; some lie suffering wounds in the hospitals and the remainder are fighting for freedom and democracy and the defence of our own Canadian homes. There is no party politics in the trenches. When our soldiers go "over the top" and shoulder to shoulder charge the enemy lines, they are animated only by the spirit of union and the determination for victory. If our soldiers on the firing line in the presence of the greatest menace that civilization has ever faced can give us such an example as this, why should we not support union at home? In the presence of supreme danger, the citizen, like the soldier, should adopt the old Roman system where "none were for the party, but all were for the state."

There are, of course, some disappointed and dissatisfied ones among the ranks of the two old parties. Occasionally we hear the charge that the Conservative party has been wrecked by the premier and those who have assisted in the formation of a union government. We also hear that those Liberals and Independents who have joined the union government have sacrificed their principles. It is a poor time to bring forward such charges and it is not the broad-minded citizen who makes them. The Conservative party by the aid of the new franchise act and the soldier vote was certain of a victory at the polls. The consummation of a union government, therefore, is very highly creditable to Sir Robert Borden and those of his colleagues who shared in it. Those Liberals, Independents and Progressives who entered the government have not sacrificed any principle whatever. They still stand for the same principles for which they stood before they entered the government, but in the hour of national danger both sides have realized that there is something more important for the immediate present than even great economic principles which the West so strongly supports. History will accord a high place to those strong men in both parties whose love for their country has been greater than their love for party.

The program of the new government is decidedly progressive. Already political patronage has been brought to an end. The civil service is to be extended to include the Dominion government servants throughout all Canada, instead of being restricted to Ottawa city as at present. Contracts for the government are to be awarded on merit. Henceforth

the job hunter and the patronage seeker will find the usual avenues closed. If the new government in domestic politics offers us nothing more than the elimination of the patronage system it will be well worth while. But the program also guarantees an increase in income tax and in the tax on war profits, which has been strongly demanded by the general public throughout Canada for many months past. Another guarantee is that profiteering shall cease, and profiteers will no longer be permitted to gouge the public in the hour of the nation's agony. There have been no bargains and no promise in respect to the tariff, which is naturally a burning question in the West, but we may take it for granted that there will be no increases in the tariff and if any change is made it will be in the nature of a downward revision. It is reasonable to suppose that when the new government begins to consider domestic problems and the absolute necessity of increasing food supplies, that the implements of production may be placed upon the free list. An energetic public opinion would assist towards this end very considerably.

The division of the cabinet in two is a decided innovation in Canada. One half of the cabinet will devote its attention to the prosecution of the war and the war problems. The other half will concern itself with domestic problems, and the reconstruction work necessary at the conclusion. Experience only will prove the wisdom or otherwise of the new system. But to the onlooker it appears to be a wise and businesslike provision. The new government in its personnel, in its program, and in its systematic arrangement promises exceedingly well for a live, honest and efficient business administration of the affairs of the nation.

The organized farmers of the prairie provinces ever since the outbreak of war have demanded a national government at Ottawa, and we believe that their support to the new union administration will be whole-hearted, and in the highest degree patriotic. There are certain well defined and fundamental principles for which the organized grain growers have stood for many years. They adhere to those principles as firmly today as ever. But the organized grain growers are not the type of citizens to waste the strength and the resources of the nation by internal strife when the enemy is literally pounding at the gates. We believe that the grain growers are willing to accept any reasonable terms for a cessation of internal political struggles until the enemy is forced to surrender. After that date the organized farmers will push for the fulfillment of their own legitimate demands with all the vigor at their disposal. In the meantime they will carry on their educational work, and will give the union government whole-hearted support so long as its actions and conduct warrant that support. It will be unwise to disturb this prospect of harmony by an attempt by either of both of the old parties to shoulder out the candidates who stand upon the farmers' platform in favor of so-called union, or fusionist candidates. There are no better union government supporters than those candidates who stand upon the farmers' platform. The best promise of harmony is to give the farmers' candidates full support in those constituencies where they have already been nominated.

A NEW SCALE OF PENSIONS

A marked increase in the Canadian pension list retroactive to April 1, 1917, has been announced by the Minister of Finance. The increases apply to pensions and allowances of soldiers and sailors holding the lower ranks

up to lieutenant in the army and sub-lieutenant in the navy. The extra amount due from April 1 to the present time will be paid in one check. The total amount payable by Canada for pensions and allowances will be increased from about \$5,000,000 annually to \$7,000,000 or approximately 40 per cent. The changes will affect the pensions of not only the men themselves, but of their children, orphan children, widows, dependent parents and younger brothers and sisters.

Henceforth disability will be divided into twenty instead of six classes, and disabled men will receive pensions on the basis of the percentage of their disability insofar as possible. All will be entitled to at least a 25 per cent. increase on present pensions and on account of the new classification it is said this will usually work out considerably more than 25 per cent. A marked change for the better has been made in the allowance to disabled pensioners for children. A more careful grading in accordance with the disability has been made which was very necessary as the old regulations were most inequitable. Totally disabled privates will by this change receive an increase of one-third in the allowances for their children. Previously, men disabled below 60 per cent. were not entitled to any allowances for children, but now these will go to children of men disabled as low as 5 per cent. Special allowances are being made for married disabled men. The increases for dependent parents are commendable as is that to widows. Better regulations governing the maintenance of incurable or helpless soldiers have been made and many other matters clarified that have previously been rather hazy and unsatisfactory. These increased pensions are most commendable and will be welcomed not only by those directly benefiting, but by all those anxious to treat properly the dependants of those who have made the greatest sacrifice for their country.

THE ABOLITION OF PATRONAGE

The Union Government has already laid the foundation for a reform that party governments have shied at ever since confederation. The patronage lists are being abolished. Government purchases are to be made by a commission similar to the War Purchasing Commission. The outside civil service is to be put on the same footing as the inside service, that is, in order to get a government job or hold it a man must have some qualification besides political pull. Such a reform will strike at the root of much of the extravagance, graft and incompetence that has characterized the conduct of government work in the past. If the reform is rigidly enforced, and there are indications that it will be, it will mean one of the greatest triumphs for government by reason in the history of Canada. In no way has the party system shown itself weaker than on the question of patronage. For decades the reform of the civil service and the abolition of the patronage system has been a favorite plank in the platforms of oppositions. Upon attaining the treasury benches however, parties have usually given evidence of an accommodating memory regarding their pledges on this reform. The only important improvement was the passing of the Civil Service Amendment Act of 1908. By this Act the civil service was divided into two divisions, the inside and the outside services. The outside service includes practically all civil servants not employed in Ottawa, on the Dominion Experimental Farms and at the Dominion Observatory. The Civil Service Commission was created and given power to select members for the inside service on a basis of their ability to discharge their duties. The