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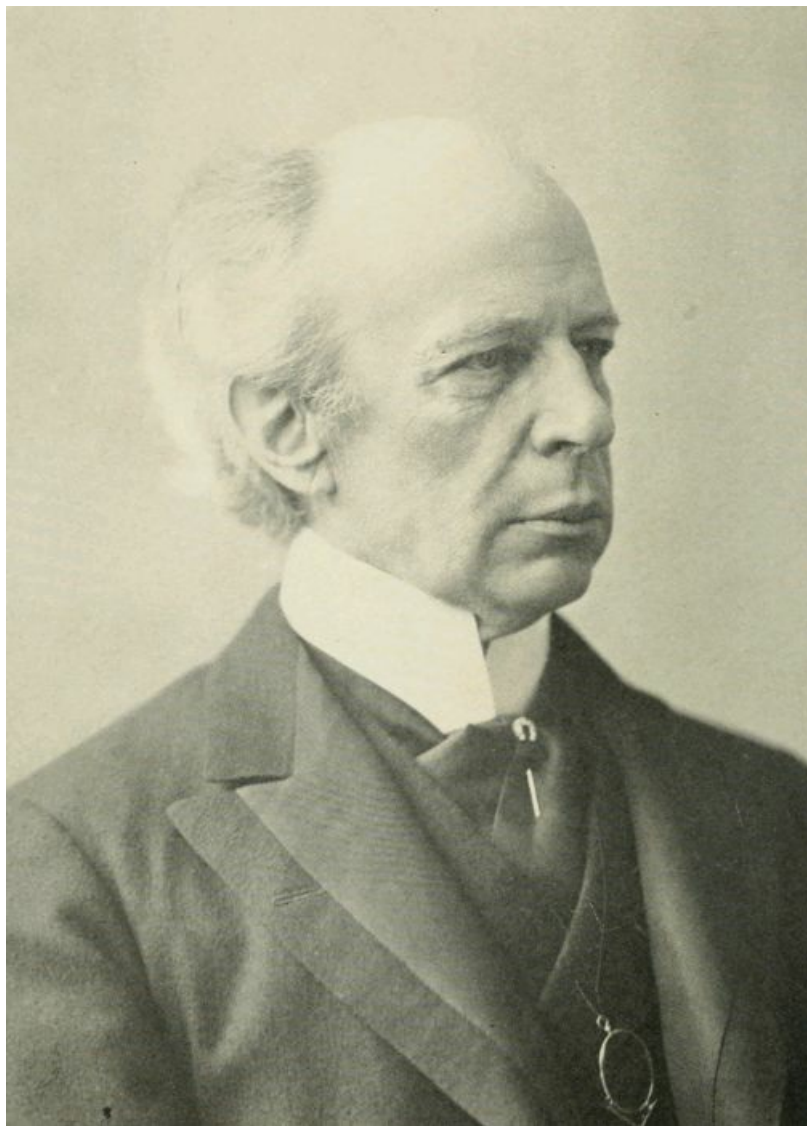
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WILFRID LAURIER

Prime Minister of Canada, [1896-1911](#)

1907

LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

BY

OSCAR DOUGLAS SKELTON

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAPHS

VOLUME II

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LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST LAURIER MINISTRY

Speeding the Parting Guest—Forming the Ministry—The Laurier-Greenway Settlement—An Episcopal Challenge—An Appeal to Rome—The Beginning of Prosperity—The Opening of the West—The British Preference.

After eighteen years' wandering in the wilderness of opposition, for half the time under Wilfrid Laurier's leadership, the Liberal party had come to power. For fifteen years, the longest unbroken stretch of authority in the country's annals, Mr. Laurier was destined to remain prime minister of Canada. They were to be years crowded with opportunity and with responsibility, a testing-time sufficient to search out every strength and every weakness of the leader or of his administration. It was Mr. Laurier's fortune, and Canada's, that he was to be in control of the country's affairs at the most creative and formative period in its history, in the years when the Dominion was attaining at once industrial maturity and national status.

In June, 1896, these things lay hidden in the future. The immediate question was, when would the defeated ministry resign? Since Mackenzie's resignation in 1878, it had been accepted doctrine that in the event of a decisive defeat a ministry would not await the assembling of parliament and a formal vote of want of confidence, but would resign at once. Sir Charles Tupper made no undue haste in retiring. It was necessary to wind up the work of the departments. It was still more necessary to use the vanishing powers of appointment to reward past service and to buttress future positions. A long list of new senators, judges, Queen's Counsel, revising officers, inland-revenue collectors, was drawn up and presented to the governor-general, Lord Aberdeen, for his formal approval. Lord Aberdeen hesitated to sanction the more important nominations. As the last parliament had voted supplies only until June 30, and as Sir Charles Tupper had not formed his government until after parliament had prorogued, "the acts of the present administration," the governor-general held, "are in an unusual degree provisional." The Senate, after twenty-four years of Conservative and five of Liberal appointments, was overwhelmingly Conservative, and to fill all the remaining vacancies with Sir Charles's nominees would not only keep the scales loaded against the new government for many a year, but would embarrass it seriously at the very outset, blocking Sir Oliver Mowat's accession to the cabinet. The Bench, again, would be overwhelmingly Conservative. On this ground the governor-general, using the discretion the constitution gave him, finally declined to accept his advisers' advice. Sir Charles, after a vigorous protest against this "unwarranted invasion of responsible government," and an endeavour to buttress up his position by appeals to Todd's authority and Mackenzie's example, treated the governor-general's refusal to sign the appointments as an indication of want of confidence; on July 8 he resigned the seals of office, but he never forgave the speeding of the parting guest. The next day Lord Aberdeen called upon Mr. Laurier to form a new administration.

It was not a difficult task to find sufficient cabinet timber. The difficulty was rather an embarrassment of riches. There were many potential ministers, and few portfolios,—fewer, alas, than might have been, had not Liberals in the unrecking days of opposition denounced as extravagant the creation of every new department.^[1] There were many interests to weigh.

Mr. Laurier had to hold the balance fairly between his own parliamentary followers and the men in the provincial administrations, between the old Liberal war horses and the eleventh-hour converts, between past service and future capacity, between debating skill and executive power, between province and province and between section and section, allotting Quebec its English-speaking Protestant minister and Ontario its Irish Catholic minister. But the range of choice had been closely narrowed before the election, and it was only necessary now to make some last-moment shifts because of election fatalities or personal idiosyncracies. By July 13 all the new ministers but three had been sworn in.

Mr. Laurier, profiting by the experience of Mackenzie and of Macdonald, determined not to take charge of a department. That would have meant that either, as in Mackenzie's day, the work of policy shaping and party guiding or, as in Macdonald's day, the work of the department would often go undone. As President of the Council, he would be free to give to all the tasks of the government the general supervision he had planned.

For the important portfolios of Justice, Finance, and Railways, Mr. Laurier turned to the provinces. Sir Oliver Mowat, appointed to the senatorial vacancy which Sir Charles Tupper had sought to preëempt, became Minister of Justice. Thirty-three years before, young Oliver Mowat had joined the short-lived Sandfield Macdonald-Dorion ministry as Postmaster-General. It was a strange turn of the wheel that brought him back to the central government after a generation's work in

other fields, and stranger still the lot which gave him charge of the department against which he had waged so many persistent and so many successful constitutional battles. Though he no longer had the force or the interest in affairs which had marked his prime, Sir Oliver was still full of sage counsel. In the cabinet, his half-century's experience and his shrewd knowledge of men helped a dozen strong ministers of individual ways and training to become a team; while to the Scotch Presbyterian voters, his presence in the ministry was unimpeachable proof of its thorough soundness and respectability. William Stevens Fielding, for twenty years a Halifax newspaper man, for another ten premier and unquestioned master in his native province, gave up his Nova Scotia post to become Minister of Finance. In central and western Canada he was not well known, but it was not long before his caution and efficiency in administration and his hard-hitting power in debate had given him a foremost place in parliament and in party council. Andrew George Blair, premier of New Brunswick, who had been equally at home in Liberal and in coalition ministries, was a more uncertain quantity, shrewd, undoubtedly experienced in all the ways and wiles of the most efficient school of politics (New Brunswick) in America, and as a Maritime-province man, he was thoroughly familiar with the traffic and patronage potentialities of the Intercolonial, now assigned to his charge as Minister of Railways and Canals. From the West it was understood that a member of the Manitoba administration might be chosen to take charge of the Department of the Interior, but for the time the post was left unfilled.

From his Quebec followers in parliament, Mr. Laurier chose three men for portfolios. Israel Tarte, defeated in Beauharnois, but elected later by acclamation in St. Johns-Iberville, took charge of the largest spending department, Public Works, the department which he had assailed and exposed in his Langevin charges. Henri Joly de Lotbinière, member-elect for Portneuf, premier of Quebec for a brief space after the Letellier coup d'état, leader of the provincial Liberals until Mercier's union with the Castors in the Riel days, a Protestant who had won the confidence of a Catholic province, a seigneur who embodied the finest traditions of courtesy and honour of his order, a man for whom Wilfrid Laurier had profound respect and natural sympathy, became Controller of Inland Revenue. Sydney Fisher, one of the few men of leisure in Canadian politics, who had followed his university training by public service in politics and in progressive farming in the Eastern Townships, was now back in parliament after a term's absence spent largely in the political organization of Quebec. Though labelled by his critics "gentleman farmer," he was still a farmer, and immensely better fitted for his new post as Minister of Agriculture than the lawyers and doctors and brewers and near-farmers who had preceded him. Two members joined the cabinet without portfolio: C. A. Geoffrion, a leader of the Montreal bar, and professor of civil law in McGill, fellow office-bearer with Wilfrid Laurier thirty years before in L'Institut Canadien, brother of the Felix Geoffrion who had been his colleague in Mackenzie's ministry, and son-in-law of Antoine Aimé Dorion, and R. R. Dobell, head of the well-known Quebec lumbering firm, who had been half-detached from the Conservative party by the McGreevy scandals, and had fully accepted the Liberal platform on the trade and school issues in the late election. Charles Fitzpatrick, another citizen of old Quebec who had won fame as counsel for Riel in 1885, and for Mercier and for McGreevy and Connolly in later days, and had held a seat in the provincial house from 1890, when he had declined a post in the De Boucherville Conservative ministry, until 1896, took the Solicitor-Generalship, which by custom formed part of the ministry but not of the inner cabinet where general policy was determined.

Among Ontario members of the federal party, Sir Richard Cartwright stood foremost in service and repute. It had been assumed by many that upon a Liberal victory he would return to his old post of Finance. But he had made many enemies. Though it was not true, as rumour ran, that a deputation of bankers had protested to Laurier against his reappointment, in the eyes of the business world he was identified, rightly or wrongly, with a policy of doctrinaire and ruthless free trade. In determining to offer the portfolio of Finance to Fielding rather than to Cartwright, Laurier was influenced not so much by the desire to reassure the business world as by his conviction that for this most important of all the ministry's tasks, the tried administrative capacity and balanced judgment and the younger years of William Fielding were the qualities most needed. Mr. Fielding's acceptance was contingent on Sir Richard's assent. To Sir Richard the post of Minister of Trade and Commerce was offered. He took the post, and gave loyal service to the country and to the party for many a year, but never again with the old joy and confidence in combat, and never with complete confidence in all his colleagues. William Mulock, Toronto lawyer and York farmer, known at election times as "Farmer Bill," the most vigorous and able of the Ontario group, a good fighter, a good hater, of dominating will and high ambition, became Postmaster-General. Richard W. Scott, member of Assembly and Commons and Senate since 1857, and famed as the maker of the Act of 1863 which firmly established Upper Canada's separate schools, and of the Act of 1878 which gave counties local option to prohibit the retail sale of liquor, was chosen Secretary of State. William Paterson, a successful manufacturer who had coined the cry which had done much service, "Has the N. P. made *you* rich?" a speaker of stentorian power, slashing in debate, but too kindly ever to leave a smarting wound, became Controller of Customs. His

post, like Sir Henri Joly's, was not of cabinet rank, representing, as it did, Thompson's experiment in under-secretaryship, but at the first session both were made full ministerial and cabinet positions.

From the Maritime provinces, besides Fielding and Blair, two ministers were chosen. Louis H. Davies, lawyer, bank president, premier in the Island, member at Ottawa since 1882, had been for many sessions the foremost Maritime Liberal, and so predestined for the portfolio of Marine and Fisheries. Frederick Borden, doctor, banker, militia surgeon, had held a seat in every parliament but one since 1874, and by his long interest in military matters had qualified for new honours as Minister of Militia and Defence.

