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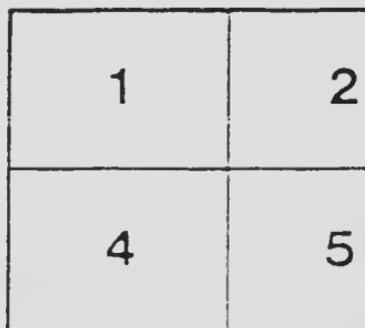
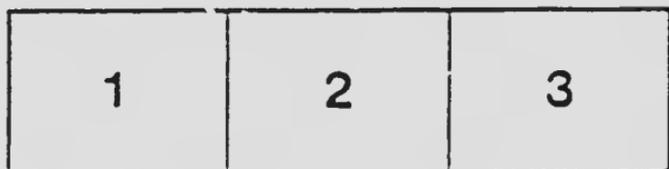
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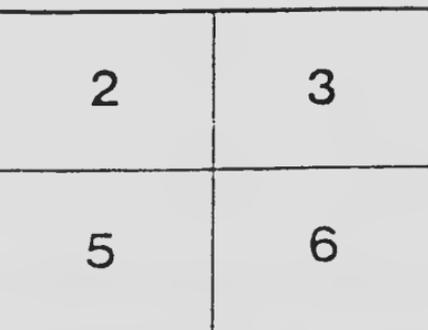
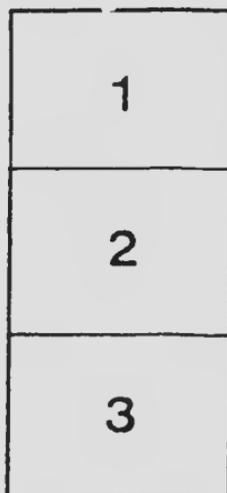
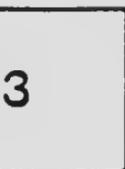
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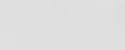
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Pamphlet No. 18

New Provincial Political Platform

p***

(By J. B. MUSSELMAN, Central Secretary)

At the last annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, the Central Board was instructed to prepare a draft programme of desirable provincial legislation and policy of administration for submission first to the locals of the Association for study and discussion and later to the 16 district conventions covering the entire province. Finally it will come before the next annual convention for its consideration and probable adoption with such modifications as it may see fit to make. In all probability it will then become the provincial political platform of the Association, which will endeavor to ensure that only conscientious supporters of it are elected at the next provincial election.

Federal Political Action

A few years ago the organized farmers of Canada, acting through their Central body, which is known as the Canadian Council of Agriculture, drew up a schedule of their federal legislative demands together with a short statement of principles to which they adhere. This has become known as the "New National Policy" and forms the basis of a new political group in federal elections. In the three prairie provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick, the supporters of this platform are already organized for effective expression of themselves at the next federal election.

One of the principal reforms which this new group, now commonly known as the New Nationals, is achieving, is grouping the electors

for the nomination and election of their representative purely on the basis of their common desire to support the platform outlined. The old party basis of division with the old party machine domination of nominating conventions is to be entirely eliminated and electors are asked to group themselves on the basis of their common devotion to issues rather than to a desire to return any set of political leaders to power. It is confidently believed that by this means only can a true expression of public opinion be secured through the medium of elections.

The Association in convention passed also a resolution declaring that provincial elections should be freed from federal issues so of course it is not intended that the organization formed of supporters of the federal platform shall be used in a provincial election.

Democratic Nominating Conventions Demanded

This same spirit of independence is demanding equally democratic selection of representatives in provincial elections. In the past appeals to electors in provincial elections have been in considerable measure on federal issues. The effect of this on electors was to cause them to vote for candidates for the legislature, who, if elected, were to do the business of Saskatchewan, without a clear knowledge of their fitness for the task or of a devotion in common with their supporters to a set of provincial political principles. Indeed, all too often the electors themselves had not clearly formed such in their own minds. Candidates were voted for or opposed according as electors agreed or differed with them on an issue having no connection with their duties if elected. Such an appeal is narrow and partizan and likely to secure an expression of the prejudices rather than the best judgment of electors on the real issues involved.

The big convention, seeking to correct this abuse, passed the following resolution:—

“Whereas provincial election issues have at times been beclouded by strictly federal matters:



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And, whereas, insufficient public notice of pending elections has at times added to the difficulty of securing truly representative nominating conventions:

"Therefore, be it resolved, and it is hereby resolved, that in future representation at nominating conventions should be on the basis of the desire of electors to support in common a legislative programme and policy of administration, clearly defined and made public sufficiently long before the calling of such conventions, to enable the electors to secure proper representation of themselves on such basis; and, further, that the time for the provincial election or bye-election should be published at least sixty days prior thereto."

A People's Provincial Platform

Logically, then, if the electors are to be freed from becl uding of issues and from party machine domination and to group themselves as outlined in the resolution, someone must take the responsibility of drafting such "program and policy, clearly defined." Obviously the Association itself could not escape the responsibility, at least the convention so decided, and instructed its Board of Directors to proceed as outlined in the opening paragraph.

The directors have taken this duty very seriously. Being a large body which cannot meet frequently it had to delegate the task of all preliminaries to the Executive which in turn has placed the Secretary under instructions to investigate locally besides the local associations such representative public bodies as are known to interest themselves in matters of legislation and government administration to present memoranda of such suggestions as they care to make of matters in their opinion suitable for inclusion in the proposed platform. Indeed, suggestions will be gladly received from anyone caring to make them. Our purpose is to get clearly before us as many various views of the problems involved as we can. Many suggestions have already come to hand, all will be carefully considered, compared with each other and with existing legislation, studied as to their legal feasibility and finally be presented to the full Board.

Non-Class and Non-Partizan

The directors have declared that the proposed platform must contain no merely vote-catching panks and that it must be in the best permanent interests of the people as a whole. It must seek no class advantages and must make no appeal to class, race or religious prejudices. Its main purpose must be to express the best thought of the province on matters of public moment and not either to return any set of leaders to power or to oust the existing government. If suggestions appear sound and feasible to the Board they will be included in the draft platform for consideration by the Association even if not now popular. If they are good they will become popular when understood.

We hope with the friendly co-operation of the best thought of all classes and the sympathetic support of the press which thus far has been freely accorded us, to evolve a provincial political programme so sane and sound and so fair to all interests as to merit the support of all reasonable persons.

Fifty thousand citizens of the province will have a voting voice in making this programme. When completed it will truly be a people's platform. For such a platform and for its successful application to the affairs of Saskatchewan the people will feel a new sense of responsibility that will accomplish much in developing a fuller appreciation of the duties and privileges of citizenship.

It should be clearly understood that this is not a party movement, either for or against the existing government. It is primarily an expression of political independence from the old party methods and a demand for truly democratic expression at the polls. Instead of electing supporters or opponents of a party leader who either is or hopes to become premier, the electors are demanding a means for intelligent expression of their own views at the polls and we believe that by the method proposed this can be accomplished.

Issued May, 1920.

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