

PREMIER NORRIS AT NORWOOD MEETING

First Public Appearance Since
Taking Over Reins of Office—
Made Temperate Speech.

Says Sir Wilfrid Laurier Would
Accept Proposal for Coalition
Government at Ottawa.

"If Sir Robert Borden were to approach Sir Wilfrid Laurier with hand extended, and say 'let us work together for the good of Canada until this war is over,' I am sure that Sir Wilfrid would grasp that hand in a minute," said Premier Norris contrasting the political situation in Canada with that in the old country, at the present time, before the big political meeting, held last night in Raddow theatre, Norwood, in connection with the convention of Liberals of the federal constituency of Springfield. This was the premier's first appearance on a public platform since he took over the reins of office, and he took occasion to comment on the situation at Ottawa which had rendered necessary the holding of a convention in this time of stress and strain as a preparation for a Dominion election.

Premier Norris, accompanied by Hon. Dr. R. S. Thornton, minister of education, entered the theatre just as the address given by A. C. Fraser, of Brandon, who filled the breach caused by the inability of Dr. Michael Clark, of Red Deer, Alta., to fulfill his engagement, was being concluded. His appearance and that of his colleague was the signal for vociferous cheering, testimony to the popularity of the new government, and of relief at the sudden demise of the old.

Temperate in Remarks.

Mr. Norris was temperate in his remarks concerning the late Roblin government. He had nothing to say detrimental to that regime, but expressed sorrow that such circumstances as had brought about the change in the government of the province should have taken place. Referring briefly to provincial matters, Mr. Norris, by easy transition, discussed the situation at Ottawa. He condemned the fiscal policy of the Borden government, referring to its schemes to increase the revenue and raise "war expenses" as progression

"backwards like a crab." He commented on the \$10,000,000 increase in taxation in five years, and maintained that the war taxes were being levied not to defray the cost of way but to maintain the Borden government in power. Premier Norris then referred to the coalition formed between the great political parties in the old country, claimed that the hatchet should be buried at Ottawa, that Sir Robert Borden would find ready response from Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and emphasized the fact that with such an agreement arrangements could be made to continue the present parliament till the war was over.

Bespeaking the support of the Springfield electorate for its Liberal candidate, A. R. Bredin, who also addressed the meeting, Mr. Norris pointed out that were a Dominion election forced on the people at this time, it was the duty of every citizen to oppose the graft which had reflected so much discredit on Canada to cast his vote in favor of freer trade, and in favor of a reduction in the preferential tariff, rather than of its increase.

Loyalty to Empire.

Loyalty to Empire, disgust at the patronage system in vogue at Ottawa, and shame at the recent political debacle in Manitoba, all found expression, and echo. The various speakers, through the two vehicles, French and English, voiced the opinions of independent Canadians anent the party "machinations," the "contract scandals," and the "war taxation," the echo being found in the crowded theatre. The "loyalty-disloyalty" slogans of the Conservative party were referred to in scathing terms by Mr. Norris, and Mr. Fraser, during discussion of the prospective Dominion election. "The men who prate of loyalty in this connection," said Mr. Fraser, "have their loyalty in their boots, and—these are made of paper."

Ex-Ald. Jean, of St. Boniface, presided over the meeting, and after a few remarks by Albert Dubuc, A. R. Bredin, Liberal candidate for the electorate was introduced. The latter after a preamble in which he insisted that all Canadians must stand shoulder to shoulder to see the iniquitous war brought to a successful conclusion, detailed a few of the gigantic problems which it was necessary for the Canadian citizens to face. The Conservative administration, he held, had been proved extravagant in civil government. Under it the patronage system had become greater in effect than when it took office. They had to face the problem caused by the high cost of living, and by the growing mass of unemployed. In the latter connection he stated that as many of the men who lined the streets today with no work to do, wanted work and not charity, the government should turn their energies to the scrub

country, where employment profitable to both parties, employer and employed, was lying to hand.

Need of Wider Markets.

Mr. Bredin insisted that reciprocity was an issue at the next election just as it had been an issue in 1911. The west, he said, needed wider markets for its products. In the same connection he deplored the fact that instead of encouraging the farmers, "the producers of all the wealth in the west," the Conservative government had seen fit to place a $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent increase on the duty of farm implements. That the natural resources of the province rightly belonged to the province was another plank in Mr. Bredin's platform, which was emphasized. Lastly, he referred to the preferential tariff with Great Britain, saying that this "the first tangible proof of the loyalty of the Conservative party" had been introduced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and that he himself hoped to be a spoke in the wheel which would place the "grand old man" back at the head of Canadian affairs.

A. C. Fraser's Address.

A. C. Fraser's address was a satire on Conservative loyalty, and the Roblin debacle. He contrasted the coalition between the great political parties in the old country with the condition in the Springfield riding where they had been forced to hold a convention in order to prepare for an election. France the frivolous, had altered the whole of its public sentiment to face the conditions of the time. Political differences had been forgotten. All were united as one man to fight the enemy. The Conservatives, however, had claimed that the Liberals had broken the truce. This, according to the speaker, they were justified in doing, when they had seen grafters in control of the supplies.

The people were now thinking back to first principles, and discovering that in all times some things were more important than money or success. Public sentiment in the province had driven the Roblin government out of power. They had not been beaten in the house, nor defeated in an election. They were so disgusted with themselves that they quit, when they saw how they stood condemned in popular opinion. He regretted as a Liberal the dishonor which the unprecedented exit had brought upon the province, and warned the meeting that the same medicine would be given Premier Norris if he acted in the same manner as his predecessor.

Attacked Graft at Ottawa.

Mr. Fraser then attacked the gifts and patronage at Ottawa. Sir Robt Borden, he said, was an honest man but was surrounded by numerous camp followers, and was too weak to get rid of them. The militia department had had a grave problem

to face on entrance into the war. The militia department was hailed as non-partisan. It was said that contracts would be given independent of politics. Yet, said Mr. Fraser, there was not a single Brit on the patronage list, providing boots, glasses, etc., for the soldiers. "These grafters are the worst kind of traitors," said Mr. Fraser. "They ought to be treated as spies and shot without trial."

"These same men that talk of loyalty placed an additional 5 per cent on goods manufactured in England, with the idea, I suppose, of making the English manufacturer help pay the cost of Canada's share in the war," continued Mr. Fraser, commenting on the increase in the preferential tariff, and scoring the war taxes. He maintained that the greater part of the amount raised to meet the cost of paying these grafters two dollars for supplies that cost only one dollar.

Guilty of Extravagance.

Continuing, the speaker maintained that the Borden government had been found guilty of extravagance in 1914, at a time when conditions necessitated economy. Instead expenditure had been increased, the burden falling upon the worker. The people, he concluded, would no longer peaceably submit to conditions of that kind, where millions were being mis-spent to keep the Conservative government in power.

Testimony to the worth of the candidate elected at the convention held in the afternoon was borne by Mr. Fraser, Albert Dubuc, and L. A. Delorme.