When all the posts were filled, there were seventeen ministers, including two without portfolio, or one ministerial place for every seven Liberal members. Even so, many men of outstanding ability and service could not be included. Of the Quebec members, many were young, and were yet to earn their spurs. From Ontario there were men of experience and personality, John Charlton, James Sutherland, James Lister, George E. Casey, George Landerkin, M. C. Cameron, John Macmillan, W. C. Edwards, Thomas Bain, who continued to give effective service as whips or private members. James D. Edgar, one of the most aggressive of the Ontario delegation, was elected Speaker of the Commons. One expected name was missing,—that of David Mills. His long service, his rank as the senior Ontario member and his mastery of constitutional issues, had marked him out for cabinet rank again. But he had been defeated in his old riding. It would have been possible to find a seat for him in the Senate, as was done for Sir Oliver, or in the Commons, as was done for William Paterson, who also had gone down in his home constituency, if Mills had been deemed indispensable. As it was, assurance was given of a cabinet post later; and when in November, [1897](#), Oliver Mowat resigned to become Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, David Mills was appointed Minister of Justice. Perhaps more serious, for the party's future, was the inability to find cabinet place for Dr. Benjamin Russell or for D. C. Fraser, of the Nova Scotia contingent. One very interesting experiment was blocked by death. D'Alton McCarthy, to whom in earlier days the French tongue and the Catholic religion had been anathema, had in time so broadened and mellowed that he came to look forward with pride to serving under a French-speaking and Catholic premier. It had just been arranged, in 1898, that he should enter the Laurier government, as Minister of Justice, when his death, resulting from a runaway accident, ended an alliance which might have had a material bearing on the future of Liberalism in Ontario.^[2]

As it was, the ministry was an extraordinarily able one,—none so strong before or since. In individuality, in varied ability, in administrative capacity, in constructive vision, in internal unity and in integrity, it could safely challenge comparison. Time was to dull the edge of zeal, to emphasize differences, to sap moral resistance, in more than one case, but that was in the twilight hour; the morning was full of high promise.

The cabinet's first task was to settle the Manitoba school question. Until this was done, there could be no peace, no opportunity for constructive work. The eleventh-hour negotiations between Ottawa and Winnipeg and the result of the elections had made clear the bounds within which agreements must be sought. It was clear that a federal remedial law was out of the question except as an absolutely last resort; that relief for the minority must come by provincial legislation; that the province would not consider for a moment the re-establishment of separate schools, but that there was a possibility of securing provision for separate religious teaching and similar adjustments within the framework of the existing system. Preliminary discussions with Mr. Greenway and Mr. Sifton indicated the possibility of agreement, and accordingly it was considered unnecessary to appoint the commission of inquiry suggested when the two governments stood apart.

In August, after some preliminary correspondence, Messrs. Sifton, Watson and Cameron, of the Manitoba government, came to Ottawa, and there threshed out the solution with a sub-committee of the cabinet. It became apparent that the three points upon which concession might be made were: separate religious exercises, a teacher of the minority's faith, and the use of the French language in the schools. To reach agreement upon details, as for example, whether the minimum attendance essential to secure the first two privileges should be sixty, as the province proposed, or a smaller number, and to debate the possibility of further concessions as to text-books, teachers' licenses, and administration, weeks of consideration were required. It was not until the middle of November that a settlement was effected.

In the meantime the question had arisen as to how far the minority could be brought into the agreement. It was desirable to secure their assent to an agreement made in their behalf; yet it was plain that so far as their ecclesiastical spokesmen

were concerned they would not formally assent to anything short of the impossible. Whether consulted or not consulted, they would make trouble. One of the leading representatives of the minority, Mr. Prendergast, who had resigned his post in the Greenway cabinet when the measures of 1890 were passed, was consulted, and agreed that the compromise proposed was the best attainable. Through Israel Tarte, Mgr. Langevin was sounded, with results less happy than the sanguine Minister of Public Works foretold:

(Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier—Translation)

Winnipeg, 8 November, 1896.

MY DEAR MR. LAURIER:

. . . This is how things stand: Archbishop Langevin stands firm for the right to organize Catholic school districts. In other words, he demands the re-establishment of separate schools, which, as you know, is out of the question. I have not shown him the agreement, for I believe that he would immediately have taken advantage of it to raise a row. The priests who surround him are fanatical and full of prejudice. The Archbishop, however, seems to me to be coming back to a more moderate position, and I do not think he will make a disturbance. Our relations have been very cordial. I have tried to learn his views and to pacify him, by making him realize more clearly the unfortunate side of the present situation for Catholics. In fact, half the French schools are closed and about 1500 French-Canadian children are to-day without instruction.

Prendergast and the most intelligent among the French-Canadians will support our arrangement. I enclose an interview prepared by Mr. Prendergast which should be given to the press the day of the publication of the agreement—not before.

A long habit of absolute submission to the clergy has made my mission here very difficult. Everyone is scared. Further, we have no support in the Catholic press of Manitoba, and our friends are left to the mercy of the "Manitoba" and of the "North-West Review," which is edited by Father Drummond and is extremely violent. . . .

In brief, the position is this: The French Liberals, guided by Prendergast, will support us, and within a year at latest, practically the whole community will have accepted the situation effected by the present agreement.

Mr. Tarte found it necessary also to keep an eye on the provincial ministers. He writes the next day:

I have just telegraphed you not to adopt any order-in-council regarding the Manitoba schools until I return. I hope you will adopt my suggestion. It is in fact essential to the success of the work of conciliation which we have undertaken and which above everything calls for good faith. If the proposed amendments are put into effect in a spirit of friendship and good will, all will go well. If, on the contrary, they are enforced in a niggardly spirit, nothing good will come of them. I have met all the ministers, including Mr. Greenway, and they seem to me to realize the necessity of understanding and conciliatory action.

There is no reason why the Federal government should express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Let the legislature adopt the proposed amendments; let them be put in force. If, as I have no doubt, the Catholics express themselves as satisfied, the last word will have been said. But it would be extremely imprudent to tie ourselves now, and thereby to give our adversaries in parliament ground for attack. Our rôle hitherto has been to act as *amici curiæ*. Let us stick to that. This is the position which I have taken with the Catholics here. I have promised them to continue our good offices in the application of the law. . . . Sifton will ask you for an order-in-council approving the settlement. Let him wait, telling him that it will not be advisable to do anything before my return. . . .

The settlement embodied three concessions. First, religious teaching was to be carried on between half-past three and four o'clock, by any Christian clergyman or his deputy, when authorized by a resolution of the local board of trustees or requested by the parents of ten children in a rural or twenty-five in an urban school. Different days or different rooms might be allotted different denominations; no children were to attend unless at the parents' desire. Secondly, at least one duly certificated Roman Catholic teacher was to be employed in urban schools, where the average attendance reached forty and in village and rural schools where it reached twenty-five, if required by parents' petition; similarly, non-Roman Catholic teachers were to be employed when requested by a non-Catholic minority. Thirdly, "when ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language or any language other than English, as their native language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French, or such other language, and English upon the bilingual system." The provincial government also agreed that fair Catholic representation in advisory council, inspectorships and examining boards would be kept in mind in the administration of the act. In essence, the agreement left the system of public schools intact, but secured for the minority distinct religious teaching, and, where numbers warranted, teachers of their own faith and the maintenance of the French tongue. The language clause was framed in general terms by the provincial authorities in order to make it apply to the German Mennonites as well as to the French Catholics.

The question at once arose,—how had the settlement been effected? Which side had given way? Had the Manitoba government played politics and made concessions to Wilfrid Laurier which it had refused to Mackenzie Bowell? Had the Laurier government accepted for the minority less than the Bowell government would have secured for them? The fact was that the terms, as was inevitable, were a compromise, but a compromise consistent with the essential principles

of both parties to the negotiation. The Manitoba government was doubtless readier to negotiate with a Liberal than with a Conservative government, and with exponents of sunny ways than with the wielders of "big sticks." Yet it had adhered to its essential position, refusing to agree either to the restoration of a Catholic school system wholly separate and independent in organization, as the Remedial Bill had provided, or to the establishment, as the Dickey proposals involved, of a system within a system, the segregation of Catholic children, in towns and cities, in separate school buildings or rooms, for secular as well as religious purposes. This agreed, it had assented to all the other concessions for which the Dickey delegation had stood out, and which others now proposed. The Laurier government believed that the agreement was of more real value to the minority than any which could previously have been secured. The Remedial Bill would have been unworkable; the Dickey proposals in part were equally impracticable, while in important details they fell short of what was now secured. Definite religious teaching in the tenets of the Roman Catholic or any other faith was made possible in the only way compatible with unity in secular instruction, by optional instruction at the close of the day. The representation in practice, though not by statute, of Roman Catholics on administrative bodies, and an understanding as to text-books, were common ground. The provision for a Roman Catholic teacher was a modification of one of the Dickey proposals. The new agreement went beyond the Dickey proposals in providing that Roman Catholic children might in all cases be exempted from the standard religious exercises. It added the provision, arising, curiously enough, out of an amendment to the Remedial Bill moved by D'Alton McCarthy himself, for instruction in French.

The announcement of the settlement, on November 19, met very wide approval. Mr. Prendergast, in the interview to which Mr. Tarte refers, pointed out that fifty-one Catholic schools were closed, some since one, some since two, some since four years; that twenty-five others had come under the Public Schools Act, with its standardized religious instruction; and that of the thirty-two schools supported by private contributions as parish schools, half would have to be abandoned or turned into public schools within a year; the new agreement, while not all that could be desired, was worth a fair and honest trial; much would depend upon the spirit of its administration. The Anglican archbishop of Rupert's Land, an upholder of denominational teaching, agreed the settlement was the best that could be made. Dr. Bryce, Isaac Campbell, R. T. Riley and other leading Winnipeggers endorsed it. In Ontario, D'Alton McCarthy and E. F. Clarke spoke for the Conservative opponents of the Remedial Bill in approving it as a reasonable and satisfactory compromise: "Laurier has kept faith," Mr. Clarke declared. "La Patrie" welcomed the passing of evil days. From East to West the overwhelming opinion was approval of a settlement reasonably fair in itself and likely to ensure peace at last.

But approval was far from unanimous. As usual, extremes met. The Grand Orange Lodge of Manitoba denounced the settlement as a betrayal of the national schools, an insidious recognition of denominational pretensions. Senator Bernier and A. C. LaRivière, leaders of the French-Canadian Conservatives of Manitoba, at a mass meeting in St. Boniface attacked it as a wholesale and disgraceful surrender of the minority's rights; no settlement could be accepted which had not previously been approved by the archbishop. Father Cherrier, of St. Boniface, declared that the Church was not content with half an hour for God. Archbishop Langevin sounded a call to arms: "I tell you there will be a revolt in Quebec which will ring throughout Canada and these men who to-day are triumphant will be cast down. The settlement is a farce. The fight has only begun." The next week he opened ten parish schools. In the far East, Archbishop O'Brien, whose flock enjoyed privileges much less extensive, attacked "the cynical injustice ... of this feeble compact of unscrupulous expediency." In Quebec, Archbishop Begin, in a circular letter, declared:

No bishop wants nor can approve the so-called settlement of the Manitoba school question, which, in a word, is based upon the indefensible abandonment of the best established and most sacred rights of the Catholic minority. His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface has sounded an immediate and energetic protest against this agreement; in so doing he has done nothing but fulfil his duty as a shepherd and followed the directions of the Holy See. He could not but defend his flock.

"La Semaine Religieuse," the official organ of the Archbishop of Montreal, voiced the prevailing ecclesiastical opinion:

The Manitoba school question is not settled; it merely enters a new phase.... In Manitoba, Catholics and French-Canadians are not beggars nor strangers, to be content with crumbs. We will demand the Catholic school, school districts, books, teachers, and exemption from taxes. All constitutional and legal means of defence will be used before consenting to the rising generation being led into religious and national apostasy. There is no danger of His Eminence the Holy Father assenting: the signal for retreat will never come from Rome.

To one bishop of moderate views Mr. Laurier addressed a reasoned defence of the settlement:

(Translation)

30 November, [1896](#).

MONSEIGNEUR:

. . . Your Grace may perhaps tell me that these concessions do not go far enough. Was it possible to secure more? That is the first point to determine.

In the first place, I must meet the objection so often urged, that it is not a question of knowing whether it was possible to secure more: "the constitution as interpreted by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council declared that the Catholics had the right to the complete re-establishment of separate schools." I submit that on this point there is complete misunderstanding, and I believe this will be easy to demonstrate.

. . . The text of the judgment authorises merely an amendment to the existing law, and not the abrogation of that law. It is clear that separate schools could not have been re-established without as a preliminary repealing the Act of 1890, of which the express purpose was to put an end to the system of denominational schools. The text of the judgment states explicitly that in order to remedy the grievance of which Catholics complained it was not essential to give them back all the rights which had been taken away from them, but simply to add to the existing law provisions sufficient to protect the conscience of Catholics.

. . . But that is not all. Even supposing that the judgment of the Privy Council had declared that Catholics were entitled to the restoration of separate schools, was it possible to attain this result by a federal law? . . . Three things are indispensable in what is understood by separate schools: 1° exemption from public school taxes; 2° a distinct school organization; 3° a proportionate share in the appropriations voted by the legislature for education. These three conditions were found in the remedial order, but as your Grace knows, they were not found in the bill. The bill did not ensure a cent from the public grants for education. What was the reason for this retreat? Why after having declared in 1895 that separate were, like public schools, entitled to a grant from the provincial treasury, did the same government leave the separate schools which it pretended to re-establish without this grant? The reason given by Mr. Dickey, the Minister of Justice, was that there were very serious doubts as to the power of the federal parliament to appropriate the moneys of a provincial legislature. In other words, the Bowell government did not recognize this power as existing in the federal government.

