

Liberalism at Its Best

By A WINNIPEG CONSERVATIVE

THREE weeks ago a Winnipeg Conservative wrote for The Canadian Courier his impressions of the Western Liberal Convention. It was a very candid but appreciative criticism of a strange event. The same writer afterwards attended the Reform meeting in South Winnipeg. During the editor's absence at the pitchfork he wrote and hastily sent his impressions of this second convention. Because of the lapse of time since the actual event the original article had lost some of its novelty, but the writer's point of view was so hopefully national that we have decided to adapt the best part of what he said to the present state of affairs. The original convention he describes as Liberalism at its worst; the second as the same thing at its best. He commends the second convention because it repudiated the "machine" tactics of the first. In so doing he incidentally endorses the second convention's criticism of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Since that convention, however, Sir Wilfrid has placed himself in Parliament openly on record as prepared to help enforce a conscription measure to which he was just as openly opposed—because it is now the law of the land. We imagine that even our Winnipeg Conservative will admit that an action of this kind has nothing to do with any sort of machine, and that he will give Sir Wilfrid credit for patriotic conduct of a peculiarly intensified character.

Undoubtedly, says our correspondent, the leaders of both parties in Winnipeg believe in conscription. A really national Government with an out-and-out, win-the-war policy is what the vast majority of Winnipeg people want. South Winnipeg's delegates at the convention had failed to represent South Winnipeg's views. South Winnipeg Liberals were meeting to endorse conscription and to call for Union Government. Winnipeg Conservatives were ready to meet them half way.

In the chair at the South Winnipeg convention was ex-Mayor R. D. Waugh, while the secretary's place was taken by an old friend of mine, whom I had never thought to see in disagreement with the silver-plumed leader, whom he has idealized for so long.

Be it recorded here that this meeting passed several resolutions of unmistakable meaning, by unanimous vote. One resolution endorsed conscription in downright, plain and unequivocal fashion. Another repudiated the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, although, as was fit and proper, it referred to him in kindly terms. Another resolution endorsed the National Government plan, while still another provided for a committee to meet with South Winnipeg Conservatives to arrange, if possible, for united action in the selection of a win-the-war candidate.

Hon. T. C. Norris, Hon. A. B. Hudson, and Isaac Pitblado probably read The Canadian Courier. Knowing what the editor expected of them, they were determined that he should not be disappointed with their behaviour on this occasion. After ex-Mayor Waugh had declared in ringing tones, musical despite—or because of—the Scotch burr that still adheres to his tongue, that he was for the boys at the front and against Sir Wilfrid, Isaac Pitblado started the real business of the meeting.

Now, Winnipeg is proud of Isaac Pitblado, perhaps it is not too much to say that it loves him for his real worth and downright sincerity of character, and admires him for his unusual abilities. But Winnipeg had been sorely disappointed in Isaac. It believed that at the meetings of the Resolutions Committee he had probably waged a strong fight against the machines from the West. It was grieved, however, that for the sake of an apparent but unreal party unity he had failed to carry the battle to the floor of the convention.

It takes a big man to admit his mistakes in public. In a clear cut speech Mr. Pitblado advocated an out-and-out declaration for conscription, the formation and support of a National Win-the-War Government, a repudiation of the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and united action with South Winnipeg Conservatives if that could be arranged.

Then came the Hon. A. B. Hudson in his confession of his political faith. If Winnipeg had been disappointed in Mr. Pitblado, it had been still more disappointed in Mr. Hudson's apparent surrender

to the Western machine element. Mr. Hudson's conscience had troubled him, and he had given out a signed "explanation" that had failed to explain. The futile attempt had done him great injury. Nevertheless, he was given a very cordial reception. In less than five minutes he made a clear-out declaration of his beliefs. He advocated conscription of men, contributions of wealth, the formation of a National Government and a union of forces in the coming elections of all those who believe in a win-the-war policy.

Then came Hon. T. C. Norris, who had to face considerable heckling. There were those who wanted to know why he had failed to stand his ground in the convention. They were insistent, but the Premier wasn't answering questions! His confession of faith was similar to that of Hon. A. B. Hudson. He would support a National Government with Sir Robert Borden at its head—but he would prefer a change in Premiers. He suggested the name of Sir Adam Back. As for Sir Wilfrid Laurier, he could no longer support him.

This was a South Winnipeg meeting only, but assuredly it voiced the sentiments of true Liberalism in Manitoba. I am greatly mistaken if it does not also represent the opinions of most of the rank and file of Liberalism in the three provinces farther West. Before this appears in print, it may be that a National Government satisfactory to both conscriptionist-Conservatives and conscriptionist-Liberals will be announced from Ottawa. In that case, there can be little doubt of a victory in the West for the win-the-war policy. It is the Premier's opportunity, it is the opportunity of the prominent Liberals with whom he is negotiating to rise above party considerations, give and take a little on either side, and unite to support the policy which they have at heart.

