

## Louis J. Robichaud

by Ken Sherrard

Louis J. Robichaud is New Brunswick's first Acadian premier, its youngest, and he is the premier under whom a Liberal government has introduced the most radical transformation of provincial government structure in New Brunswick history. His announced purpose is to give to everyone "Equal Opportunity".

Born in 1925 at St. Anthony, Kent County, he was the seventh of ten children of Amedee Robichaud, a sawmill operator. Kent County has been a very poor region. Predominantly French populated, Kent County has been a very poor area. Fishing, farming and lumbering are the main sources of local employment.

Mr. Robichaud was educated in Kent County elementary schools. In 1947, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Sacred Heart University at Bathurst, then did graduate work at Laval University in economics, political and social sciences.

The older Robichaud boys had gone out to work and helped pay family expenses so that Louis could get his B.A. Now he wished to obtain a law degree, but found that the money had run out and he now had to help support his younger brothers and sisters. As an alternative to a formal education in law, he decided to articulate with Albany Robichaud (now Mr. Justice Robichaud of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick) at Bathurst. At this time, this was an acceptable method of gaining admittance to the New Brunswick Bar.

In 1952 he was admitted to the Bar. That year he established a law practice in Richibucto; was



LOUIS J. ROBICHAUD

married, entered politics and won a Kent County seat in the provincial legislature. He was a member of the opposition during the following eight years of Progressive Conservative rule, and during 1957 and 1958 was the Liberal party's financial critic of the government.

At a leadership convention of the Liberal party on October 11, 1958, Mr. Robichaud was elected leader of the party and for the following several months was the leader of the Opposition.

In the provincial election of 1960, the Liberal party came to power, and Louis Robichaud be-

came the premier. In the course of his subsequent two terms of office, he has embarked the Liberal party on a program of radical social legislation.

The bulwark of his reform is based on the recommendations of the Byrne Royal Commission on Finance and Municipal Taxation. The controversy in which the new legislation has embroiled the province has provided the single largest issue — the control of local government — of the 1967 provincial election. On this (and the personal challenge of Charles Van Horne), Mr. Robichaud will emerge in triumph or defeat.

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