Even assuming that the government had this nominal power, I submit to your Grace that in the state of opinion, in face of the steadily growing feeling in favour of provincial autonomy, there is not now and there never will be any government strong enough to induce parliament to lay violent hands on the treasury of a province. . . .

. . . Now, to pretend to re-establish separate schools without a public grant, would be simply a fraud.

This being the situation, I submit to your Grace that the concessions offered by the government of Manitoba will be infinitely more effective than the so-called remedial bill could ever have been, if it had become law.

As amended, the Manitoba law will give, not separate schools a name—for that matter they were called public schools before 1890—but an equivalent which I believe acceptable. It will give us Catholic schools, taught by Catholic teachers, in all the districts where the number of Catholic pupils is forty in the city and twenty-five in the country, and these schools will be aided by the government like all other public schools. Further, the law as amended will provide Catholic teaching for Catholic pupils in schools where the teachers are not Catholics, at certain fixed hours.

So much for the amendments to the law. The questions of control and administration remain. I have undertaken to deal with them also, and have secured from the Manitoba government an undertaking to grant Catholics fair representation in the educational staff, the inspectors and the examining boards. With this representation, if good understanding and harmony are re-established, as I hope, and if the agreement which has been effected is carried out in the loyal and broad spirit which has been promised, the Catholics can easily reach a good understanding with the majority as to the qualification of teachers and the school curriculum.

I am ready to admit that the concessions made by the government of Manitoba do not include all that the Catholics looked for, but to seek to re-establish separate schools by federal intervention and to carry things through by main force, is a task which six years of agitation, of struggle, of bitterness, seem to me to have rendered impossible. Without dwelling on this point, I ask your Grace to consider the situation of the country, taking into account its races, its creeds, the inevitable passions, and the nobler sentiments which make provincial autonomy the foundation of our political system, and I believe that your Grace will come to the same conclusion as myself.

Religious teaching should be re-established in the schools. On this point, there is no doubt. I do not believe that it can be re-established by a federal law, and I am sure that it can be by mutual concessions, to which the provincial legislature will give its sanction.

Even admitting that it might be possible to obtain from the existing parliament, or from another to be elected by the people, a law completely restoring separate schools, which would be better, such a law administered by a hostile government, or a law less perfect, but passed by the provincial legislature itself, and administered by a government which, from being hostile, had become friendly?

The proverb, dictated by popular common sense, that the worst agreement is better than the best law-suit, may be applied with as much force to political as to private affairs. It seems to me on every ground that in this case more than ever conciliation will be more effective than compulsion.

I have presented to you briefly, Monseigneur, the considerations which, as it seems to me, determine this burning question.

My colleague, M. Tarte, with the same end in view has at my request visited his Grace of St. Boniface. His mission has not been successful.

. . . I do not ask your Grace to express satisfaction with the proposed arrangement. I simply ask you to consider whether it will not be better to give the arrangement a loyal trial.

I could not ask his Grace of St. Boniface to renounce the rights which he believes are guaranteed by the constitution, but there is ground for hoping that a trial of the new régime of conciliation will give him the most complete satisfaction, reserving the right to renew the struggle, to break the truce, if these hopes prove baseless.

I ask your Grace to consider that in our system of government there are two principles perpetually in antagonism—the principle of centralization and the principle of provincial autonomy. Do you not think, as I do, that the safety of Confederation, the interests particularly of the province of Quebec, lie in the firm maintenance of provincial autonomy? Not that federal intervention should never be exercised, but only as a last resort, when every other means has been exhausted, and when all hope of conciliation and of understanding with the provincial authorities has been found vain. . . .

While some members of the episcopacy were convinced of the soundness of Mr. Laurier's contention, others continued to denounce him and all his works. The months that followed brought not calm, but rising storm. It was not surprising that to men of ultramontane views or uncompromising temper, the situation was not acceptable. Firmly persuaded of the right and duty of the Church to direct the political actions of Catholic voters and legislators, convinced that an intolerable wrong had been done their coreligionists in Manitoba and that the constitution provided a complete remedy, if only statesmen had the will to use it, surprised and angered by the disregard of their edicts shown by the electors of Quebec, they determined to use every means to reassert their authority and crush all opposition. A reign of ecclesiastical terror began, particularly in the archdiocese of Quebec, in the east of the province. Armand Tessier, editor of a Liberal journal, "Le Protecteur du Saguenay," was called to the episcopal palace of Chicoutimi, given his choice between making an abject apology for publishing articles questioning the right of the bishops to intervene in politics and having his newspaper put under the ban; he signed the apology. The leading Liberal journal of the province, "L'Electeur," of Quebec, still edited by the Ernest Pacaud of the Baie de Chaleurs episode, was not given this choice. Despite the fact that in earlier days, when Mercier was in his prime, Pacaud had received the blessing of the Pope to the third generation, "L'Electeur" was banned by bell, book and candle. In a pastoral signed by Archbishop Begin of Quebec, Bishop Laflèche of Three Rivers, Bishop Gravel of Nicolet, Bishop Blais of Rimouski, and Bishop Labrecque of Chicoutimi, and read in every church in the archdiocese in the last week of December, "L'Electeur" was condemned for its denial of the episcopal right of intervention in politics, its "abusive, fallacious and insulting" comments on the action of certain bishops during the elections, its reprinting of the David pamphlet, and particularly, for an article published in November, which denied the bishops the right to decide what amount of religious instruction should be given in schools or to forbid children to attend mixed schools; all Catholics were therefore "forbidden formally and under pain of grievous error and refusal of the sacraments, to read the journal, 'L'Electeur,' to subscribe for it, to collaborate with it, to sell it, or to encourage it in any way whatsoever." Pacaud evaded the issue: that day "L'Electeur" ceased to appear, and next day "Le Soleil" was issued from the same press. Again, when Mr. L. O. David, a lifelong and intimate friend of Mr. Laurier, published a pamphlet, "The Canadian Clergy, their Mission and their Work," in which, after a solemn profession of his Catholic faith, he criticized the policy of the episcopate from the days of their opposition to the Patriotes of '37 down to their arbitrary stand on the school question, the five bishops of eastern Quebec sent it post haste to Rome, charging that it was undermining their authority at a moment when the Church had need of all its power. Early in January, Mgr. Begin was able to announce in a circular letter that the offending pamphlet had been condemned by the Sacred Congregation of the Index Expurgatorius, that "each and every believer is held, under pain of grave disobedience to the Holy See, to destroy this book, or remit it to his confessor, who will do so," and that the author had, like a good Christian, submitted without reserve to this decree.

This high assertion of episcopal authority was a challenge not merely to the Liberal party but to the self-respect of individuals and the liberty of the State. How was it to be met in its political hearings? There were some Liberals who wished to bow before the storm, and await whatever crumbs of future favour the clergy might give. In counties where there were not a score of Protestants, where the parish was the community, it was not easy to face a condemnation which virtually meant ostracism, a barring of social intercourse and of public service.^[3] On the other hand, there were some old Rouges who were more than ready to take up the challenge and to fight to a finish. Ex-Mayor Beaugrand of Montreal declared in his journal, "La Patrie," that Quebec was the Spain of America; the episcopal attack was the beginning of a struggle to the death between the hierarchy and the government; no compromise was possible, and if "L'Electeur" was too cowardly or too poor to continue the struggle others would do so for it: "We have had our victories of June 23, as our fathers had the victories of St. Denis, St. Charles, St. Eustache, in spite of the threats of the religious authorities. I fight not for myself but for poltroons who do not dare to raise their heads."

Laurier faced the crisis squarely. He would not submit, and he would not be led into a war against the Church. Once more, as twenty years earlier, he determined to uphold the right of Catholics to be at once free citizens and faithful sons of the Church. In parliament, before the public, and at Rome itself, this was the policy he and his colleagues had already pursued, and it was the policy they determined to continue.

In parliament there was surprisingly little discussion of the issue. The government urged its followers not to taunt the losers, and to give the parties concerned in the settlement an opportunity to work it out in quiet. On occasion, however, their position was made clear beyond question. Israel Tarte put it with his usual frankness and lucidity in a debate in

March, [1897](#):

Some of our honourable friends opposite do not seem to realize the currents of public opinion. The days are gone by when the people of Quebec could be deceived and treated as my honourable friends opposite would wish them to be treated. I say that more progress in the ideas of liberty and freedom has been made in the province of Quebec in the past ten years than in any other province of the Dominion. When I started out from my parents' farm I entertained then and entertained later many of the doctrines now held by many of my Roman Catholic friends in the clergy, and it is on that account I forgive them many things. Sir, the Roman Catholic clergy of the province of Quebec is composed of good men, of moral men, there is not a more moral body of men than the priests of the province of Quebec, but I am bound to add at the same time that those men have been brought up, as it were, within closed walls, and some of them have become the unwilling tools of such men as those who sit on the opposite side of the House.

The Conservatives were quite as reluctant to make the settlement a party issue. The Conservative survivors from Quebec still demanded "justice, not a sham," and taunted the Liberal members who had signed the bishops' pledge, but the Conservatives from other provinces washed their hands of the whole question. The bishops had not delivered the goods in the last election; why worry further? Sir Charles Tupper frankly refused to pull any more episcopal chestnuts out of the fire; while denying that he had made any compact with the bishops of Quebec, he admitted he had naturally expected more support than he had received:

I am free to confess that I entirely overrated the importance of this question. . . . I find there has not been that deep importance attached to this question by a very large part of that denomination that I had previously supposed. I make this admission frankly to the House, and I cannot but feel that it is not unlikely that it will be much more difficult in the future than it was in the past . . . to induce gentlemen to sacrifice their own judgment to some extent, and the feelings of their constituents to some extent, to maintain a policy which when subjected to the test of actual experience, is not found to have the importance attached to it that was previously supposed. . . . I am glad to know that the responsibility rests no longer on my shoulders, but upon those of the gentleman who is now the First Minister of the Crown.

In Quebec, the Liberals stood to their guns. They pressed to a successful conclusion their protest against the election of Dr. Marcotte in Champlain, on the ground of undue influence of curés who had declared it a mortal sin to vote for a Liberal. When in a bye-election in Bonaventure in March, [1897](#), Mgr. Blais asked both candidates to sign a pledge to vote in the House against the Laurier-Greenway settlement or any other settlement not approved by the bishops, and to forbid their fellow-campaigners "to speak one single word in favour of the Laurier-Greenway settlement or of giving it a trial," the Conservative candidate agreed, but the Liberal candidate, Mr. J. F. Guite, flatly refused: he would like to see still better terms for his compatriots, but must use his own judgment as to the best means: "I am a Catholic, and in all questions of faith and morals I am ready to accept without restriction the decisions of the Church. In all political questions I claim the freedom enjoyed by every British subject. . . . I cannot before God and my conscience renounce the freedom of exercising my privilege as a member, to the best of my judgment." He was elected by double the previous Liberal majority,—though possibly the prospect of government railway extension through the country had some influence on the result.

At the height of the crisis Mr. Laurier made his own position clear. At a banquet held by the Club National in Montreal, on December 30, a few days after "L'Electeur" had been banned, he defended the school settlement as the best practicable solution, and then, in terms which revealed the strain and tension of the hour, referred to the clerical crusade:

I have devoted my career to the realization of an idea. I have taken the work of Confederation where I found it when I entered political life, and determined to give it my life. Nothing will deter me from continuing to the end in my task of preserving at all cost our civil liberty. Nothing will prevent me from continuing my efforts to preserve that state of society conquered by our fathers at the price of so many years and so much blood. It may be that the result of my efforts will be the Tarpeian Rock, but if that be the case, I will fall without murmur or recrimination or complaint, certain that from my tomb will rise the immortal idea for which I have always fought. . . .

It is to you, my young friends, that I particularly address myself. You are at the outset of your career. Let me give you a word of good counsel. During your career you will have to suffer many things which will appear to you as supreme injustice. Let me say to you that you should never allow your religious convictions to be affected by the acts of men. Your convictions are immortal. Their foundation is eternal. Let your convictions be always calm, serene and superior to the inevitable trials of life. Show to the world that Catholicism is compatible with the exercise of liberty in its highest acceptation; show that the Catholics of the country will render to God what is God's, to Cæsar what is Cæsar's.

While defending himself resolutely from attack, Laurier was strongly opposed to any counter campaign. He wanted no anti-clerical movement of the European model. With some difficulty he restrained the ardour of Mr. Beaugrand and his fellow-stalwarts, some of whom were in close touch with affairs on the Continent and were quite ready to follow Continental Liberalism in its attitude to the Church. In 1897, as in 1877, Wilfrid Laurier interpreted Liberalism otherwise. In a letter to Mr. Beaugrand he refers to the difficulties he met in making his policy prevail:

Wilfrid Laurier to H. Beaugrand.—(Translation)

Ottawa, February 8, [1897](#).

