

# The Brain Growers' Guide

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## THE LIBERAL CONVENTION

The economic policies endorsed in the resolutions passed by the great Liberal convention in Winnipeg last week were generally in keeping with the progressive spirit of the West. Considered as a whole, the economic platform adopted was one that should appeal very strongly to Western people. The years of educational work carried on by the organized farmers was manifest throughout the convention and the greater part of the farmers' platform was endorsed unanimously. It is understood that there were some reactionary elements in the resolutions committee which opposed some of the principles of the farmers' platform, but they were not prepared to ignore the overwhelming opinion of the delegates. On some questions on which the organized farmers have a clear cut policy the convention did not express itself. It will, however, be a source of gratification to the organized farmers that a large proportion of policies for which they stand have been endorsed and incorporated into the platform of the Western Liberals. The delegates at the convention represented every section of the four Western provinces, and every industry, both urban and rural. The result of their deliberations on economic questions affords further conclusive proof that the organized farmers in preparing their platform enunciated policies in the best interests not only of the West, but of Canada at large.

The first two days of the convention were devoted largely to a consideration of economic questions not directly related to the prosecution of the war, and the present national war crisis in Canada. In dealing with the war and war problems the convention failed to rise above the spirit of partisanship. It failed to grasp the greatest opportunity that has ever been presented to Western Canada. Calm consideration compels the conclusion that the convention made no contribution towards the solution of our national crisis. The so called "win-the-war" resolution was a compromise. It was skillfully drafted so as to secure the support of both conscriptionists and anti-conscriptionists and the convention voted down Mr. Turriff's amendment calling for compulsion if it was found necessary in order to maintain the strength of the Canadian army. But nevertheless the resolution as it stands cannot be construed as other than demanding compulsion if voluntary recruiting fails, even though the word "compulsion" is not contained in the resolution itself. The resolution in favor of national government voiced the general Western spirit. The West, and in fact all Canada, has been calling for a national government for a long, long time, but until recently has made little impression at Ottawa. A truly national government is now the only possibility of preventing an internal crisis in Canada, which may prove to be almost as serious as the war crisis. Had the convention stopped at this point and declared for an independent Western party with no connection with the Eastern Liberal party there would have been little to regret. But the resolution expressing admiration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the endorsement of his leadership destroyed the effect of all that went before. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is frankly opposed to conscription of men. He has made that very plain. Furthermore a considerable element among his supporters in Quebec are opposed to further participation by Canada in the war. By endorsing the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier the convention cast grave suspicion upon its own sincerity in regard to the prosecution of the war. It indicated a keener desire to win the election than to win the war. Nor has the West much to hope

from the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in securing the economic reforms which the convention endorsed. For 15 years Sir Wilfrid was prime minister of Canada and absolute dictator of the Liberal party. His record on the tariff, public ownership, taxation, patronage and justice to the West is such as to give little encouragement for the future. If the convention had organized into a separate independent Western party it would then have been in a position to meet every problem that might confront it. There will be 55 members elected from the four Western provinces at the next election. No doubt 45 of them at least could have been carried on the platform drafted by the convention. A practically solid West in the House of Commons would have been a mighty factor and under present conditions would practically have held the balance of power. The Western party could then have united with any other elements for the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion. It would also have been strong enough to compel recognition of the rights of the West in economic and fiscal questions. But by placing the West to all intents and purposes under the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, to lead it where and whither he deems fit, the spirit of the West will have no articulate voice in the councils of the nation.

What is the explanation of the action of the convention towards Laurier and the organization of a Western party? It is well known that there was in the convention a group from Vancouver, another from Edmonton and a smaller one from South Winnipeg that were determined to endorse Laurier at all hazards. They comprised the machine element in the convention and probably numbered about 15 per cent. of the total. They were well organized and very active both in the resolutions committee and in the convention. There is little doubt that many or most among them were animated by an appetite for jobs and patronage if Laurier again becomes premier. Another disturbing element was the recent visit of Sir Clifford Sifton to the West where he urged conscription and a national government. Sifton's stock stands mighty low in the West and his visit raised widespread suspicion and resentment. The Liberals looked upon it as an endeavor to secure revenge upon Laurier by breaking up the Liberal party. It was also believed that Sifton was playing a game to rehabilitate himself with an eye to becoming a member of the proposed national government and premier if possible. Sifton's visit drove many conscriptionist Liberals to the support of Laurier. Another contributing factor was the whitewashing of the Hon. Robert Rogers and his retention in the Borden government. Rogers and his peculiar political methods do not commend themselves to the West and the whitewash merely served to create greater antagonism against the Borden government. All this contributed towards the action of the convention in endorsing Laurier. The resolutions committee, from which all resolutions emanated, it is understood, spent about eight hours and an all night session on this problem. Practically half the committee, it is understood, were opposed to the endorsement of any leader and a very considerable percentage favored the organization of a Western party. But the machine element and the job hunters were uncompromising and finally succeeded in forcing through the resolution which was finally presented to the convention. It is learned, however, that the resolution was not unanimous even in the resolutions committee and it was not unanimous in the convention. A great majority of the delegates came to the convention animated by a desire to rise above partisanship and to take a broadminded,

generous attitude towards the solution of our national crisis. They were, however, betrayed into the course they finally adopted by the job hunting crowd who certainly do not represent the people of this Western country. In its war policy and in its endorsement of Laurier the convention did not represent the best thought and opinion of the prairie provinces at least. It has added only further confusion to an already confused problem. What it will lead to no one can even guess.

## CONSERVING EXPORTABLE FOODS

Hon. W. J. Hanna, food controller of Canada, has issued his first definite regulations for conserving food that is urgently required by our soldiers and our allies across the water. It is ordered under heavy penalty that no beef or bacon be served at any public eating place on Tuesdays or on Fridays and that on other days beef and bacon be not served at more than one meal per day. It is also ordered that at every meal in every public eating house substitutes for white bread must be served, such as corn bread, oat cakes, potatoes or something of that nature. There will be no spirit of opposition to the regulations of the food controller. The best and most reliable information to hand indicates that the food shortage in Britain, France and Belgium is becoming steadily more serious. It is declared that without the utmost food supply from Canada and the United States there will be actual starvation among some of the women and the children in the countries of our allies. Our fighting men must be fed if they are to carry on the struggle. It is equally important that there should be sufficient food for all the people in Britain, France and Belgium. In these countries every man physically fit is in war service and it is an absolute impossibility for these countries to produce all the food required for their civilian population and their soldiers. That food must come from Canada and the United States.

The food which at present is in the greatest demand and which can be transported most cheaply and with the most economy of space is wheat, wheat flour, beef and bacon. The United States is being organized to use as little as possible of these foods and to ship as much as possible across the water. In Canada the aim is to do likewise. We have abundant food in Canada of various kinds and it is our duty to do everything in our power to provide proper and sufficient food for those across the water. No doubt the food controller, as his organization and information becomes more complete, will make other regulations for the conservation of other foods and probably also for the regulation of prices. The regulations announced thus far apply only to public eating houses. It is much more difficult to regulate the food consumption in private homes, but in the hour of the nation's need every private home should as far as possible observe the regulations of the food controller respecting public eating houses. If every private home will observe these regulations it will save an immense quantity of beef, bacon and wheat flour. There is plenty of other food available. Most of us cannot go to the front and fight in the trenches, but each and every one of us can do at home something to assist the boys at the front. The people of Canada are looking to the food controller for action and generally they want strong and determined action. Here is the first move: How many private homes in this country will cut down the use of beef, bacon and wheat flour in accordance with the regulations of the food controller?