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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Lib Convention Seen This Year

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A PROVINCIAL Liberal convention late this summer, or in early fall, looks like a good bet from where I sit. I know that several Liberal political spokesmen have been urging a convention for some time.

They are the ones who are opposed to the present leader, Alex Matheson. But I also get from some of Mr Matheson's strongest supporters the suggestion that a convention is the only way "to clear the air".

I haven't heard much the past few weeks, but underground rumors keep telling me that one group that wants a convention are just waiting until after Monday's byelections to start a campaign they hope will produce a new leader.

THE P.E.I. Liberal Federation executive disposed early last winter of convention suggestions by confirming Mr. Matheson in office. But the rumblings of discontent are far more widespread this time.

I WAS TOLD this week that there hasn't been a Liberal provincial convention since the late A.C. Saunders was chosen leader in the Twenties to succeed John H. Bell.

Mr. Matheson succeeded J. Walter Jones who was called to the Senate in 1953. He was chosen by the Liberal members in the legislature. Mr. Jones had been chosen in the same way when Premier Thane A. Campbell resigned in 1943 to become Chief Justice. He became premier in January 1936 when Premier Walter M. Lea died in office only a few months after his government was elected by a whopping and unprecedented 30-0 margin in August 1935. Mr. Lea had assumed the leadership mantle after A.C. Saunders went to the bench in May 1930.

Both Premier Walter Shaw and R.R. Bell who preceded him as PC leader, were chosen by provincial conventions and that fact is being used by those who are demanding a Liberal convention now.

Close Battles Are Predicted

I HAVE ONE bold prediction for next Monday's byelection. Provincial Secretary J. David Stewart tells me "We'll take both of them by 50 votes". He gave me that one after I had stressed last week they would be close. Apparently he thinks so too.

The betting appears to be pretty even on the outcome in 2nd Queens and 5th Kings, with most Liberals telling me Kitson will take the nod over MacPhail, although some are doubtful. But I get much the same reaction from the PCs for their man, although their confidence seems just a shade weaker.

The predictions on 5th Kings are confusing. A prominent Liberal told me this week "George Ferguson is the best candidate our party has had in 25 years. He's a

personable young man, a most capable organizer and you can bet he'll have his organization working effectively."

From PC sources I still get suggestions that Leslie Hunter's experience and popularity over the years will turn things his way. And there's that ball-point pen loss the last time that many Liberals and PCs think may turn some votes his way this time.

Strawberry Picking Champion

I HAVE a really good strawberry story this week. A Young Mt. Stewart lady, Barbara Doyle, appears to be the province's berry picking champion. She picked 400 boxes one day last year on the farm of Wilbur Jay, Mt. Stewart, and I'm told she picked 205 boxes in an afternoon this year.

I checked the 400-boxes story this week with Lane Piggott, manager of the Mt. Stewart strawberry exchange because it's so much more than any picking story I could get from any grower in this area. "She's a picking machine" commented Mr. Piggott who assured me the story is true. He added that he had three people pick more than 300 boxes on his farm last year.

I didn't check this part of the yarn but I'm told Barbara made \$35 on that 400-box performance. She made \$20 at 5 cents per box, and won three \$5 bets besides. A girl who can pick that many berries deserves to make that kind of money.

Strawberry prices have been maintained at a 20 to 25 cent range pretty well in recent years, and for that the strawberry exchanges and special marketing efforts can take a bow. They keep off the market the surplus berries that would depress it below reasonable levels.

Low Price Season Was Good

BUT a friend told me this week that the 1932 season which gave him prices of 5 cents and 4 cents a box for a large part of his crop was one of his best financially.

"We had three acres that year and we cleared \$1,000. That was a lot of money back in those days," he recalled. They sold 2000 boxes at 5 cents and 1600 boxes at 4 cents. Of course there were better prices for early berries. So any talk of prices must be fitted into the period when the prices were received.

My friend suggested maybe a dollar was worth ten times more than what it is now. Before you say he's wrong, consider that they paid one-half cent per box to pickers. They pay 5 cents now. On that score at least, money was worth ten times more in 1932 than it is in 1961.

W.I. Sees Dream Come True

OUR WOMEN'S Institute members yesterday saw Montgomery Hall, the girls residence for PWC students, that they've been recommending for more than a dozen years. The Institutes are responsible for many improvements in the rural districts of this province.

I couldn't exaggerate the influence they have had over the years. The trip through

the beautiful new residence must have been a satisfying experience.

Heifer's Production Praised

Willard Prowse, Brackley has a junior 2-year old Ayrshire heifer that is showing unusual production. I'm told she has averaged 59 pounds of 4 percent milk daily since she dropped twin heifer calves on May 3. The youngster, Greendale Elizabeth Ann, was born January 26, 1959. She has a top daily production of 62 pounds.

I've never seen such production from a heifer that age, a veteran ROP inspector told me yesterday. The heifer is inbred as her sire, Inglesyde Gilt Edge, is also her maternal grandsire. The Inglesyde bull was bred by Wilfred Furness and Son, Vernon and his name makes me believe his sire was Dunduff Gilt Edge, a bull selected by Fred T. MacRae, Union Road for the P.E.I. Ayrshire Breeders Association in Scotland.