MY DEAR BEAUGRAND:

. . . Let me say how much I thank you for all you say in your letter. I cannot adequately express to you how deeply I was touched by the interview I had with you. Between such friends as we are, there cannot be a break, though there may be differences. I am a Liberal, like yourself, but we do not belong to the same school. I am a disciple of Lacordaire. I regret that on one or two occasions I expressed my disagreement with you in terms much too strong. Now that we have frankly threshed the matter out, our old friendship will only be the better for it.

I am pleased to see that the sale of "La Patrie" has gone off well,^[4] and that, now that you are freed of the press of business you are going to be able to give your health all the attention that it requires. . . .

But it was not enough to take this stand before his countrymen. It had become essential to take it in Rome as well. It was necessary to appeal from those who spoke in the name of Rome to Rome itself, to ask the head of their church whether Catholicism involved a loss of political independence, to avert by timely information action from Rome supporting the aggressive bishops in their stand. A steady stream of ecclesiastical visitors from Canada had presented at Rome their side of the case; the laity had not been heard. Immediately after the general elections, therefore, a group of Quebec Liberals determined to state their case. Abbé Proulx of St. Lin des Laurentides, who had supported the Liberals on the school issue, and Chevalier Drolet, who had been a member of the crusader band of Zouaves who had rallied to the defence of the papacy nearly thirty years before, were despatched to Rome. A semi-private letter from Mr. Laurier to M. L'Abbé Proulx provided his credentials:

(Translation)

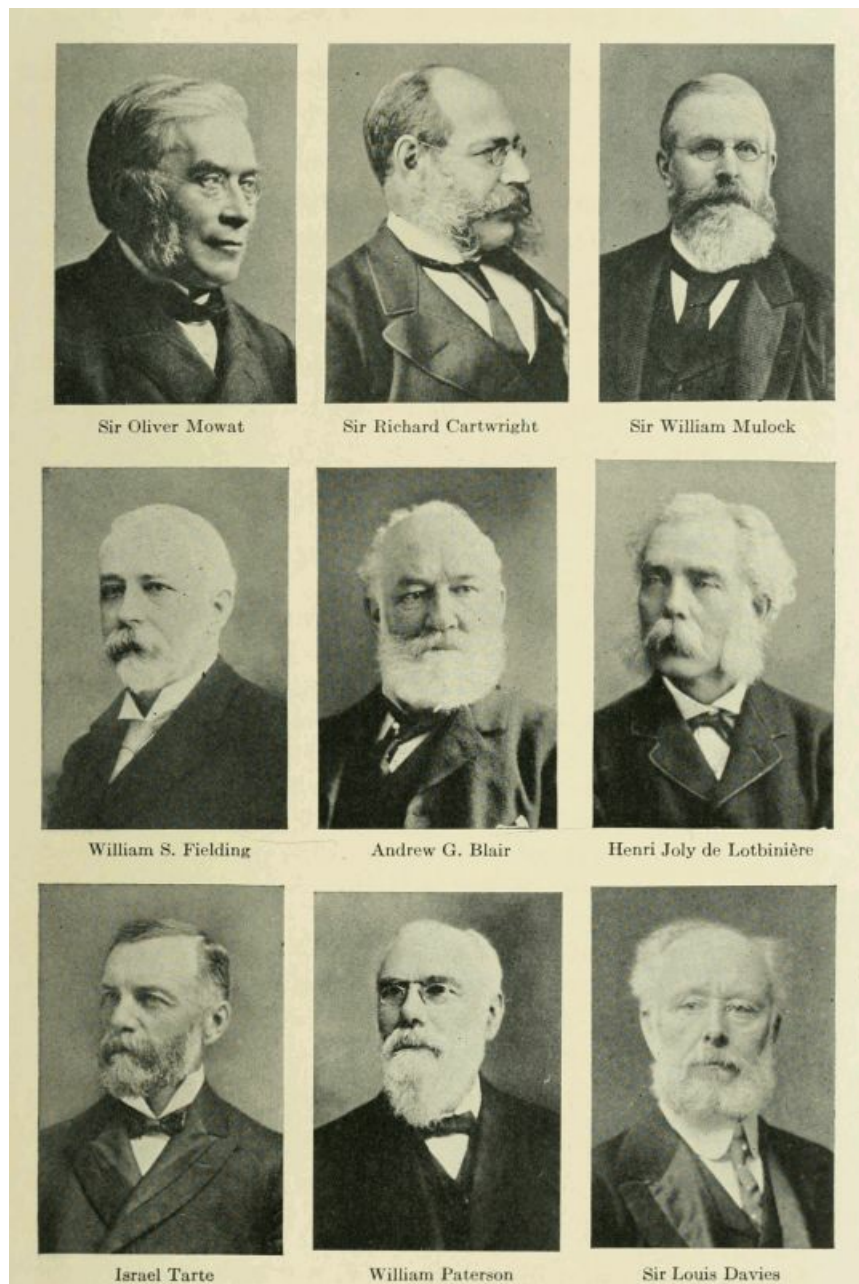
Ottawa, [9 September, 1896](#).

MY DEAR M. PROULX: The attitude taken during the recent elections by Mgr. Laflèche and some other members of the episcopate, was, in my opinion, a great mistake. It seems to me certain that this violent intervention of the ecclesiastical authorities in the electoral arena cannot but have harmful consequences for the position that Catholics hold in the Confederation, and that it is equally likely to trouble the consciences of the faithful.

It may seem unseemly on my part to speak thus. I persist, however, in believing that the attitude which my political friends and I have taken in the question which was then submitted to the electors was much more in conformity with the ideas frequently expressed by his Holiness Leo XIII than the attitude of Mgr. Laflèche and of those who acted with him.

It is not, I think, presumptuous to believe that if the question is submitted to the pontifical authorities at Rome, we may expect a statement of doctrine which would have the effect of bringing regrettable abuses to an end, maintaining peace and harmony in our country and reassuring the consciences of Catholics.

As you are about to sail for Rome, you will render a great service to the Catholics of this country who unfortunately have incurred the disfavour of certain members of the episcopate, because of their political opinions and for no other reason, if you would state their case and represent to the pontifical authorities that all they seek in this country is to exercise their duties as citizens in accord with the recognized principles of the British Constitution, principles recognized equally by his Holiness Leo XIII.



GROUP OF MINISTERS

In a more personal letter of the same date Mr. Laurier gave further suggestions for guidance:

(Translation)

I am sending you herewith a private letter not intended for publicity, but which may however be shown as a credential. Mr. Drolet will leave shortly for Rome. My colleagues in the House of Commons are sending him as their advocate and interpreter to state their case officially before the pontifical authorities. I would like you to keep in touch with him, in order to inform him as to all useful steps that should be taken to attain the end in view.

In a short time I shall send you a memorandum relative to the settlement of the school question, but the first thing to do is to make the pontifical authorities understand that we are Catholics and that we wish to remain Catholics but that in a constitutional country such as ours the attitude taken by Mgr. Lafleche and certain other members of the episcopate, if approved at Rome, would place us in a position of inferiority such that a Catholic could never become prime minister nor even form part of a government like the Canadian, in which Protestants are necessarily in a majority, since the Protestants are in a majority in the country.

I must repeat to you also what I have said already, that while disapproving the conduct of members of the episcopacy, to which I have just referred, it is not the intention of any of us to expose them to the slightest humiliation. If you consider it advisable that a delegate should be appointed for Canada, you will please inform me. I need not say to you that the selection of such a delegate would be of very great importance.

The two envoys made their way to Rome, finding "half ecclesiastical Canada there before us or on the way." In Rome, progress was slow. The affairs of all the ends of the earth met there; rules of etiquette and audience were stiff; there were so many personages to see. "The impossibility of making rapid progress," writes Mr. Drolet, "often the necessity of making no progress at all, with the Congregations, with this Black monde, jealous, oh so jealous, meddling, old, old above all." In moments of despair he was prepared to believe Zola's "Rome" not wholly false. It was not easy to convince Rome that Bishops were in error and laymen right. The bishops had long had the ear of Cardinal and Congregation. Had not the Queen in Council commanded that separate schools be restored? Had not Protestant Tupper tried to restore them and had not Catholic Laurier resisted? Was not this Laurier a bad Catholic, a Free Mason?[5] And perhaps the good Mr. Drolet was not the most tactful of envoys, unduly suspicious and belligerent, laying emphasis on his long dossier containing two hundred charges of intimidation against this bishop and that curé, rather than on the danger of the recoil to the Church itself. "The old gentleman is rather a light weight," wrote a critic, "a kind of Monsieur Tartaran, who got on the wrong track from the first and among the wrong set."

He fared somewhat better when he turned from Cardinal Ledochowski, head of the Propaganda, and thus the champion of the bishops under his charge, to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla.

Whatever the reason, progress was slow. It became necessary to take more direct and more effective steps. It was decided to make a formal and collective statement of the case, to send other representatives to Rome, and to press for the appointment of an apostolic delegate. These conclusions were not reached without debate. Tarte opposed Laurier's suggestion of a joint petition to his Holiness, as likely to be twisted or misconstrued by Protestants, but when Laurier made it clear that it was not the political question, not the settlement of the school issue, but the conflict within the Catholic Church in Canada that the Pope was to be asked to consider, he became an ardent supporter of the plan. Forty-five members of the Commons and the Senate, Wilfrid Laurier's name leading, signed a petition and protest.[6] There was also some question as to the coming of a papal legate. True, the visit of Cardinal Satolli to the United States in 1892, and the visit of Mgr. Conroy to Canada in 1876 had brought peace and liberty, but much depended on the man. An Ontario bishop foresaw Protestant denunciations of Papal interference, and feared "that a delegate sent from Rome or France who, being prepossessed, as all Continental ecclesiastics are, with the idea that Liberalism in politics is synonymous with infidelity, could not grasp the idea that Liberalism here bore no relation to what is known by that name on the Continent." Yet the risk seemed worth running. The new envoys were Charles Fitzpatrick and Charles Russell, son of Lord Russell of Killowen, whose family spent the winters in Rome. Fortified by a strong statement from Edward Blake, counsel for the minority, that the Judicial Committee could not, and did not, command the restoration of the schools as they were before 1890, and that the terms of the Laurier-Greenway settlement were more advantageous to the Catholic minority than any remedial bill which it was in the power of the parliament of Canada to force on the province of Manitoba, and with letters from Cardinal Vaughan and the Duke of Norfolk, the envoys went to Rome. At once progress was rapid. Mr. Russell's wit and knowledge of Anglo-Roman politics opened many doors. Mr. Fitzpatrick's piety was "the wonder and the awe of Rome." With the Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla, with all the other cardinals who were likely to be consulted, Cardinals Vannutelli, Vicenti, Jacobini, Ferratta, Ledochowski, Gotti, and Mazella,—of whom only Mgr. Ledochowski refused a fair hearing, all the others impressing the visitors as "men of strong intelligence and judgment who were anxious to learn the truth,"—with Mgr. Merry del Val, the Pope's companion and attendant, and finally in an audience with His Holiness himself, the case was urged. It was necessary to make it clear not merely that the judgment of the Privy Council had no mandatory effect, but that Canada was not, as seemed to be assumed in Rome, a predominantly Catholic country, and that not all the bishops, but only six out of twenty-nine had committed themselves to the war against the Liberal party. The promise to make full inquiry through a special commission of cardinals was readily given. The appointment of an apostolic delegate, Mgr. Merry del Val, followed a few weeks later.

Mgr. Raphael Merry del Val was then only thirty-two, but he had already made his mark in Europe. In the household of his father, a Spanish nobleman of Irish descent who was ambassador in turn to London, to Brussels and to Rome; in schools in England and in Brussels; in the Papal Court, where he soon became confidential chamberlain, Mgr. Merry del Val proved his ability and his judgment. His striking presence,—"the most truly prince-like man, I ever met," Mr. Laurier afterward termed him, his searching but kindly eye, his polished but somewhat reserved address, his mastery of European tongues, his shrewdness, thoroughness, and, above all, the complete confidence he inspired, made him a diplomat predestined to success. He arrived in Canada late in March; in the next few months he met the bishops and many of the clergy of Quebec and Ontario, and leading Catholic and Protestant laymen. It did not take long for him to realize how dangerous a policy Mgr. Laflèche and his friends had been pursuing. Archbishop Walsh and the majority of

the Ontario bishops strongly confirmed his reading of the situation. Not least, the instant friendship and confidence which developed between Mgr. Merry del Val and Mr. Laurier contributed to a firm understanding. He issued no mandement, made no public rebuke, but gradually agitation ceased, and Mgr. Merry del Val returned to Rome.

