

WESTERN LIBERAL CONVENTION IS NOW IN FULL SWING IN WINNIPEG

DISTINCTLY WESTERN WING WITH TRUE WESTERN LEADER AND SOLID WEST MAY BE AIM

**Political Future of Prairie Provinces and British Columbia,
However, Still in Lap of the Gods—Homesteading,
Immigration, Land Settlement and Other Problems
Vital to the West Are Discussed**

(By NORMAN LAMBERT, Staff Correspondent of The Globe.)
WINNIPEG, Man., Aug. 7.—The political future of the West is still in the lap of the gods, but there is one hopeful sign, and it is expressed by the words, "a solid West," printed on the badges of hundreds of delegates, who appeared at the opening of the Western Liberal convention here to-day. A feeling has developed to-day among the representatives of these Western Provinces, which seems to express itself in favor of preserving peace and harmony at any price.

Last night pro-Laurier sentiment was at its height. The demonstration of the Cross-Oliver detachment from Alberta fairly stampeded those delegates who had not found their bearings. To-night, however, the Laurier spell is wearing off and opinion is now shifting to a more favorable consideration of the organization of a distinctly Western wing of the Liberal party.

Saskatchewan holds the balance of power. The delegates from that Province, guided by the shrewd hand of Hon. J. A. Calder, are keeping their silence, and attempting to unite the conflicting elements of Alberta and Manitoba and British Columbia on a common policy. And the real aspiration of Saskatchewan, the seed-bed of progressive Liberalism for over ten years, is the formation of a strong Western political group.

The great test will come to-morrow, when the convention will be called upon to decide whether it favors direct leadership from Sir Wilfrid Laurier or desires to organize a new progressive movement in politics west of the Great Lakes.

Came to Proclaim Laurier.

A most significant expression of opinion escaped from the convention late this evening when Delegate Barley from Alberta attempted to bring in a motion of adjournment in the middle of a discussion on nation-wide prohibition. It was a distinct effort to produce a pro-Laurier demonstration. The Alberta man said that he and his friends had come to the convention for one purpose, and one purpose only, that of proclaiming Sir Wilfrid Laurier as the Canadian Liberal leader. The discussion of other issues was waste of time. Delegate Barley, however, was voted down by over ten to one.

Long Program of Reforms.

The sessions this afternoon and to-night were entirely devoted to resolutions of economical and social interest. A long program of reforms still remains to be submitted before the convention will be allowed to declare itself on the war resolution, which, it is hoped, may be presented for approval to-morrow afternoon.

Approve Nation-wide Prohibition.

The concluding feature of to-day's sessions was an enthusiastic endorsement of nation-wide prohibition during the period of the war. The resolution, which was adopted unanimously, was moved by Mrs. Charles Robinson of Winnipeg, and seconded by Mrs. Tedford of Yorkton, and read as follows: "Resolved, that, as a war measure, and with the object of utilizing to the fullest extent the food values within the Dominion, the Federal Government should take possession of all stocks of alcohol, and the Federal Government should absolutely pro-

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hibit the manufacture, importation, exportation, storage or sale of intoxicating liquors within the Dominion of Canada."

A strong resolution on agricultural credits was presented by Hon. Chas. Mitchell of Edmonton and J. H. Haslam of Regina, and passed, as follows:

"Resolved that, in view of the fact that several of the Provinces of Canada have inaugurated Governmental policies of long-term agricultural credits, which, being under Provincial control, permit each Province to deal adequately with the conditions which are peculiar to itself, and as it is desirable that in the development of these systems the money be obtained at the lowest cost; we believe that the Federal Government should make provision to assist the Provinces in securing the cheapest possible long-term credits for agriculturists by lending money to the Provinces at cost for this purpose on the security of Provincial bonds whenever an economy in the cost of money to the farmer can be effected by so doing."

Election Laws.

The following resolution pertaining to the matter of election laws was also passed without discussion:

"Resolved, that the election laws of Canada should be so amended as to prohibit contributions for election purposes by corporations or officers thereof; so as to limit the total amount of money spent in behalf of any candidate in any election contest; to provide for full publicity of the source of all campaign contributions and the mode of expenditure of money for election purposes; and for a more speedy and simple procedure for the trial of election petitions."

Press War to the Limit.

At the beginning of the afternoon's session, before the Resolutions Committee had begun to supply the Chairman of the convention with finished resolutions to submit for discussion, Premiers Norris and Martin were called on to fill in time. Each spoke about fifteen minutes, and each seized the opportunity to press home the national necessity of prosecuting the war, so far as Canada was concerned, to the very limit. Premier Norris described a recent trip through the United States and gave it as his impression that the neighboring Republic, after three months' declaration of war, was better organized and better prepared to wage a vigorous campaign than was Canada to-day after three years of war. This statement evoked tremendous applause.