There was a time when we had statesmen in Canada who would have measured up to this opportunity. I am not saying that we have not got them to-day. Certain it is, that Sir John A. Macdonald would very soon have taken advantage of such an opportunity as this to unite with him political opponents in order to assure the success of a policy of vital importance. I left the hall with a sincere admiration for the patriotic spirit of Liberalism at its best.

Criticizing Chisholm

Victoria, B. C.

Editor, Canadian Courier:

The "Man from Windermere" has said his say. He has filled several pages with his own opinions and apparently is thoroughly convinced that he has voiced the sentiments of the West.

But he has another "think" coming to him. Any man who starts out with the idea that by making an assertion, and making it very boldly, he thereby proves it to be a fact, is away off his base.

Who gave him authority to say that the West "is practically a unit of approval on conscription?" The suggestion that anyone who doubts his statement will soon be convinced by offering to bet money on an election is no evidence. This could only prove that there were fewer "antis" than "pros"—not that there were none.

With equal arrogance he states that "nobody wants an election." Doubtless "nobody" is his authority for this. Thousands of somebodies would tell him differently.

His statement that there is every "constitutional" and no "common sense" argument for an election is pretty rough on the framers of the constitution. His ideas on common sense, and mine, evidently differ.

He acknowledges that the Parliament was elected when nobody thought of war. That in itself is sufficient evidence that we need an election when everybody is thinking of war—that is, if it is the intention to give the people any say in the matter.

He says "it is a thousand pities that Sir Wilfrid could not hear the voice of Canada calling him." There is not the slightest reason in the world for imagining that Sir Wilfrid has not heard the call, and that he is answering. The man from Windermere simply happens to be one of those who fail to recognize that a man may differ from him in opinion and still be a genuine patriot.

It is evident that he has arrived at the same

mental location as thousands of others in both East and West, and gone absolutely "war mad." He sees no other way out of the world catastrophe, than by raising the "Win-the-War" cry, a cry that bids fair to ruin the whole country and Empire.

Instead of using his undoubted ability in the forming of a sane judgment during the present crisis, he deliberately sets himself to fan all the baser elements in a man's nature in a wild enthusiasm for an impossible proposition; viz., "a decision by force of arms." The cost in blood and manhood is not to be considered. Millions of men are to be sent to be slaughtered in defence of a freedom which is taken from them before they go.

Mr. C.'s remarkable simile of the "froth that is making all the noise" acts like a boomerang. His article contains not a single argument that could not be torn in shreds in half the space it occupies.

It is the difference of a man who has come to his own conclusions and absolutely refuses to entertain the idea that anyone who opposes him can possibly be right. If he will eliminate his superabundance of slang and verbosity and get down to plain, dignified English, what he has to say might carry more weight.

H. E. PEIRCE.

H. G. Fricker, Organist

We may as well admit that the British have all other nations musically beaten in playing the pipe organ. (We persist in saying pipe organ, even though we are assured by one of these British masters that we should simply say "organ" and let it go at that.)

More great organists nowadays come from the British Isles than from all other countries combined. France used to thrill us with Guilman. The United States gave us cold creeps years ago with Frederic Archer—who was probably a Britisher in the first place. Germany, Italy, Austria, any other country in Europe may have great organists, but we never hear them and as a rule their names don't get into print. Russia has no organists whatever, because Russia has no organs.

And last week one of the greatest English organists broke the musical ice in Canada by giving his first recital in this country. Mr. Fricker, late of Leeds, England, now organist and choirmaster of the Metropolitan Methodist Church, Toronto, and new conductor of the Mendelssohn Choir, has already established himself as a master at the art of making a big organ act like an orchestra and a choir in one.

It is a coincidence that a generation ago the leading choral organization of Canada was also conducted from the console of the Metropolitan organ, in the days when F. H. Torrington was our first conductor and organist. Things have changed since then. There is a difference between the old Philharmonic Society and the Mendelssohn Choir; and a vast difference between the old maiden lady of an organ that used to discourse so sedately to big congregations in the 70's, 80's, and 90's, and the solemn

(Continued on page 25.)

The Canadian Language

By ARCHIBALD MacMECHAN

A FRENCH SCHOLAR, who made and published a study of French as it is spoken in Quebec was, in consequence, practically expelled from the Royal Society of Canada. He was condemned unheard, but the incident is probably the most exciting in the annals of that august but somewhat somnolent body. No similar penalty can befall the penman who ventures to take up the other, or English, side of the question; for the results can only be flattering to our national pride. English, as she is spoken in Canada, is so far superior to all other varieties that it is astonishing no one has remarked the fact.

A short argument will convince any doubter. Our American cousins speak with a "Yankee twang." The Irish have a "brogue," the Scotch are noted for their "burr." But the funniest of all are the English. They speak "with an English accent," a manifestly

(Concluded on page 22.)