After hearing the apostolic delegate's report, and after consulting further with members of the Canadian episcopacy, including the new Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr. Paul Bruchesi, the Pope issued an encyclical, given at Rome on December 8, [1897](#), and read in Canadian pulpits a month later. The encyclical noted with regret the obstacles which had been placed in the way of the Church's efforts in a country which owed to it the first glimpse of Christianity and civilization, and emphasized the importance of morals in education, and the necessity of grounding morals in religion. The bishops had therefore been right in protesting against the Manitoba law, which struck a blow at Catholic education; the laity should have sunk differences of party and stood united for justice. True, something had recently been done to alleviate the grievances; no doubt these efforts had been inspired by laudable intentions and a love of equity, but the fact remained that "the law which has been enacted for the purpose of reparation is defective, imperfect, insufficient." The concessions stopped far short of justice; they might not be carried out effectively, when local circumstances changed. Complete justice must be sought. However, there was room for difference of opinion as to the best tactics to follow; "let no one therefore lose sight of the rules of moderation, of meekness and of brotherly charity." Meanwhile, "until it shall be granted them to obtain the full triumph of all their claims, let them not refuse partial satisfaction. Wherever the law or the situation or the friendly disposition of individuals offer them some means of lessening the evil, and of better averting its dangers, it is altogether becoming and useful that they make use of these means and draw from them the utmost possible advantage." The greatest care should be taken to improve the quality of teachers and the scope of the work of the schools; the Catholic schools should rival the most flourishing in methods and efficiency: "from the standpoint of intellectual culture and the progress of civilization there is nothing but what is great and noble in the plan conceived by the Canadian provinces of developing public instruction, of raising its standards constantly, and making it something higher and ever more perfect; there is no kind of study, no advance in human knowledge, which cannot be made to harmonize with Catholic doctrine."

In this moderate and enlightened utterance, both sections of opinion within the Church in Canada found ground for satisfaction, but the general effect was distinctly in support of the moderates' position. The Laurier-Greenway settlement had been pronounced imperfect and inadequate as a final settlement, but its acceptance as an instalment of justice had been commended, moderation and a recognition of the good-will of its framers enjoined, and emphasis laid on the quality of instruction to be given in the schools. Nothing further could have been expected in a public statement, and Mr. Laurier and his Quebec friends had not desired more. The school question was by no means yet ended, but the ecclesiastical war was halted, and the political tension eased. Once again, as a score of years before, the firmness and moderation of Wilfrid Laurier and the Catholic Liberals of Quebec, and the sagacity and fairness of the highest authorities in the Church, had averted a struggle which would have involved both Church and country in difficulty and disaster.

The failure of the crusade was made evident when in the spring of 1897, the time came for the provincial elections in Quebec. The Conservative government of Hon. E. J. Flynn, who had become premier when Mr. Taillon had entered the Tupper administration, absolutely declined to make the school question an issue in the local contest. The prestige of Laurier's name and the rout of the Conservatives in the federal contest gave an overwhelming victory to the Liberal leader, Felix Gabriel Marchand, a man lacking the oratorical gifts and the personal magnetism of many of his predecessors but shrewd and solid, trusted of all men, and firmly progressive in his policies. When, however, Mr. Marchand endeavoured to put educational reform in the forefront of his legislative programme, and to reverse the policy adopted twenty years before, which had taken control of the schools from a government department and entrusted it wholly to denominational committees, Catholic and Protestant, he found himself blocked. The truce was held to bind both parties. The Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr. Paul Bruchesi, who kept in close touch with Wilfrid Laurier, soon proved that sunny ways and personal pressure would go further than the storms and the thunderbolts of the doughty old warrior of Three Rivers.

The settlement of the Manitoba school controversy made it possible to concentrate attention upon policies of economic development. For years the country had marked time. The depression which had set in with the "nineties" had not yet

passed. The prices of farm products were low, farms hard to sell and burdened with mortgages. Railways, banks, wholesale houses, retailers had to scratch hard for custom. Factories stimulated by the N. P. found the home market too small and sought remedy in combines and selling agreements. Foreign trade advanced slowly and uncertainly. Few immigrants came and fewer remained; the exodus of the native-born to the United States bled the country white. Homestead entries in the West had fallen to four thousand a year in the early "nineties," and to eighteen hundred in 1896; in that year only five hundred and seventy Canadians had sufficient faith in their own country to seek a Western homestead. West of Lake Superior there were only some three hundred thousand people, one-third of them Indians. "The trails from Manitoba to the States," declared a Western Conservative newspaper, "were worn bare and brown by the wagon wheels of departing settlers."

The causes of this economic stagnation were not wholly Canadian. World-wide factors had played a part. World peace and rapid railway-building had opened vast areas of new lands to settlement,—the western United States, Argentina, Australia, Russia,—and had flung their products on a falling market. Canada's severe and testing climate, exaggerated in foreign repute, and perhaps her subordinate colonial status, had played a part in deterring settlers. But there were other causes more readily removed: a protective tariff which sought to isolate and make self-sufficient a population too sparse and scattered for the experiment; racial and religious bickerings (for which both parties had a share of responsibility) draining and distracting energy; and a government weak and divided in cabinet council and permeated with dry-rot in the general administration.

The turn of the tide after 1896 was of course not due solely to the change of government. World-wide forces played a part in revival as in depression. The filling up of other new lands, the growth of urban as against rural population, the rapid increase in the world's gold supply, raised prices of all goods and particularly of farm products. Within Canada, again, forces beyond the government's control made for betterment. Most notable were the development of the gold-copper and silver-lead ores of Southern British Columbia (the prospector, it is true, being helped by the building of the Canadian Pacific), and particularly the discovery of fabulously rich placer-mines in the Klondike in 1896 and the stampede from all corners of the world which followed in 1897 and 1898. Perhaps less wealth was taken out of the ground than was put in, but these discoveries at least primed the pump of prosperity, and arrested the world's attention long enough to make evident the more enduring wealth that lay beyond.

Yet the new government were not merely "flies on the wheel," as Sir Richard Cartwright had once rashly rated the Mackenzie cabinet during the depression of the seventies. They had confidence in Canada and in themselves, energy, constructive vision. The policies they developed in the next few years were real and indispensable factors in the new prosperity. They did not create the opportunity; they did seize it when it offered. The immigration policy, the land policy, the railway policy, the tariff and fiscal policy of the Laurier administration were essential elements in making Canada what Mr. Laurier was soon to term it, in a quotation now as hackneyed as "Hamlet,"—"the country of the twentieth century."

The land and immigration policy of the administration was developed by its youngest and sole Western member, Clifford Sifton. He had entered the government as Minister of the Interior, in November, [1896](#), as soon as agreement had been reached between Ottawa and Winnipeg on the school question, securing election for Brandon by acclamation. He knew the West; he was ambitious for himself and for his country; his shrewd insight, his administrative capacity, his power of quick decision, were qualities rare at Ottawa. In dealing with the public lands of the prairie provinces, the chief action taken was to end at once, as Liberal policy had long demanded, the lavish grants of land to railways. Before 1896 some fifty-six million acres had been voted and some thirty-two million acres earned as railway subsidy; after 1896, not an acre was voted. Homestead regulations were eased and simplified. Then a campaign for settlers began, unparalleled in Canada or elsewhere. From Continental Europe the Doukhobor and the Ruthenian were brought or welcomed, filling Western wastes but creating difficult problems of social or national harmony. From the United States came the immigrants most immediately helpful in themselves, farmers as most were, with no little capital, skilled in the ways of Western land, and most effective in advertising to the rest of the world the fact that Canada had now more to offer the settler than any other country. Advertisements in six thousand weekly newspapers in the United States, agents and sub-agents stationed in every likely centre, exhibits at autumn fairs and free excursions for pressmen and farmer delegates, ready aid in land-seeking and home-shifting, soon set going a migration that rejoiced Canada, puzzled the States and aroused Europe. From seven hundred in 1897 the settlers from the South rose to fifteen thousand in 1900,—and one hundred thousand in 1911. Then Mr. Sifton turned to the United Kingdom, the schools, the press, the patriots who wanted Britons kept within the Empire; the British tide mounted more slowly, but soon surpassed the Continental and American

movements,—thirty thousand in 1904, a hundred and twenty thousand in 1911. The exodus to the more dazzling city opportunities of the United States, the return to Europe of the men who had not found gold lying in the streets of their New Jerusalem, continued, but were far outbalanced by the incoming tide. Homestead entries leaped to seven thousand eight hundred by 1900, twenty-two thousand by 1902, and forty-one thousand by 1906.

In Canada, it had become accepted doctrine that the State should not merely aid settlement, but should aid in developing the means of communication. No great new railway was built in these early years; the country was still growing up to the Canadian Pacific. Three minor and supplementary projects were given aid. In the East the government, in 1897, sought to extend the Intercolonial, by lease and purchase, from the wayside village of Pointe Levi to the natural terminus at Montreal; the details of Mr. Blair's plan were open to criticism, but some such policy was an obvious business necessity. In the West, the discovery of coal, copper, gold, silver, and lead in southern British Columbia and Alberta, called for railway service, and none the less so when "Jim" Hill thrust a spur of the Great Northern up into the boundary country. General opinion favoured an independent road, but in 1897 the government concluded the most feasible policy was to seek an extension of the Canadian Pacific. A subsidy of eleven thousand dollars a mile was voted to its Crow's Nest Pass branch, from Lethbridge to Nelson; in return, freight rates on the main line were cut substantially, and one-fifth of the coal lands granted improvidently by the British Columbia government were transferred to the Dominion. Western hostility to the Canadian Pacific, Eastern suspicion of Toronto capitalists interested alike in Crow's Nest coal and in the Toronto "Globe," the foremost advocate of extension, led to wide criticism, but the bargain was carried through. A third project, brought forward in 1898 for the building of a railway from the Stikine River to Teslin Lake, and thus giving access to the Klondike through Canadian territory instead of through the Alaskan panhandle, involved a grant of twenty-five thousand acres of Yukon lands per mile to the enterprising contracting firm of Mackenzie and Mann, now first coming into public fame. In the light of Eldorado visions, the land grant seemed extravagant, and the Senate felt sufficient public backing to throw out the government's measure. The completion of the St. Lawrence canal system to a fourteen-foot level was less controversial, and the abolition of all canal tolls was welcomed on all sides, not least in the Maritime provinces where it furnished a precedent for demands for low rates on government railways. The Post-Office Department, hitherto inefficient and a source of large deficits, was transformed under the management of William Mulock, one of the strongest administrators in the cabinet; a great improvement in service and a reduction of postal rates by one-third were justified by increased business and steadily rising surpluses.

As regards state aid to production, little had been done directly for the fisherman, the lumberman or the miner. Fishing-grounds had been conserved by close seasons, restocking, protection against outside poachers; now, instruction in curing and packing, and later cold-storage and fast-shipping facilities were added. The lumberman and the miner had shared the benefits of railway facilities and the two-edged gift of tariff protection; now fresh efforts were made to open foreign markets and to lessen tariff burdens on mine and mill machinery. The farmer had been aided by experimental farms; now, under Sydney Fisher's direction, the work of experiment and instruction was greatly widened, and, with the co-operation of the Saunders, James Robertson and J. A. Ruddick, the Eastern farmer was aided in that shift from wheat and barley to cheese and bacon which has transformed Canadian agriculture.

One great field of state aid to production remained, and that the most controversial. The use of the tariff to stimulate and protect industry, particularly manufacturing, had been the most distinctive of Conservative policies for nearly twenty years. What was the Liberal policy to be? In the Ottawa convention in 1893, in repeated speeches, notably during Mr. Laurier's Western tour in 1894, and in open letters exchanged on the eve of the general election between Mr. Laurier and a Toronto manufacturer, George H. Bertram,—a grandson of his old friend of New Glasgow days, John Murray,—the policy of the Liberals had been declared. They denounced protection, urged the reduction of the tariff to bear lightly on the necessaries of life and "to promote freer trade with the whole world, particularly with Great Britain and the United States," reiterated the demand for "a fair and liberal reciprocity treaty with the United States," and set as their goal "a tariff for revenue only." There was a distinct revival of low-tariff sentiment in the "nineties," following the failure of protection to protect, and on this current even an "incidental protectionist" like Mr. Laurier was once swept on to prophesy that "free trade as they have it in England" would be Canada's ultimate goal, while Mr. Davies denounced protection as bondage, robbery, a system accursed of God and man. Yet Mr. Laurier made it plain, particularly in the Bertram correspondence, that change must be gradual; there would be no tariff revolution; one advantage of a tariff primarily for revenue, would be its stability.

The first step of the new administration created confidence. Instead of meeting protected manufacturers secretly in "Red Parlours," the government appointed a committee—Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Fielding, and Mr. Paterson—to hear in

public all who had views to present. Sittings were held in the leading centres; not many others but manufacturers gave evidence, but their demands were made in the open.

Mr. Fielding brought down his first budget in April, 1897, in a speech which revealed his power of lucid statement and readiness in debate. It was a modest budget, as budgets go nowadays. In the first twenty years of Confederation, the ordinary expenditure had grown threefold, from the original thirteen millions, and then for ten years had stood stationary. Mr. Fielding forecast for 1897-98 an ordinary expenditure of \$39,000,000, and a total outlay of \$45,000,000.^[7] To raise this amount, it was still customary to rely almost wholly on tariff and excise duties. Mr. Fielding stiffened the excise duties on spirits and tobacco, but the main interest lay in the customs changes. The tariff revision was substantial and comprehensive. Important additions were made to the free list, notably corn, fence wire, binder twine, cream separators, mining machinery; reductions were made in sugar, flour, farm implements, and coal-oil. The schedules were simplified and specific duties largely changed to ad valorem. Power was taken to abolish duties on goods produced by trusts or combines. The duties on iron and steel were lowered, but in compensation the bounties on pig-iron, puddled iron bars and steel billets were increased, and made to apply to iron manufactured in Canada from foreign ore. Most important, the principle of a maximum and minimum tariff, with special reference to Great Britain, was introduced.