Must Not Take Backward Step.

Premier Martin's speech was twofold in its plea. He urged Canada to keep a firm face towards the war, and at the same time endeavor to preserve national unity at home. In an eloquent sentence he said: "We cannot take one backward step in this war, and our greatest problem in this convention is to see that the Canadian divisions at the front are maintained."

Over 1,200 Delegates.

The original intention of the committee in charge of arranging the facilities for the convention was that all the sessions should have been held in the Assembly Hall of the Royal Alexandra Hotel, but the overcrowded conditions of the hall this morning made it necessary to move to the large auditorium in the Industrial Bureau for the afternoon meeting. The list of registered delegates and visitors now contains over 1,200 names from all parts of the four Western Provinces.

The morning session was consumed entirely with completing the working machinery of the convention. The Resolutions Committee, which is the inner and unapproachable ring of the convention, was formally organized. Twenty delegates from each Province were duly elected to the committee, which also included all Liberal Federal members of Parliament, making a total of more than 100 members. The real mind of the convention is centered there. The voice is located outside in the large auditorium, where the majority of the delegates, the press representatives and the official Chairman of the convention await the finished product of the Resolutions Committee.

Laurier to Unite Canada.

At the beginning of the afternoon session a number of telegrams were read. The President of the North Qu'Appelle, Sask., Liberal Association, and the associations of Cowichan, B.C., and Kamloops, B.C., wired expressions of confidence in Sir Wilfrid Laurier as the only leader to unite the Dominion. The Win-the-war League from the Eastern Townships wired from Sherbrooke, Que., an earnest request for a resolution favoring a non-political national union Government, whose chief aim should be winning the war. The Regina branch of the War Veterans wired a resolution that it endorsed conscription of men and would regard it as the only issue to be considered in any election in the near future.

Win-the-war Speeches.

Then, while the delegates waited for their Resolutions Committee to commence grinding out fodder for them, Premier Norris of Manitoba and Premier Martin of Saskatchewan occupied the time in delivering extemporaneous but quite stirring win-the-war speeches, which were well received.

Natural Resources of West.

A Western grievance of long standing was voiced by Hon. A. L. Sifton, Premier of Alberta, in the following first resolution referring to the natural resources of the West:

Be it resolved:
(1) That in the interests of the proper carrying out of the spirit of Confederation and as a fitting memorial of the fiftieth anniversary thereof, the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta should be placed as nearly as possible on a basis of equity with the other Provinces of the Dominion; (2) the lands within said Provinces, which have already been disposed of by the Dominion Government for the general benefit of Canada, should be considered a fair recompense for the financial terms granted said Provinces; (3) all the lands, water, minerals and timber heretofore ungranted in said Provinces, now held by the Crown for the benefit of the Dominion, should, from

and after the first day of July, 1917, be held for the benefit of the respective Provinces within which they are situated; (4) such legislation as may be necessary for the proper transfer of such lands, water, minerals and timber and all rights thereto appertaining, subject to agreements heretofore made and with such exceptions of land now in use by the Dominion as may be proper, should immediately be passed.

Reaching Plane of Equality.

Premier Sifton said that at last the West was in sight of reaching that plane of equality in the possession of its natural resources which is enjoyed by the other Provinces in the Dominion. The resolution which the convention was asked to sanction was the same that had been presented to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and in turn to Sir Robert Borden. Both men had told the speaker that unquestionably an injustice had been done to the Prairie Provinces in the matter of the control of their natural resources. Now that the representation of the Western Provinces in the House of Commons had increased, the people of the prairies could no longer be kept from justice. The resolution was seconded by S. J. Latta, M.P.P., of Govan, Sask.

No Hereditary Titles.

An enthusiastic approval was given to a resolution opposing the granting of "hereditary titles in Canada and all other titles than those granted for naval and military services." The mover was L. S. G. Stubbs of Birtle, Man., and the seconder Alex. Stewart, K.C., of Edmonton. Mrs. Luther Howling of Winnipeg received the hearty support of the convention in her speech, recommending the extension of the Federal franchise to women. The resolution was seconded by Mrs. Stanley W. Brown of Vancouver, and was adopted almost unanimously. An amendment, submitted by D. F. Kalese of St. Vital, Man., asked that the franchise should not be extended to women of alien enemy birth, but it was impossible to find a seconder, and the original resolution stood unchanged.

School Administration.

The question of school administration on the prairie was dealt with in the following resolution, which was presented by Hon. Edward Brown of Manitoba:

"Resolved, that the interests of education in the West demand the transfer to Provincial control of all school lands and of the school land endowment fund, which under Federal management have produced scarcely more than one-half of the revenue which could be secured by placing the control in the hands of those most interested in the revenue."

