



HON. ROBERT BOND—PREMIER OF NEWFOUNDLAND

## THE RAILWAY QUESTION IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

*By P. T. McGrath, Editor St. John's Evening Herald.*

THOSE articles by Mr. R. L. Richardson, M.P., on "Government Ownership of Railways," which have been appearing in *THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE* the past four months, have been read with the keenest interest in this colony, where the railway problem is, if possible, even more important than it is in Canada. Indeed, the first two papers supplied valuable ammunition for the recent general election campaign, the main issue in which was the endorsement or repudiation of the transfer of the Colonial Railway and allied properties from the state to individual and ultimately to corporate ownership.

Newfoundland's experience throws an instructive sidelight upon the question of who should own the railways—the country or the corporations, and an analysis of the conditions underlying our case will probably result in the investigator becoming satisfied that the answer must be one influenced

by the environment and circumstances of the particular country under discussion. For instance, while Mr. Richardson makes out a strong case in defence of the proposition that the proprietary rights of the Dominion railways should vest in the Government or people of Canada, an even stronger argument can be adduced in justification of the colony of Newfoundland parting with its railway, under certain specific conditions, however unpalatable that may be to the mass of the people at the time.

Perhaps no phase of colonial economics in recent years has been more remarkable than that comprehended in the Newfoundland railway—its construction by the colony and its sale to a contractor. To bring an intelligent understanding to bear upon it, the fact must be borne in mind that the principal industry of the colony is fishing—for cod, seal, salmon and herring, and