

PARTY MACHINE

FIRST, WAR NEXT

Ottawa Paper Says Mention of Conscription at 'Peg Con- vention Would Offend Pro-Germans.

WOULD ANGER QUEBEC AND ALSO PACIFISTS

West Won't Sell Birthright for Mess of Pottage, Says Free Press.

OTTAWA, Aug. 15. — Commenting editorially on the recent Liberal convention in Winnipeg, the Journal-Free Press says:

"The Western Liberal convention has delivered itself, and out of the mountain has come forth a mouse. Proclaiming itself mightily for war, the convention had not a squeak for conscription. The word was not even mentioned. The cowardice of its absence was sought to be covered up by magnificent emptinesses of phrase. 'The entire resources of the country,' said the war resolution, proceeding to specify man-power, 'are justly disposable by the state,' and 'the imperative duty of the people of Canada in regard to the war is its continued and vigorous prosecution.' Thus, according to the resolution, conscription is proper; and Canada ought to do her best. Her best at the present moment means conscription; but the convention refused to say conscription. And why the cowardice? Why did these brave warriors shrink from a plain word? The answer is obvious to the most limited intellect. The word conscription would anger Quebec. The word conscription would offend the pro-German aliens who are thick in the west. The word conscription would offend pacifists and Socialists and some labor demagogues. The word conscription is an honest word. The thing conscription is an honest thing. But honest word and honest thing as it is, and war or no war, it would not do for the Liberal politicians of the west if it threatened to interfere with the chances of the Liberal machine in Canada getting into office at Ottawa.

Yet these are men who ask the country to come to them because they have lofty principles—these men, who in the biggest issue which Canada has ever faced since Confederation, show themselves mere partisans and cowards. These are men who ask the country to condemn what they allege to be undue partyism in their political opponents—these who in this supreme national crisis, show themselves such desperate partisans themselves as to cheer for a party leader and plot for his success who has declared himself unalterably opposed to that very principle of compulsory service which their war resolution asserts in a round-about way, and for which the mover of that resolution voted in the House of Commons himself.

When nearly all the world has come to conscription in this war, not merely the Teuton allies, but Britain, France, Italy, Serbia, Belgium, Japan, the United States, New Zealand—and when it is the burning issue in Canada, this convention of bold Western Liberals meets, orates and departs with never a plain word about conscription. They were advertised as men of big minds, as men of valiant temper, as men at whose calibre the effete east ought to be awe-struck. But they didn't have big enough minds, nor valiant enough tempers, nor sufficient calibre, to utter one direct word as to where they stood, either as to the principle of conscription, or as to the enforcement of it now, that it has been enacted by parliament.

No Mess of Pottage

WINNIPEG, Aug. 15.—The Free Press (Liberal) says editorially: "Those cleverly-disastrous and fatally-brilliant tactics that transformed the late Liberal convention into a party catastrophe were intended to make possible a great political coup.

"The west was to be made solid for Laurier by virtue of the very excellent economic programme adopted by the convention, while Laurier was to secure a solid Quebec on the issue of anti-conscription.

"Then there was to be a bargain. Quebec was to dictate the war policy of the new government, while the west was to be given a considerable instalment of economic reform.

"The political possibilities of this deal have been much discussed for some months past. They were not overlooked at the recent convention.

"The plan is a clever one, but it will fail. The west can get the economic and fiscal reforms necessary to her advancement by honest means.

"Not even for this attractive mess of pottage will the west sell her birthright."