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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE

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Our Ottawa Letter

New Ministers Sworn In—Government Candidates Designated—Abolish Patronage List.
(By The Guide's Special Correspondent)

Ottawa, October 26.—Some new chapters were written this week at the capital in the history of the Union government. From the standpoint of the solidarity and cohesion of the movement to provide a non-party administration for the period of the war, the most important development of the week has undoubtedly been the decision of the Liberals of Nova Scotia to have representation in the government and to agree to the putting of Union candidates in the field. As intimated last week, Premier Murray of Nova Scotia decided to remain at the helm of the provincial ship of state, but Mr. A. K. MacLean, who for six years has sat as junior member for Halifax, was sworn in on Tuesday as minister without portfolio. He will be vice-chairman of one of two committees of the cabinet that have been announced, one to deal with all matters pertaining to the war, and the other to devote its attention to matters of domestic concern. Sir Robert Borden is the nominal chairman of both committees but Hon. N. W. Rowell will be the real head of the war cabinet, while Mr. MacLean will be the chairman of the domestic committee.

The entry of Mr. MacLean into the cabinet has received the blessing of Premier Murray as well as that of Hon. W. S. Fielding, minister of finance in the Laurier government and former prime minister of Nova Scotia, while it is stated that the majority of the Liberal members from Nova Scotia, who in the past have been of the most uncompromising party type, have, no doubt with a considerable degree of reluctance, agreed to enter the field under the aegis of the Union government.

Designating Government Candidates

The writs for the election will be issued on November 1, or thereabouts, and as seven weeks must elapse between their issuance and the voting, this probably means that polling will take place on Monday, December 17, Tuesday, 18, or Wednesday, 19, with nominations one week earlier. The first difficulty for the Unionists is one which arises over the selection of candidates, more particularly in constituencies where Conservative and Liberal candidates have previously been placed in the field. The nature of the difficulty is indicated in the following official statement issued last night from Unionist headquarters:

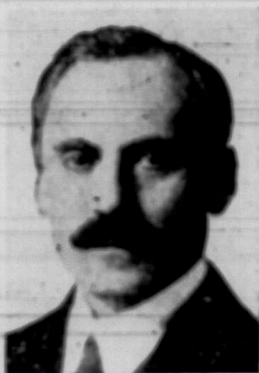
"The formation of a Union or National government has changed the political situation throughout Canada and in many constituencies two or more candidates—Conservative, Liberal or Labor—may desire to run and be recognized as Union government candidates. Under the Military Voters Act it is the duty of the prime minister to designate a candidate in each riding as the government candidate, who thereby may receive the benefit of the soldiers' votes which are given, not for a particular candidate but for the government. It is the earnest desire of the government that in each constituency the supporters of Union gov-

ernment, whether Conservative, Liberal, Labor or Independent, should confer together and see if they cannot agree upon a candidate who will be acceptable to, and who may be designated by, the prime minister as the government candidate for the purposes of the Military Voters Act."

The provision of the Military Voters Act that candidates must receive the endorsement of the prime minister or the leader of the opposition will be particularly embarrassing in constituencies where Conservative and Liberal nominees, both favorable to Union government, desire to fight it out. The prime minister will have to make a choice between the two. It will also be embarrassing for the Liberal candidates who, while favoring Union government war measures, do not want to bind themselves to support the

anyone with the slightest knowledge of how the political game is played in Canada. Cynics will undoubtedly say that a Union government must of necessity abolish patronage lists, otherwise they would quarrel over the division of the spoils. That is probably quite true. Nevertheless Unionism will undoubtedly be given the credit for removing a baleful influence upon the public life of the country—an influence which no party government of the future, let us hope, will have the audacity to remove. The momentous announcement was as follows:

"In pursuance of the government's intention to abolish patronage, both in respect of appointments to the public service and in the purchase of supplies there will hereafter be no patronage list in any department of the government. The work of the war purchasing commission has been so satisfactory and effective that the prime minister has under consideration the retention of its organization as a general purchasing commission for all the departments of the government. During the past two-and-a-half years the commission has undertaken and carried out the purchase of all supplies for every



HON. N. W. ROWELL
President of the Privy Council



MAJOR-GENERAL NEWBURN
Minister of Militia



HON. F. R. CARVELL
Minister of Public Works

government all along the line. Such candidates would probably not desire endorsement of Sir Wilfrid Laurier for the purpose of securing the soldiers' vote, but failing the endorsement either of one leader or the other they would be "outlawed." As I understand the Act an independent candidate can qualify for the soldiers' vote by declaring that he constitutes a party in himself. By so doing he would qualify for independent soldiers' votes cast in the constituency for which he is running. This is a feature of the bill which promises to lead to queer complications in various constituencies. It was undoubtedly drafted by the legal craftsmen of the late administration with the express object of forcing Liberals to seek recognition by Sir Wilfrid Laurier or come out as straight Unionists. By many would-be candidates it will undoubtedly be regarded as a "war" measure.

Patronage Lists Abolished

The announcement by the prime minister that patronage lists have been abolished is another landmark in the progress of events. The admission that they have existed up to the present time, after more than three years of war, may come as a painful surprise to some innocent people, but not to

department of the government in connection with the war.

"These supplies have been purchased for the department of militia and defence, the department of naval service and the department of justice in connection with the internment operations. In pursuance of the government's intention to abolish patronage both in respect of appointments to the public service and in the purchase of supplies there will hereafter be no patronage lists in any department of the government."

"There has been no such list in the war purchasing commission, which has purchased all supplies by tender after public advertisement or circular addressed to all known sources of supply in this country."

Mention should also be made of the inclusion in the government this week of a representative of Labor in the person of Senator Robertson, vice-president of the Order of Railway Telegraphers. Senator Robertson was named as a member of the upper house in January last as the first representative of labor. He was the first union man to get a place in that holy of holies of the politicians, the red chamber. It is perhaps but fitting that he should represent labor in a "union" government.



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The politicians on both sides are looking forward to a manifesto which is to be issued by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the course of a few days. The leader of the straight Liberal forces it is expected will state his position at some length and with his customary adroitness. When his manifesto is out the issues of the campaign will be defined. Sir Wilfrid's health has not been very good of late and it is not likely that he will be able to do much public speaking during the campaign.

Under a definite allotment of United States coal for Canada announced by the fuel administration, 2,000,000 tons of bituminous and 700,000 tons of Anthracite coal will be permitted to move across the Canadian border during the next few months.

About 500 coal miners are idle consequent of the strike at Fernie, B.C. The settlement of minor matters pertaining to the agreement when they returned to work in August has not been satisfactory to them.