

It offers nothing to the Canadians which is personal, new, special and superior on questions which agitate Canadian politics.

Whether it is a question of tariff or transport, of social legislation or administrative reforms, the Liberal party has always kept in sight Canadian interests, and has endeavoured to have these national interests dominate over the narrow views of parties and groups.

Its broadminded policy on national unity was first ignored by the Conservative party which brands it, for instance, with sacrificing the east to the west, of selling the east to the Progressives. We still hear, in certain quarters of the Tory press, the faint echoes of this violent denunciation of 1925 and 1926. But now the Conservative party is preparing to also turn their back on their past. The selection of Winnipeg for its convention of last autumn is quite an indication, one moreover discussed and explained in a very lucid manner by the former temporary leader of the Conservatives who, with an unexpected gracefulness, turned his back on the east and opened his arms to the west.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Translation): Hear, hear!

Mr. PREVOST (Translation): Once more, the Conservatives vary their tactics. In a rather clumsy way and without tact, they endeavour to follow out the Liberal policy and gain favours from the west. However, what the Liberal party has always done, under Laurier and Mackenzie King, from conviction and love of national unity, the Conservative party does it, to-day, for election purposes. This tardy expedient to which it has recourse is so repugnant to its past history that we have a right to suspect its sincerity.

Let us now consider the so important question of imperialism and our imperial relations.

The Conservative party did not state its policy at the Winnipeg convention, on our relations with the empire as regards our participation in wars and the military or naval defence of England and its possessions in all parts of the world.

Notwithstanding the famous intervention of Mr. Meighen, the convention neither endorsed nor disavowed the statement of the ex-prime minister. So that in the event of Canada being called upon to participate in an imperial war, we do not know what would be the Conservatives attitude. Would they make an appeal to the people before taking a decision, as advocated by Mr. Meighen or would they choose the policy of immediate action which is thus expressed:

"Ready, aye ready" and which was proclaimed by the same Mr. Meighen at Toronto? The country has yet to learn.

The convention remained silent on this important and serious aspect of our policy.

In beautifully couched phrases, the convention expressed the Conservative party's loyalty to the crown. "In words no less beautiful it rejoiced in the powers and freedom of action that Canada as a nation has attained." It ends there. Really that is very little. These are but words, and very vague at that. We must wait and hope that the Conservative party will prove by their actions the sincerity of its Canadian and autonomous sentiments. I well remember several circumstances of their not acting in accordance with those sentiments. For instance, when they rebuked the King government for having concluded with the United States a treaty which bore only the signature of a Canadian minister and thus having insulted England and its ambassador at Washington.

The imperial spirit which has guided the Conservative party in the past is well known. It has brought on legislation, struggles, regrettable acts which form part of our political history. To-day, even with a program overflowing with pleasant words and pompous statements on Canadian autonomy and equality of races, I think that this is insufficient to reassure us on the course the Conservative party will take. Time alone will tell us whether this party has freed itself of the influence of Tories, Orangemen and jingos who have guided it heretofore.

Canadians who are lovers of peace, union and harmony—French Canadians are of that number—do not wish to be unfair to the Conservative party, but they do not wish either to be imposed upon by the politicians who for too long a time acted as generals for that party.

The French Canadians especially have grounds to be prudent and cautious. They have not yet forgotten those waves of fanaticism which have embittered Canadian life, and from which they had so much to suffer. They are not yet ready to forgive the Conservative party for its odious Elections Act during the war. Their pride as well as their true love of national unity forbid them to confide without reserve in the guidance of a party which allowed them to be vilified far too long by its principal newspapers and which have still as allies, to-day, leaders of leagues who batter at the principles which guided the fathers of confederation, by advocating one single language for this Dominion.