Hon. Edward Brown urged strongly that the school lands of the Middle West be placed under the control of the Prairie Provinces. Under the Dominion administration of these lands, large areas, amounting in all to more than a million and a half dollars, have accumulated and are due to the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The problem of providing adequate educational facilities for the new peoples of the plains demanded instant transfer of these school lands from Federal to Provincial control. Hon. J. R. Boyle of Alberta seconded the resolution, which was passed unanimously.

The convention ran out of resolutions about five o'clock, and advised further material for discussion. Resolutions Committee should be prepared until 8 o'clock, when the

Land Settlement and Immigration.

J. G. Turfitt, M.P., of Assiniboia, upon the opening of the evening session, presented the following resolution urging a reorganization of Dominion land and immigration policies:

"Resolved, that as the general progress and prosperity of our people depends in very large measure upon our agricultural development, and as the obligations assumed by Canada by reason of the war and of our existing railway situation can best be taken care of by increased population and consequent increased production, it is imperative there should be inaugurated without delay a comprehensive scheme of immigration and land settlement, such scheme to be evolved and carried into effect by the co-operation of Federal and Provincial authorities, and to embrace the principle of State assistance in the direction of making available for suitable settlers the vacant land now owned by speculators, railway and land companies and located in existing well organized communities within easy distance of railway and marketing facilities."

T. A. Crerar of Winnipeg, in seconding this resolution, stated that at the present time there was no available cheap land for new settlers close to the railways of the middle West. In order that land settlement might be facilitated in Western Canada, the speaker urged an elimination as far as possible of the area held by speculative and capitalistic interests.

Homesteads for Women.

"Homesteads for women" was the subject of the following statement: "The homestead act at the present time gives to male British subjects of 21 years and widows with minor children 160 acres of free land providing they fulfill certain specified conditions. Be it resolved that this convention go on record that the act be extended to permit women to file a claim and upon fulfilling sim-

ilar conditions to receive their patent."

The resolution created a warm discussion. Miss Flett of Winnipeg was the chief sponsor of the resolution, which was seconded by Miss Wilson of Harrois, Sask. W. W. Thompson of Kennedy, Sask., and D. Henry of Togo, Sask., opposed the idea strenuously, however, on the ground that the young women did not fully appreciate the hardships and trials of homestead life. J. G. Turgeon, M.P.P., of Rebstone, Alta., espoused the cause of the resolution, claiming that Western Liberalism stood for absolute equality of rights between both sexes. The resolution was finally passed.

Reclaiming Lands in B.C.

The question of reclaiming lands in British Columbia for the purposes of the Province was presented by Premier H. C. Brewster, as follows:—"Whereas, the retention by the Dominion of the title to the lands in the Peace River District and the railway belt leads to an unnecessary, expensive and embarrassing duplication of offices, agencies and administration, and is particularly embarrassing in the administration of the minerals, as well as the lands, in the railway belt; "Resolved, that, in conforming with the request put forward with regard to land and natural resources in the three Prairie Provinces, we strongly urge that the same policy be pursued with regard to British Columbia, and that all lands, timber, water and minerals in the Peace River District and railway belt be transferred to the Province of British Columbia."

Premier Brewster's resolution was vigorously supported by Premier A. L. Sifton of Alberta, and it was approved unanimously by the convention.

Shipbuilding on Pacific.

Special attention was given to the shipbuilding industry on the Pacific coast in the acceptance of the following resolution, presented by Fred Stork and Hon. J. Pattulo of Prince Rupert:

"Whereas it is necessary to bring to bear every possible national energy in the present condition, and whereas an elaborate and modern drydock and shipbuilding plant, costing two and a half million dollars, has been in existence in Prince Rupert for the last three years, the interest on the bonds of which is guaranteed by the Government;

"And whereas no steps have been taken by the Government to make use of the same and it remains neglected and out of use, and this neglect has become a public scandal;

"Be it resolved that the Dominion Government should at once cause to be installed a permanent and efficient staff and materials assembled for the operation of said drydock so that building and repairing of ships may be carried on in the national interest; and this convention pledges itself to the enforcement of this resolution."

Cost of Farm Machinery.

An important resolution on farm machinery was presented by Thomas McConica of Kerrobert, Saskatchewan, and it was passed, as follows, without discussion:

"Resolved, that as the present high cost of farm machinery is one of the great factors in the increasing cost of producing foodstuffs, the Canadian farmer paying more for such machinery than does the farmer of most other countries, we believe that the Dominion Government should immediately provide for inquiry into the different factors which constitute the price to the farmer; such an inquiry to embrace cost of manufacture, cost of transportation, distribution, collection and any other factors, with a view to such action as may be possible to bring about reduction when the facts are ascertained."