The first Fielding budget was a masterly achievement. It was a careful and informed endeavour to harmonize and reduce the tariff. It was not wholly consistent: the increase of the iron and steel bounties and the retention of the duty on coal, in face of Mr. Laurier's declaration after the election that raw materials such as coal and iron would be free, revealed the pressure of Nova Scotia interests. It left the tariff still protectionist; and while Sir Charles Tupper declared that the tariff would ruin and paralyze the industries of the country, and the columns of the Montreal "Gazette" were filled with announcements from manufacturers that their mills would be forced to close, Mr. Foster insisted that "the Liberal party has embalmed the principle of protection in the tariff" and that "there is to-day, in this parliament, as between the two sides, practically no difference upon the expediency of the principle of protection as the guiding principle of our fiscal system." John Ross Robertson, a sturdy independent Conservative who had broken from his party on the school question, but was a confirmed protectionist, gave a middle view when he declared that while the Liberals might be considered half-seas-over on the way to protection, he feared their gradual attack as the most dangerous strategy and could not fully trust them even if they did steal the Opposition's clothes: "the Opposition is the mother of protection and loves the policy for its own sake; the government is a sort of nurse that takes protection and suckles it in order to earn a living for its party." Yet the weight of contemporary opinion and later experience have stamped the Fielding tariff as a sound and moderate revision.

As a first practical step toward freer trade it could not well have been bettered. Unfortunately, it was also, save for extensions of the British preference, and the attempt in 1911 to secure reciprocity with the United States, to be a last step.

The feature of the new budget which had most political importance and popular appeal was the adoption of a minimum and maximum tariff, with the purpose of restricting the minimum tariff mainly to British wares. Imperialists seeking a counter-cry to unrestricted reciprocity, Conservatives trying to reconcile protection with imperialism, had urged reciprocal tariff preference between Great Britain and the colonies, but so long as Britain cleaved to free trade, any such proposals were an idle dream. In 1892, the Liberal party had unanimously voted for a resolution moved by Louis Davies, demanding that as Britain already admitted Canadian products duty-free, Canada should reduce her duties on goods mainly imported from Britain. D'Alton McCarthy and his Equal Rights League had urged a minimum and maximum tariff, the minimum rates for Britain, the British colonies and other countries prepared to give fair terms. But any policy of tariff discrimination was barred by the existence of British treaties binding on Canada and conferring on foreign countries Rights to equal treatment. These treaties were survivals from colonialism. In early days Britain had made colonial tariffs and bound the colonies by her treaties. Slowly the larger colonies, with Canada leading, had been emerging from this subordinate status. Galt and Macdonald had made it clear that Canada could and would make her own tariffs. In treaty-making, negative freedom for the future had been attained in 1878 when the Colonial Office had agreed to make colonial adherence to British commercial treaties optional; a beginning in positive freedom had come with the inclusion of Canadian with British plenipotentiaries in drafting trade treaties affecting Canada. But the old treaties survived. Some, as with France or Argentina, entitled these powers to any tariff privilege accorded any other foreign power. The treaties concluded with Belgium in 1862 and the German *Zollverein* in 1865 were still more burdensome, as they called for the granting of any tariff privilege accorded even to British goods. Repeated requests from Canada, in 1881, [1890](#), 1891, had failed to induce the British government, which admitted the impolicy of the latter

treaties, to denounce them and so face the prospect of a tariff war for no certain return.

The new government determined to satisfy imperial sentiment and keep its lower tariff pledges by granting a tariff reduction on the exports of Britain and other low-tariff countries. If the treaties stood in the way, they would first try to get round them, and if that failed, to break them down. The Fielding tariff provided that a reduction of one-eighth, to be increased a year later to one-fourth, should be granted on imports from "any country" which admitted the products of Canada on terms equally favourable. It was expected that as a matter of fact Great Britain and New South Wales would be the only countries which could so qualify. Sir Charles Tupper at once denounced the proposal as futile, the device of blundering amateurs: the act would be disallowed in Britain; Germany would demand its rights; the government could not play fast and loose with solemn imperial obligations. That the position taken by the government was legally precarious was obvious, but, as Sir Richard Cartwright declared in answer, "we were not born yesterday."

The position taken by the Laurier government is best summarized in a memorandum of council in May, sent in response to a request from the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. It was contended that the Belgian and German treaties did not apply to Canada, since by 1859 the old province of Canada had been taken out of the category of the colonies referred to in those treaties by A. T. Galt's declaration of tariff independence; that in any case, while "Canada had undoubtedly been actuated by the fact that the mother country was the only nation in a position to enjoy the advantages to be reaped from the minimum tariff,"^[8] yet it was also true that the offer was made to the whole world, no favour was extended to any special country, and if Belgium or Germany could not share, the fault lay with them, since at any moment they could qualify simply by complying with the conditions; if, however, a different view of the effect of the treaty bonds was taken by the British authorities, it would be necessary to ask that "the treaties be denounced in so far as Canada is concerned."

Whatever doubts there might be as to the legal soundness of the government's arguments, there were none as to the popularity of its policy alike in Canada and in Great Britain. In Canada, it was welcomed by free or freer traders as a first step toward Britain's policy, and by imperialists as a return for British protection and a pledge of closer unity. In the mother country, Lord Farrer and the Cobden Club hailed it as an advance on Canada's part toward free trade while Sir Howard Vincent, the veteran Fair Trader, hoped it marked the beginning of inter-imperial preferences and the commercial federation of the Empire. The London correspondent of the "New York Times" fairly summarized British opinion when he declared:

For the first time in my experience, England and the English are regarding Canadians and the Dominion with affectionate enthusiasm. . . . The spirit of preference for the Mother Country appeals to the imagination here. This change will make Mr. Laurier, when he comes here in June, far and away the most conspicuous and popular of all the visiting premiers of the Empire.

The government had done all that could be done in Canada. The next step must be taken in London. When in June, [1897](#), Mr. Laurier sailed for England to take part in the Jubilee demonstrations, his first task was to ensure that in one way or another the preference should stand, and that the "rash and amateur" policy of the government in acting first and consulting later should be justified.

CHAPTER XI

THE FLOOD TIDE OF IMPERIALISM

The New Imperialism—From Disraeli to Chamberlain—Imperial Sentiment in Canada—Laurier's Imperialist Trend—The Jubilee Pageants—An Unwelcome Title—Laurier and the British Public—The Colonial Conference—The Denunciation of the Treaties—A Pilgrimage to Hawarden—Canada and France—Imperial Military Organization—Boer and Briton—Agitation in Canada—Canadian Contingent—Laurier and Tupper—Laurier and Bourassa—The Elections of 1900.

When Wilfrid Laurier sailed for England on June 5, 1897, a new stage in Canada's development had begun. For thirty years Canada had been preoccupied with her internal tasks of railway-building and settler-planting, and except for line-fence disputes with her great neighbour, had taken little part in world affairs. Now, with a fair measure of unity and consolidation attained at home, and with prosperity giving new confidence to her own people and new importance in the eyes of the outer world, the Dominion entered upon that unknown way which was to bring her sons in the next twenty years to the battle-fields of Flanders and the council chambers of Geneva. For the first part of this way, Canada was to follow closely in the wake of Britain, under the flag of imperialism. The next three years were to witness the flood-tide of imperial sentiment. In the gorgeous pageants of the Jubilee year, in the business discussions of the Colonial Conference, and in their sequel in participation in the Boer War, Canada seemed to the world to have committed herself indefinitely to the laudation and support of the new imperialism which was dominating the policy of Britain.

The new imperialist movement was not peculiar to Britain or to Canada. The whole white world was well in the grip of a passion for expansion, an absorption in *welt-politik*, a scramble for prestige and profit, which was to sweep it on to bankruptcy and chaos. The hopes of world peace and economic harmony men had entertained in the brief interlude of sanity in the sixties, had been shattered and laughed to scorn. National rivalry was yearly growing more intense. The spirit of nationalism drove subject peoples to seek freedom, defeated states to regain their lost provinces, and free and successful nations to find fresh fields for the pride and energy developed in their struggle. Nationalism went to seed in imperialism. It offered a sanction for protectionism at home and economic exploitation abroad. It provided a stimulus to the growth of armaments, needed to protect each state from its neighbours, and confirming in their growth military castes and armament cliques; the dominance Germany enjoyed in Europe after the victory of its efficient military machine over Austria and France, the weight which her invincible navy gave Britain in the councils of the world, stirred emulation. The consolidation of the great states of Europe, attained after centuries of struggle, set them free to join in the scramble for overseas possessions in which for a century Britain had had no competitor. In Africa and Asia and the isles of the sea—with America barred by the Monroe Doctrine—great states and some of the small made haste to stake out fields for exploitation. In the crowded years since 1880 Germany had appropriated a million miles, Portugal and Belgium, or her monarch, each nearly as much, and France more than all three, while Russia rolled remorselessly across Asiatic plains, and even the United States was soon to enter on its career of Philippine expansion and Caribbean imperialism.

It is not surprising that Britain shared in this movement. She entered it more slowly; satiated with world-wide possessions, experienced in the drawbacks and delusions of empire, checked by vigorous and independent criticism at home, her statesmen never annexed more than their next neighbour's lands, a trifle, in these fifteen years, of some two and a half million miles, ranging from Nigeria to New Guinea. But steadily, as African hinterlands overlapped and states crowded together, as competition in the world's markets grew keener and British trade failed to advance, as the jostling of newer rivals, the preaching of professor and poet dervishes of Anglo-Saxondom, the Seeleys and the Kiplings, left their mark, the British people were stirred to a more aggressive and more conscious share in the race. The decline and defeat of the Liberal party and Liberal opinions was one manifestation of the new tendency; it had been the Liberal policy of granting self-government which had held the white empire together, but Liberalism had little in common with this new expansion in tropical lands and among subject peoples. Still more significant was the decision of Joseph Chamberlain, the most forceful character in British politics, on the formation of the new Unionist government of Lord Salisbury in 1895, to choose the hitherto secondary and routine post of Secretary of the Colonies.

As Disraeli had typified the imperialism against which Gladstone had fought, the imperialism which strutted in European council chambers and Indian pageants and cared little for kinsmen overseas or markets for surplus goods, so Chamberlain personified the newer imperialism, with its emphasis on the sublime virtues of the Anglo-Saxon, its reviving interest in the Englishman overseas, its assumption of a mission toward the darker races, and its keenness for new markets. Mr. Chamberlain's imperialism was narrowly racial; there was no room in his empire for Frenchmen or

Dutchmen save as they were transformed into Englishmen, while the lesser breeds of Africa and Asia must accept the rule of their trustees for all time: he glorified the Anglo-Saxon race,—"that proud, persistent, self-asserting and resolute stock," he declared in Toronto in 1887 on his way to the fisheries arbitration at Washington, "that no change of climate or condition can alter, and which is infallibly destined to be the predominating force in the future history and civilization of the world. . . . I am an Englishman. I refuse to make any distinction between the interests of Englishmen in England, in Canada, and in the United States." His other dominating conviction was the need of securing markets overseas if England was to hold her place and her prosperity. In Birmingham in 1894 he insisted,

For these reasons, I would never lose the hold which we now have over our great Indian dependency, by far the greatest and most valuable of all the customers we have or ever shall have in this country. For the same reasons I approve of the continued occupation of Egypt; and for the same reasons I have urged upon the government and upon previous governments the necessity for using every legitimate opportunity to extend our influence and control in that great African continent which is now being opened up to civilization and to commerce; and lastly, it is for the same reasons that I hold that our navy should be strengthened until its supremacy is so assured that we cannot be shaken in any of the possessions which we hold or may hold hereafter.

Such was the frank and arrogant gospel which was now to be pushed with all the vigour of the successful Birmingham merchant and all the adroitness of the most skilful politician in Britain.

In Canada it seemed that the new imperialism was to find full acceptance and justification. The desire for closer imperial unity had greatly strengthened during the nineties. Among English-speaking Canadians pride of race was strong, pride in the unchallenged might of England's navy, pride in the valour and efficiency of her army, pride in the justice and firmness which had marked her foreign policy, pride in the honour and capacity of her Gladstones and Salisburys. The long reign of Queen Victoria had furnished imperial sentiment a rallying-point; her domestic virtues, her sorrows, her womanly sympathies, the reflected glories of the Victorian era, and, perhaps not least, the linking of her name with the happiest holiday of all the year, the climax day of springtime, had given her portrait the post of honour in hundreds of thousands of Canadian homes; distance, and the dazzling light that surrounds a throne, had concealed her weaknesses, her persistent and futile efforts to restore the personal control of the sovereign, her jingoism, her dynastic and pro-German view of European politics, and had left the legend of perfection unquestioned. A natural resentment against the aggressive and unneighbourly policy of the United States had strengthened imperial feeling; traditions of the sufferings and the heroism of the United Empire Loyalists were still fresh in many minds, there were still Canadians who were fighting the battles of 1812, and the Venezuela message of Secretary Olney and the prohibitive Dingley tariff played into their hands. Not least important, was the effect of reviving prosperity and confidence, in making Canadians feel they must take a more active and independent part in the world, and must cease to be a colony. It was really a spirit of nationalism that was stirring, but for a time it took the channel of imperialism. Imperial partnership might be a permanent ideal, or it might be only a step toward nationhood, but in any case it represented a distinct advance over colonialism.



MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN AND HIS COLONIAL PREMIERS

THE CHAMBERLAIN CONCEPTION OF EMPIRE
Colonial Office, June, [1897](#)

As the imperialism of these days was distinctly racial, it was not surprising that the French-Canadian population did not enter into it with enthusiasm. It has already been observed that the politicians foremost in advocacy of imperial federation were foremost also in the attempt to anglicize Canada, to narrow the use of the French tongue,—the McCarthys, the McNeills, the Tyrwhitts, the Wallaces.^[9] To expect active enthusiasm for an Anglo-Saxon empire was absurd. Here and there a French-Canadian public man, notably Israel Tarte, had joined the Imperial Federation League, but the great body stood aloof. With their own mother country, France, they had little contact; immigration had ceased two centuries before, the France of revolutions and anti-clericalism was not the France of old, and the Church had combined with the British government to cut off intercourse with this dangerous land. French-Canadians could not escape from passive colonialism by the road that was being taken by the English-speaking Canadians, and the way of nationalism was not yet open. These oldest sons of Canada could not become Anglo-Saxon, they did not want to become French, they were not encouraged to become Canadian, and so they remained for the present *Québécois* and *Canadiens*.

Mr. Laurier's attitude toward the issue showed a significant development in these years. His earlier ideal had been an independent Canada. That was "the polar star of our destiny." Nationhood followed on colonialism as manhood after childhood. Only in an independent Canada could the full equality of the two races be attained which was indispensable for lasting unity.

Now he displayed much more sympathy with the imperialist solution. He had the orator's susceptibility to the sentiment about him. The vision of a French-Canadian standing in the mother of parliaments at Westminster appealed to his imagination. He was deluged with advice from Ontario friends, editors, preachers, politicians, who felt strongly the inspiration or the expediency of imperial unity; Quebec was not vocal. He was deeply anxious to meet Ontario more than half-way, to understand and interpret its sentiments, to review and sacrifice any personal convictions which were not vital and which might stand in the way of harmony. He had a profound admiration for the standards of English public life

and for the principles of English liberalism. For the time it seemed to him, as to many other Canadians, that perhaps the share in world affairs which young Canada demanded, might sooner come through some form of limited imperial partnership than through a precarious and burdensome independence. For the present, then, to tack northeasterly rather than point for the polar star.

The Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne had been royally celebrated in 1887, but it had been distinctly an affair for the British Isles. In the new temper of the time it was natural that the Diamond Jubilee should be made an imperial festival, a stock-taking and display to the world of the Empire's resources. The premiers of all the colonies were invited to take part in the ceremonies and to discuss in conference with the Colonial Secretary problems of empire, defence and trade and organization. Contingents of soldiers from every colony and dependency were asked to share with British troops the honours of the Jubilee march. Every premier accepted and every colony enthusiastically sent forward its contingent.

Mr. Laurier, who was accompanied by Mme. Laurier, sailed for England on the fifth of June. He looked forward keenly to the experiences of the coming weeks. It was a curious fact that though now in his fifty-sixth year, and for twenty years in public life, he had never before crossed the ocean. The work of his profession, the demands of political campaigns, the attractions of a restful village home, a dislike for travelling, particularly on the ocean, had kept him from any first-hand knowledge of British or French men and affairs. Now that occasion demanded he purposed to probe the experience to the full.

The weeks in Britain were crowded and memorable. A lavish and kindly hospitality filled the visitor's days and nights. "I am not sure whether the British Empire needs a new constitution," Mr. Laurier wrote to a Canadian friend, "but I am certain that every Jubilee guest will need one." Dinners and luncheons, balls and receptions, Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, Cordwainers' and Fishmongers' banquets, Empire Trade League and National Liberal Club, Dublin and Derry, Edinburgh and Glasgow, the Mansion House and Lincoln's Inn, the gallery of the House of Commons and the naval review at Spithead, garden-parties and country-house week-ends, endless addresses to give and endless addresses to receive, D. C. L.'s from Oxford and LL. D.'s from Cambridge ("*Laurea donandus apollinari*" as Dr. Sandys, Public Orator, pardonably punned from his Horace), brought the guests into close if fleeting touch with English life, or at least the England of the governing classes; the other England shouted in the streets or sat down to the dinners which the Princess of Wales provided for "three hundred thousand of my poor."

The Jubilee pageant was a moving and memorable scene. The princes and potentates in scarlet and gold, the magnificent Life Guards and Her Majesty's Prussian Dragoons, the troops from every corner of the Empire,—Maori, Dyak, Haussa, and Sikh, following Canadian, Australian, and Afrikander,—the vast, good-humoured, cheering crowds in the streets, the genuine and warm-hearted enthusiasm that greeted the central figure, the Queen, whose message that morning had been marked with the simplicity of deep emotion,—"From my heart I thank my beloved people; may God bless them,"—all impressed the beholder with the might and vigour of England, the range and the unity of her empire, the greatness that had been and that yet would be. In the long procession the popular favour singled out Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Followed by the Canadian contingent, the troopers of the governor-general's Body Guards and the Royal North-West Mounted Police in their scarlet jackets, the Toronto Grenadiers with their long busbies and the Royal Canadian Highlanders in bearskins and kilts, Sir Wilfrid was recognized by the thronging crowds, and next to the Queen herself carried off the honours of the day.

"Sir Wilfrid Laurier": Mr. Laurier no more. On the day before the Jubilee pageant it had been officially announced that Her Majesty had been pleased to bestow the honour of Knight Grand Cross in the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George upon the Canadian premier as the representative figure among the colonial visitors. Two years earlier, when a heckler at a political speech in the town of Renfrew had inadvertently called him "Sir Wilfrid" he had checked him sharply: "Not Sir Wilfrid; plain Mr. Laurier; I am a democrat to the hilt." Now this democrat to the hilt rejoiced his Conservative critics and the whole tribe of those who take joy in human frailty and inconsistency by accepting knighthood. In some sorrowing Grit quarters in Canada it became necessary to explain that the chief had taken the honour only after earnest pressure from the Queen, and Tory caricaturists pictured Victoria on bended knee beseeching Wilfrid to accept. The truth was less picturesque but not widely different. The honour had come unsought and unwished. Wilfrid Laurier was frequently called an aristocrat by men who thought that democracy meant mediocrity and vulgarity. He was sufficiently an aristocrat to doubt whether a knighthood could add honour. Earlier in the year he had explicitly and emphatically declined an offer of knighthood, in spite of the urgings of Sir Oliver Mowat, who set greater store on such things. But now the offer came in embarrassing guise. It had been planned by Lord Aberdeen and Sir

Donald Smith, who was himself about to be induced to accept a peerage. Sir Donald informed Mr. Laurier of the proposal shortly after he reached England. Mr. Laurier strongly objected, insisted he must decline. Sir Donald, and later Mr. Chamberlain, declared that his refusal would disarrange the whole Jubilee-honours scheme, that no other premier could be considered representative, and that it would be discourteous to the Queen to decline an offer which had already received her approval, and had already been intimated to the public. Irritated by what he considered officiousness on Smith's part, but not wishing to mar the harmony of the Jubilee week by a refusal, Mr. Laurier assented. He had not even the usual excuse, for Mme. Laurier had no desire to be Her Ladyship.

Not merely in the Jubilee pageants, but on every occasion Sir Wilfrid was the central colonial figure. He stood for Canada, his fellow-premiers stood for a single Australasian or South African colony. The preferential tariff offer had warmed all hearts. The presence of a French-Canadian as a ruler of the greatest British colony touched the imagination. Not least, his own striking appearance, his dignity and courtesy of bearing, his eloquence, of a more glowing and fervid kind than English audiences were wont to hear, and, it must be added, more extended in scope than English after-dinner speeches were wont to be, aroused an overshadowing interest which must at times have somewhat piqued his ten colonial comrades. "For the first time on record," declared the London "Daily Mail" in a burst of extreme condescension, "a politician of our New World has been recognized as the equal of the great men of the Old Country."

In his public addresses Sir Wilfrid emphasized three themes,—that the Empire had endured because based on liberty, that with the growth of the colonies some change in imperial organization, possibly through representation in a central parliament or council, would become essential, and that the Canadian offer of a preference did not call for any preference in return, any abandonment of Britain's free-trade policy.

To drive home the lesson that the concession of self-government alone had saved the Empire, Sir Wilfrid had only to point to the contrast between the rebel Canada of 1837 and the loyal Canada of 1897. The Irish press was quick to apply the moral, but Sir Wilfrid himself, though keenly sympathetic to Irish Home Rule, was careful to avoid on this occasion any direct reference to a question on which British parties were bitterly divided. As to the future, his utterances were less clear. On more than one occasion he took a definite stand in favour of some form of federation. In his first address, given at Liverpool, he referred to Macaulay's forecast of the traveller from New Zealand gazing at the broken arch of London Bridge, and continued:

Those melancholy forebodings have not been realized. The traveller from New Zealand we have here to-day. He is here to-day among us, not to gaze upon a spectacle of ruin and desolation but to be a witness in his own person to a development of British power to the extent of which the imaginative Macaulay could never have dreamt. And the time may come when a New Zealander may stand at the gate of Westminster Palace asking for New Zealand's admission into that historic hall which, having been the Cradle of Liberty . . . [Loud cheers in which the remainder of the sentence was inaudible.]

Later, before the National Liberal Club, he declared that, "it would be the proudest moment of my life if I could see a Canadian of French descent affirming the principles of freedom in the parliament of Great Britain," and, before the members of the Colonial party in a Commons committee room, observed that the national sentiment was growing stronger every day, and would demand expression in representation in the imperial parliament or in some grand national council or federal legislative body representative of the Empire as an organized entity. Yet in these very speeches, and in other phrases he emphasized the national phase: "Colonies are born to become nations. . . . Canada is a nation. . . . Canada is free and freedom is its nationality. . . . Canada is practically independent; in a few years the earth will be encircled by a series of independent nations, recognizing, however, the suzerainty of England. . . . The first place in our hearts is filled by Canada." Addressing the Canada Club, he made it clear that it was only in the future that constitutional change was desirable; that for the present Canada was satisfied. The fact doubtless was that conflicting ideas were struggling for expression and that the formulas of imperial federation were usually readiest to hand. A New York journal surmised that Sir Donald Smith's champagne had been responsible for Mr. Laurier's imperialist utterances; in reality it was to a more subtle and intoxicating vintage that something of the credit was to be given,—the pride of imperial might, the applause of tumultuous crowds, the hospitality of famous men and gracious women.

For all the growing activity of the Fair Traders and Mr. Chamberlain's coquetting with an imperial *Zollverein*, Britain was still a free-trade nation. Mr. Laurier kept that basic fact in mind in both his public and his private campaign for the denunciation of the treaties. "The colonies who desired closer commercial relations with Great Britain," he declared at Manchester, "had no idea that this country should abandon free trade; free trade had done too much for England to make a return to protection necessary." The Canadian government, he told a Liverpool audience, had given the preference to Britain out of gratitude, and in the belief that trade beget trade; they had no wish to disturb in any way the system of free

trade that had done so much for England. But if the treaties were held to apply, what then? Then "either Canada will have to retreat or England will have to advance." When the Cobden Club, guardian of the ark of Free Trade, presented him with its gold medal for "distinguished services to the cause of international free trade," he replied, on this occasion after the denunciation of the treaties, in still sturdier free-trade tones:

I was a free trader before I came to England. I am still more a free trader having seen what free trade has done for England. It is true the dream of Cobden has not been realized. You have what is sometimes termed one-sided free trade. It is true that it is one-sided, but the advantage is not for those nations that have not adopted free trade. . . . In Canada we have had the protective system, and we have to deal with it gradually and carefully. The only reform of a permanent character we have achieved is this, that no duty shall be levied simply for protection, but for revenue. Further than that we cannot go at this moment, but the principle is laid down upon which larger measures can proceed. . . . There are parties who hope to maintain the British Empire upon lines of restricted trade. If the British Empire is to be maintained it can only be upon the most absolute freedom, political and commercial. . . . The more the Empire is free, the stronger it will be. The day will never come, I hope, when the great principle of freedom which prevails in this country, which England has promulgated all through the world, especially through her colonies,—freedom of thought, freedom in religion, civil freedom, and freedom of trade,—the day will never come when this great principle shall decline.

Little did either the Cobden Club or Canada's prime minister dream that in six short years Britain would be swept by a campaign to overthrow freedom of trade, or that, looking backward from that vantage-point, the Canadian preference would be recognized as being not the first step toward Canada's adoption of free trade so much as the first step toward Britain's adoption of protection.

