

BIG SPLIT IN CONVENTION OF WAR VETERANS

Winnipeg and Ottawa Delegates Withdraw From Dominion Gathering at Ottawa

Proportional Representation Main Cause of Trouble--Ontario Has Majority

Letter of Withdrawal Also Com- plains of General Conditions of Conducting Business

Toronto, July 31.—As the culmination of murmurings which have been heard ever since the opening of the G.W.V.A. convention, the Winnipeg and Ottawa delegations today walked out of the convention and decided to take no further part in its deliberations.

The question of proportional representation was at the root of the trouble. The delegates from Ottawa and the west have been claiming that suggestions made by them have been persistently voted down by the predominance of voting power in Ontario and they say that if the representation at the convention were proportional to paid up membership this would not have been possible.

Matters nearly came to a break last night, but the matter was patched up for a while and the delegates attended this morning's session. This afternoon, however, they held a meeting at the Carls Ritz hotel and decided definitely to have nothing more to do with the convention.

Following this meeting the Winnipeg and Ottawa delegates this evening issued a statement in the form of a letter to the president of the association, outlining their position. In it they claim that while Ontario has only 7,563 paid up members to 11,573 in the rest of the Dominion it has 94 accredited delegates while the rest of Canada has only 84. They disclaim the impression that an attempt is being made to formulate a political organization with the idea of running the country and declare that "the attitude adopted from time to time by the Toronto and Ontario delegates of jeering and howling at outside delegates with whom they may not agree is not conducive to harmony or good results."

Not Seeking Outside Assistance.

The westerners, who follow in their organization the principle of pay as you go and taking no outside assistance, have taken the view that it was not in accord with the principles of the association to continually seek assistance from civic and provincial governments. Their bodies have been built through their own efforts. They declare that it is because of this assistance that Toronto has been able to be so strongly represented. They believe that there is an effort upon the part of an element in Toronto to use the association for its own aggrandizement. They declare that a city of Toronto's size should have far more than 2,257 paid up members. It was stated among them last night that before they leave Toronto they will ask from the floor of the convention an explanation of the budget of the local association for the coming year in which it is stated that \$22,000 will be required or thereabouts to maintain the organization locally. Without civic assistance to the extent of \$10,000 it would not be self-supporting. In Winnipeg with a paid up membership of 3,500 affairs are conducted by a secretary and two stenographers.

While representing a membership of 11,677 left a total balance not represented at the caucus of 8,459. This is further proof of the manifestly unfair methods of recording our opinions under the present voting system.

"We would refer you for precedent to the motion which we have supported to the labor organizations of England, who take their vote in the same way as we proposed.

"While fully realizing the absolute necessity for compromising in conventions of this nature, and while ready to compromise on any subject under the sun except principle, we feel that here principle is being assailed, and we cannot compromise on principle. It is therefore the opinion of the delegates here assembled that we cannot further participate in the deliberations of the present convention until the principles contained in the following resolutions have been recognized as a fair basis for recording the votes of the delegates representing the various branches throughout the Dominion.

"When a poll is demanded at any national convention of the association, each branch shall on any question have one vote for each member for whom return has been made to the Dominion headquarters and for whom per capita tax is made in full to the end of the quarter immediately preceding the convention.

"With the added compromise as agreed upon in the caucus held this morning and such compromise to prevail at the present convention, that branches of less than 200 members should have 23 votes and that delegates appointed from provincial organizations shall have 200 votes, and that provinces not having a provincial organization shall elect from among their number of delegates present one to cast 200 votes for that province."

"The latter compromise was agreed upon as being fair to the delegates who are at present attending from provincial associations and from bodies of a small voting capacity, and it is agreed upon only for the present convention.

General Conditions Bad.

"It is further submitted that general condition of affairs prevailing at this convention are such that we do not consider it right or desirable that we should participate further in its deliberations.

"We have received from the convention the unfortunate impression that an attempt is being made to formulate a political organization with the idea of running. This is not, nor never has been our conception, nor was it the intention at the inception convention held at Winnipeg, April, 1917.

"We have faith in a just cause and the honor of our fellow citizens, and believe that such means to obtain justice are entirely unwarranted at the present time.

"We are firmly of the conviction that the attitude adopted from time to time by the Toronto and Ontario delegates of jeering and howling at

outside delegates with whom they may not agree is not conducive to harmony or good results. With the predominance of voting power from Ontario and having in view a resolution submitted to your convention that this association enter actively into the political arena, we tell that we cannot assume joint responsibility for any action of this convention.

"Our action in retiring is prompted solely by our determination to safeguard the cause of returned men and our comrades still in France, and it is our opinion that movement is on foot, which, on the present basis of voting, would make it possible to have an undesirable element carry personal aims to the detriment of the welfare of Canada and the cause of our comrades."

The letter is signed by R. B. Maxwell, president of the Great War Veterans' association, Winnipeg branch, and D. F. Pidgeon, president of the Great War Veterans' association, Ottawa branch.

By a vote of 83 to 71 the convention refused to adopt the system of proportional representation and retain the present system of voting on a basis of one vote for each delegate. The change was favored by western and Quebec delegates, supported by the Ottawa delegation.

Major Buchanan, representative of the pension board, addressed the convention on the question of pensions and pointed out that the board was purely administrative, not legislative. "We must abide by the government's regulations," he said.

President Purney announced when the G.W.V.A. convention opened this morning that Vice-President Shanahan, who was yesterday found by the convention to be ineligible to continue on the executive owing to not being a member of a local branch, had withdrawn from the session, although it was decided yesterday that he might remain.

Increase Clothing Allowance

The president read a telegram from the military department to Comrade Glism, M.P.P., stating that dating from April 1, 1918, the clothing allowance to soldiers on discharge would be \$35 instead of \$7 as formerly.

A discussion on whether public sympathy was with the G.W.V.A. was participated in by Comrade G. Murrell. He did not think the public was showing the consideration and feeling that was the due of the returned men. There was no doubt of the loyalty of the public.

Comrade (Rev.) Mackintosh said: "We returned soldiers must be careful or we will alienate public sympathy by ingratitude."

The alien labor question will be debated on Friday, when a lengthy resolution prepared by the special alien enemy committee comes up for discussion. The principal points of the resolution are:

1. All enemy aliens, not already so employed, to be interned and perform work of national importance.

2. Enemy aliens not to travel more than five miles without a passport.

3. Appointment of an alien enemy custodian.

4. Rigid enforcement of registration.

5. Super-tax on incomes of enemy aliens.

6. Prohibition of enemy alien publications.

7. No enemy aliens in federal, provincial or municipal positions.

8. Allied aliens to be conscripted or deported to their own countries.