

## THE CONSERVATIVE

**T**HE man who proclaims himself a Conservative is made to feel that he has confessed to a shameful thing. Under pressure of this calumny he has assumed many alien names. In England he calls himself a Unionist; in Canada a Coalitionist; in Quebec a Liberal; in Ontario a Farmer. For this the Conservatives have only themselves to blame, and the justice of the blame lies in an act of hypocrisy and cowardice. This act was committed in Canada when the Conservatives were officially designated by a master of political cynicism as Liberal-Conservatives.

It is quite true that a man is born either Conservative or Liberal. The one cannot become the other any more than he can "become" a Catholic, or a woman become a lady—without a change of heart. It is easy to deny the old faith: hard to adopt the new: easy by denial to become an anarchist in politics, an agnostic in religion, a democrat in manners. Conversion is rare.

The Conservative is a being with a definite frame of mind. He is tolerant of the old, suspicious of the new. In his pristine state he honoured the king, feared God, and was friendly to religion so long as it did not meddle too much with his private life. The world to him was a vast and complicated concern which he did not create, did not understand. If it could be improved at all, the improvement would be slow, and those who strove for improvement were only striving for change. Experiment was dangerous, and theory half false. He would risk a check but not a change. His main desire was to leave bad enough alone lest worse might follow. He had no faith whatever in legislative enactments. Legislation was one of those evils which must be endured, but it was a dangerous weapon. To him the Liberal was a gad-fly which stirred him from repose, but he was careful not to move too fast.