

# The Canadian Engineer

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## PRESENT REPRESENTATION AND THE ENGINEER

Sir Thomas More, who was Lord Chancellor of England, wrote Utopia, which represents one view of the perfect state. In this dream, or ideal, laws were so clear and commonsense that all men could interpret them. The author, as the head of the legal profession, realized clearly that there was room for great improvement in that direction.

The legislature makes laws; the profits of the lawyer are in interpretation thereof. The attraction that the rôle of law-maker has to the lawyer must be obvious.

The training of the legal profession is possibly the least suited to interpret popular wishes. A lawyer, by virtue of his profession, needs to confuse issues, hang argument upon pin points, and trap the unwary into damaging admissions. He always acts *ex parte* on behalf of one client, irrespective of the justice of the cause at issue. Hence the lawyer makes an ideal party politician, for he can concoct a plausible case from the most slender materials.

The other type prominent in politics is the professional party politician, about whom the less said the better. Politics concern themselves with the hoisting of a particular party to power. When in office the professional secures the plums for his services. He has a party viewpoint all the time and the national interest must therefore be a side issue.

It is not denied that there are men honest in intention in both connections, but in too many instances broad motives are lacking, while the opportunity for abuse is always open. Casuistry is the sheet anchor of the lawyer while fooling the electorate, and not serving the national interest is too often the supreme desire of the professional party politician.

"The war has shattered many illusions," is a phrase continually appearing in the contemporary press. But how many realize the complementary truth that the war has transvalued nearly all pre-war values, including political representation?

The administration and management of a thousand men contain problems as complex as the administration of half a continent. The problems differ in degree, not in kind. Personal touch with masses of men, and the

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tact and discrimination necessary, are a first-class training for work of a similar kind in bigger fields.

Every industry depends directly upon the engineer. There are few points of life where his work has not effected big alterations. Tolerant he must be to human weakness; efficient he must be, for in few other fields of effort is the elimination of the unfit more rigorously practiced. His training is applied science and his practice demands large commonsense.

The engineer is one of the pivots of modern civilization; therefore he should be more in evidence as a public man. He is well fitted to carry forward the lessons of practical experience in the realm of national affairs.

## UNION GOVERNMENT

The new Union Government is one step forward to what the people of Canada desire,—a government composed of men of both political parties and of men independent of political considerations,—but it is only one step forward. It is a government which will do much to help carry conscription at the next election, because the majority of people, we hope, want conscription, and largely because many Liberals and Conservatives will find it difficult to vote against a Union Government in which both parties are strongly represented. The outstanding feature of this coalition is its political character. With perhaps two exceptions, the cabinet as at present constituted consists of men who have made a mark in professional politics, not in business. Sir Robert Borden, as premier, probably recognizes the necessity for much more modern business methods in the administration of Canada's affairs while at war. He probably recognizes the need for the abolition of government red tape and the throttling of persistent old precedents. He probably endeavored to recognize these facts in the formation of the Union Government, but partisan politics were too strong.

Sir Robert had an extremely difficult task to get any kind of a Union Government, in view of the strength of party politics in war time. While we have a coalition government, it is still striped with politics rather than with business. The desire of the people for the inclusion in the cabinet of some of Canada's big business and