Norris Predicts Sweeping Victory for Liberals

Following the opening of the convention at 10.30 o'clock with the singing of the National Anthem, Premier Brewster of British Columbia nominated Premier Norris of Manitoba as temporary Chairman. In the course of his address of welcome to the delegates, Premier Norris ventured to predict that the convention would result in a sweeping victory for the Liberal party at the coming election.

Premier Norris said the delegates had been selected more carefully than ever before for any convention. It would have been humanly impossible to get a more representative gathering. He asked all to forget that they were at a Liberal convention and consider only the general good of Canada.

"This is a political convention, but allow me to say without giving advice that there has never been a time when Canada required a high order of service as much as she does to-day," said Mr. Norris. "She wants service that will subordinate community and Provincial interests to the welfare of Canada at large. It is not a time when she should meet for purely political purposes. This convention is not called for purely partisan purposes." Continuing, the Chairman said that the convention must lay the foundation of a fiscal policy not only for Western Canada but for Canada. He disclaimed any prejudice against Eastern Canada, but said the convention was to co-operate with the East. If the convention could prove that its delegates were above partisanship Winnipeg would become the hub from which the affairs of Canada would be conducted.

Premier Norris forecasted a railway policy acceptable to all Canada.

"But," he said, "there is something prominently important, and that is that you create a win-the-war policy." (Loud applause.) Some people had not been touched closely by the war and did not realize this, but it was the most important thing of all. There might be a difference of opinion as to the method, but there must be unity in all Canada. The Manitoba Premier paid eloquent tribute to the thousands of Canadians killed in Flanders. "Their blood," he said, "is calling to us, 'Will you leave us alone?'" (Cries of "No, no.") "There may be a difference of opinion as to methods, but this call must be answered, and there may be something suggested at this convention as to properly looking after the wives and dependents." (Applause.)

No Machine Present.

Mr. Norris declared that he didn't know what was going to happen at the convention, as there was no machine present. The convention was its own master, and every man should accept his own responsibility. Delegate Latta nominated as permanent Chairman Mr. C. M. Hamilton of McTaggart, Sask. Mr. Hamilton formerly lived in Wingham, Ont., but has been in the West for 25 years and was Chairman of the Moose Jaw Liberal convention. He has also been Chairman of the Saskatchewan Rural Municipalities Association. Capt. Clifford E. Riley of Calgary, Alta., a returned war veteran, was also nominated for the Chairmanship. At the suggestion of Hon. A. G. MacKay, formerly Liberal leader in the Ontario Legislature, Capt. Riley was appointed as Vice-Chairman, the convention applauding the appointment. Mr. Hamilton withdrew his name, saying that he would not oppose any returned soldier, as he took off his hat to them. However, the convention would not permit of the withdrawal, and both Mr. Hamilton and Capt. Riley took their places on the platform.

Soldiers Set Example.

"The political forces of the East," said Mr. Hamilton, "have divided themselves into two hostile forces and it is, therefore, up to the West to show them what can be done. Our soldiers who have represented us in Flanders have exemplified Canadian citizenship as it has never been represented before. Public men must live up to this standard if the highest Canadian ideals are to be obtained."

A Tribute to Soldiers.

Capt. Riley interpreted his appointment as a tribute to the soldiers of Canada, and as an earnest that the Liberals from coast to coast intended to do their full duty to the boys at the front and those dependent on them. "It's a young man's war," he said, "and you're going to do more to win it by hurling a bomb at the Hun or by using a rifle—not a Ross rifle—than by all the resolutions possible. I think my own little platoon did more to win the war than all the win-the-war conventions that have ever been held."

Mr. W. R. Wood of the Grain Growers, a Neepawa man, was appointed Secretary, and Mr. D. D. Burke of Souris and Mrs. A. Knell of Edmonton, Assistant Secretaries.

Ovation for Oliver and Molloy.

Both Hon. Frank Oliver and Dr. Molloy, the Federal members who stood by Laurier, were given a great reception when they, along with other notables, were asked to take their places on the platform.

The first business of the convention was to cable the following message to the Commander-in-chief of the Canadians in France, at the suggestion of Delegate McConachie: "The convention's heartiest congratulations on the achievements of our army in the past and our unqualified pledge of our hearty support in the future." An amendment to delay the sending of the message until the conclusion of the convention was withdrawn.

Hon. T. H. Johnson, Minister of Public Works in Manitoba, will present a resolution, proposed by Miss Lyn Flett of Winnipeg, calling for equality of women with men in homestead rights.