

### Conservative Indifference—With a Reason.

Since assuming office, the present government has studiously avoided giving any attention to this great subject. When at its last session the government was confronted with a resolution drawing attention to the recommendation of the Commission, it thought to side-track all action by raising questions of jurisdiction which were wholly apart from the main issue, and which would have no bearing at all were the government's aim that of seeking a means to an end, rather than the avoidance of the end itself. **Because Industrial Training and Technical Education opens a vaster field of opportunity to the masses of the people, it is not congenial to Conservatism.** A government which seeks to retain power by winning from special interests the support it can obtain through special favors in the way of tariff restrictions, bounties and other perquisites of privilege, is not likely to look with favour on any development on a national scale of methods which, if successfully applied to industry would mean freedom to employers and employees alike from a thralldom of this kind. Individuals are not to be blamed; it is an attitude of mind. The stand Conservatism has taken towards this far-reaching factor of national development is a stand Conservatism may be expected to maintain. It is natural that it should. It is equally natural and

inevitable that the work which Liberalism has commenced, Liberalism should carry on. That is why Liberalism and Industrial Training and Technical Education must go hand in hand, if Industrial Training and Technical Education are to receive in Canada the development their national importance merits. Having commenced with the establishment of a Royal Commission composed of enlightened and representative men to advise the country as to the best methods of advancing Industrial Training and Technical Education, Liberalism is committed to the great task of developing through this means Canada's resources, her trade, commerce and industries, and the skill of her workers. To this task Liberalism may be expected to devote its best energies and powers once opportunity for constructive effort is again afforded.

It may well be that in developing its aim, Liberalism will have to consider with care many questions of jurisdiction. This, Liberalism has ever been ready to do, for among its main concerns has been a regard for provincial rights, and the safeguarding of the interests of minorities. But while questions of jurisdiction may require consideration, Liberalism will seek to make of them instruments of the most effective means to a great national end, and not, as Conservatism has done, insuperable barriers in the path of national progress.

## THE QUEBEC & SAGUENAY DEAL

The Borden government lived up to its own best traditions when it made the last act of the recent session of Parliament the forcing through of legislation for the purchase of the Quebec & Saguenay Railway. It means that some \$4,000,000 of public money will have to be paid out as soon as the necessary formalities are complied with, but according to reliable authorities it will mean an ultimate expenditure of about \$10,000,000 before the road can be completed and ready for use. And for this the country gets a railway which was a losing proposition from its inception and which is unlikely to be able to pay its way.

The Quebec & Saguenay is a line about 62 miles long, from Quebec to Murray Bay, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. About 85% of the line is graded and rails are laid on only 7 miles, from Murray Bay to a pulp mill, and this is fast falling into disrepair. The section unfinished traverses a country with only 30,000 people in sparse settlements, and who have ample water transportation during the summer months. The whole deal, on the face of it, is improvident and indefensible, but particularly so at a time when the Government is faced with the necessity of conserving every energy and every dollar of cash for the crying needs of the War. It was vigorously opposed by the Liberals, notably by Hon. Geo. P. Graham who branded the transaction as "monstrous" and by Mr. J. G. Turriff (Assiniboia) who characterized it as nothing short of a political steal. Significant evidence that this charge is justified is to be found in the fact that Sir Rodolphe Forget, M.P., the original promoter of the railroad, herded the Quebec Nationalists

carefully into the Government fold for the vote on the Lapointe resolution on bilingualism and then had the same vote with him, with government backing, to force the Quebec & Saguenay bill through the House.

Probably no action of the Borden government since it came into power has raised so great an outcry from the Press, including many leading Conservative papers. Thus the Ottawa Journal, the Tory organ in the capital, protesting against the bringing down of such legislation in the very last days of the session said:

"There looks to be special reason for objection this time in the Quebec & Saguenay Railway matter. We don't know anything about the rights and wrongs of the money wasted or practically stolen in connection with the enterprise, but that a heap of money has disappeared in the scheme in one or both of these ways is a wide-spread suspicion. If the proposition to buy out the road had been made earlier in the parliamentary session, permitting fair time for inquiry, either the proposition would have been blocked or a reassuring argument made out for the purchase, which is not the case at present."

The Montreal Gazette, another paper usually to be found applauding any act of the Borden government, eschewed comment on the merits of the case but protested against the fact that only a small fraction of the membership of Parliament was present when the bill was forced through, and said: "Legislation passed under such circumstances does not command respect. . . . **The present House of Commons has lost its vigor and the sooner it is replaced by a new one the better for the country.**"