From festivity and feasting the premiers turned to the more serious business of the summer. The premiers of all the self-governing colonies met Mr. Chamberlain in private conference. It was the third of the informal meetings which were eventually to develop into the Imperial Conference. In 1887, at the suggestion of the Imperial Federation League, Lord Salisbury had agreed to summon a conference in London of representatives of all the colonies, Crown and self-governing. At the conference Lord Salisbury referred to the three lines along which progress might be made in what seemed the prevalent ideal of making over the British Empire on the German model: a political federation like Germany's was out of the question for the moment; a *Zollverein* was probably not yet feasible, but a *Kriegsverein* was practicable and essential. Little progress was made in either direction, though the Australian colonies promised a contribution for the support of a British squadron in Australian waters; the Canadian representatives, Sir Alexander Campbell, then Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and Mr. Sandford Fleming, held aloof from the discussion of defence, urging only a state-aided Pacific cable. Seven years later a second conference had been held at Ottawa wherein the chief issue was the development of intercolonial trade. Now a further stage in the shaping of this new organ of the Empire was taken. Only the self-governing colonies were represented, and they were represented by their premiers: government spoke to government.^[10] Mr. Chamberlain, who presided, laid the emphasis on the first of Lord Salisbury's three paths: a federal council which could speak authoritatively and without further reference to local parliaments should be established. But Mr. Reid would have none of such an inroad upon colonial autonomy and Sir Wilfrid, while prepared to consider such a solution some indefinite years ahead, was not prepared to endorse any immediate change; only Mr. Seddon and Sir Edward Braddon lent any support. As to a *Zollverein*, private discussion had already made plain the difficulty in the way of inducing Great Britain to put a protective tariff on foreign goods or Canada to abolish completely her tariff on British goods, so that Mr. Chamberlain did not now press this solution. All the representatives joined in recommending the denunciation of the treaties. As to a *Kriegsverein*, it was agreed, with Mr. Kingston dissenting, that the Australian naval subsidy should be renewed, but the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty that they would be very glad to open up similar negotiations with Canada brought no response from Sir Wilfrid, who had already stated in public his dissent from any scheme of naval expenditure for the present. The chief outward result of the five meetings was a resolution approving the periodical holding of similar conferences in the future; the most important outcome, some beginning toward an understanding, on all sides, of the personal factors and the local twists in imperial problems.

It was not until after the conference was ended that the British government announced its decision as to the treaties. The law officers of the Crown had reported that under the treaties Belgium and Germany were undoubtedly entitled to the minimum tariff. If, then, Canada was not to retreat, Britain had to advance. On July 30 it was announced that the government had given the year's notice required for the ending of the treaties. On this very day, as the irony of fate would have it, Sir Charles Tupper, who had just arrived in England, gave an interview in which, after declaring with some reason that "the idea proclaimed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier of a great imperial parliament is hopelessly behind the times, and could not succeed," had gone on to denounce the course of the Laurier ministry as "a declaration of independence, an insult rather than a compliment, an absurd scheme." Now the Canadian policy had won. British governments who would not commit themselves on a hypothetical question had met an actual situation; free traders who would not denounce the treaties to permit Canada to grant lower tariff rates in return for a preference from Britain, welcomed a preference given

gratuitously. The tactics of the Canadian government in making its decision without consulting the imperial government, the policy of Sir Wilfrid in refraining from demanding what in any case could not have been secured, tariff favours in return, were more than justified by the outcome.[11] "A great triumph for Laurier" was substantially the heading next day in every newspaper in Great Britain.

Before leaving England Sir Wilfrid made a pilgrimage to Hawarden to pay his tribute to the man who for him and for tens of thousands overseas was the living embodiment of liberalism. He was accompanied by Mr. Seddon and by Mr. Reid, as well as by Sir Louis Davies, who had come to England on departmental business. They had a long and animated conversation with Mr. Gladstone. No incident in the whole year gave to Sir Wilfrid such genuine pleasure or such lasting memories. When, a year later, Mr. Gladstone died, that July afternoon gave an added touch of feeling to the words Sir Wilfrid spoke in the Canadian House of Commons, certainly not least among all the tributes paid to the memory of the English statesman who had done more than any other to make England honoured overseas.[12]

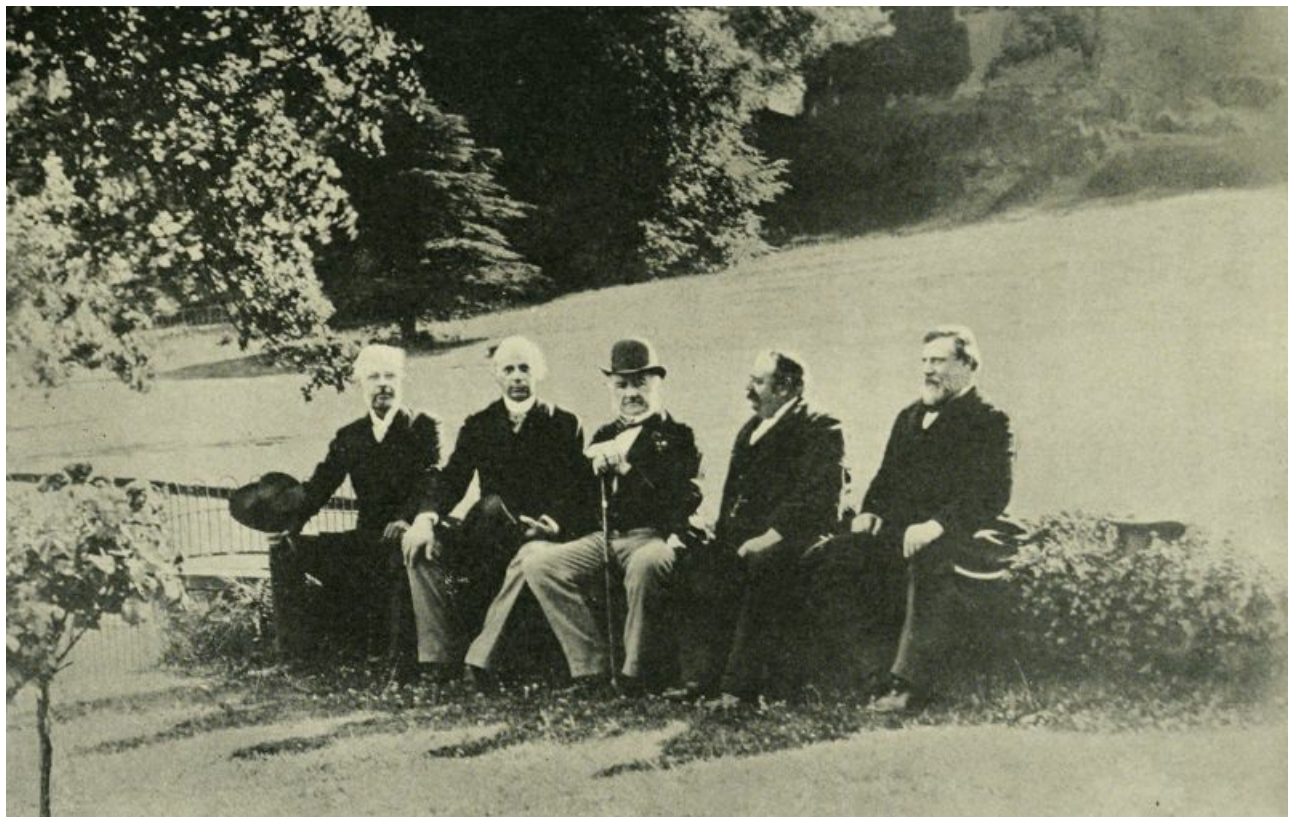
Canada had two mother countries. Sir Wilfrid was eager to see the land of his own ancestors. France—that is, the Paris of the Quai d'Orsay and the journals—was not so eager to see M. Laurier. The relations between Britain and France were strained; regret over Egypt, rivalry over the Soudan, had put Paris in no mood to read with pleasure of this son of New France praising the England that had taken away the first empire of France and was now barring the way in her effort to create a second. It was a difficult situation, but Sir Wilfrid met it frankly. In an interview with President Faure, and in two public addresses, he repeated in Paris the assurances of fidelity to British connection he had given in London, and at the same time revealed a sympathy with France which deeply moved his hearers. Incidentally, his French of Quebec seemed to pass without question in Paris; in fact, he found occasion to correct a Parisian usage:

Separated from France, we have never forgotten the honour of our origin; separated from France, we have always treasured its culture; separated from France, if we have lost our share of its glories, we have made a conquest always dear to French hearts. . . . In passing through this city, beautiful beyond all cities, I have noted upon many a public building the proud device that the armies of the Republic carried through Europe,—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Very well; all that there is of worth, of greatness, of generosity in that device, we have to-day in Canada: that is our conquest. We have liberty, absolute, complete, more complete—pardon my national pride for the affirmation I am making—more complete than in any country whatsoever in the world; liberty for our religion, with its worship, its ceremonies, its prayers, its costumes; liberty for our language, which is the official language as English is; liberty for all the institutions that our ancestors brought from France, and which we regard as a sacred heritage. Equality is ours. What other proof of it could I give you than this? In this country, where the majority is of English descent and of the Protestant religion, the last general elections have brought to power a man of French descent and Catholic religion, who has always strongly affirmed his race and his religion. Fraternity is ours. There is with us no domination of one race over another. . . .

If, in becoming subjects of the British Crown, we have been able to keep our ancient rights and even acquire new ones, upon the other hand we have undertaken obligations, which, descended as we are from a chivalrous race, we recognize in full and hold ourselves in honour bound to proclaim. May I be allowed a personal reference? I am told that here in France there are people surprised at the attachment which I feel for the Crown of England and which I do not conceal. Here that is called *loyalisme*. (For my part, may I say in passing, I do not like that newly coined expression, *loyalisme*: I much prefer to keep to the good old French word *loyauté*.) And certainly, if there is anything that the story of France has taught me to regard as an attribute of the French race, it is loyalty, it is the heart's memories. I recall, gentlemen, those fine lines which Victor Hugo applied to himself, as explaining the inspiration of his life:

Fidèle au double sang qu'ont versé dans ma veine,
Mon père vieux soldat, ma mère vendéenne.

That double fidelity to ideas and aspirations quite distinct, is our glory in Canada. We are faithful to the great nation which gave us life, we are faithful to the great nation which has given us liberty.



A PILGRIMAGE TO HAWARDEN

Louis H. Davies William Ewart Gladstone Richard Seddon
Wilfrid Laurier George H. Reid

Sir Wilfrid touched on many themes, from the hope that the close friendship that had united France and England in the Crimea would revive, to a prosaic presentation of the possibilities of trade in timber, pulp, and tanning extracts. He made it clear that it was by emphasizing the new nationality they had in common that the two races in Canada were finding unity: "The strength of our race has been not to follow a policy of race. . . . I share fully the opinion of M. LaFontaine, that isolation is always an error and that for us particularly, isolation would have meant sinking in the quicksands of inferiority." Particularly noteworthy was the shade of difference, of qualification, in his reference to Canada's future; in a speech, in English, before the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, while he still used the formula of imperial representation, his thought was clarifying, and he now emphasized a necessity for preserving legislative autonomy which in reality put parliamentary federation out of question:

I am profoundly attached to British institutions. . . . At the present moment our relations with the mother country suit us absolutely. We are satisfied with our position. We are in fact a nation, virtually independent. It is, however, manifest that these relations cannot permanently remain what they are. A day will come, in a future more or less distant, when by the mere fact of our growth in numbers, the colonial tie, light and tenuous though it be, will become heavy because it will no longer correspond to our national aspirations. When that state of affairs arrives, it is evident that the colonial connection must become more intimate or it must break completely. The solution will lie mainly in the hands of England. It may be that this solution will be found in the great principle of imperial representation. The colonies of France are represented in her parliament. Our situation is very different. We have not merely local autonomy, but the most complete legislative independence. If, as the price of imperial representation, we had to renounce our autonomy, our legislative independence, we would have none of it. If imperial representation is to be the solution, it can be only as the complement and not as the negation of that which exists to-day.

More tentative, too, was his favourite dream of a French-Canadian in Westminster, which followed:

Permit me, gentlemen, to add, that if the dream of imperial representation is to be realized, I should regard it as a glorious day when Canada would be represented in the historic halls of the Commons of England by a French-Canadian, who would bring into those new surroundings, along with frank loyalty to British institutions, the logical spirit, the ardour of feeling, the lively imagination, the artistic instinct, the poetic conception of affairs, which from all time has characterized the French genius.

Sir Wilfrid left Paris in better mood than he had found it. The ribbon of the Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour was added to his G. C. M. G. and his Cobden Club medal. In personal discussions with French public men, with M. Faure,

M. Cochery, M. Hanotaux, M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, M. Jules Siegfried, M. Nisard, he took occasion to urge that good understanding between France and England which was not merely essential for the peace of the world but, what was to a Canadian of more direct concern, essential for the preservation of racial good-will and national unity in Canada. Then, wearied of speech-making and public addresses, with Lady Laurier he spent a few quiet days in country rest, paying a visit to the home of his ancestors in Charente. From France, they went on to Switzerland, and from Switzerland to Rome, where, accompanied by Mr. Charles Russell, they had an hour's cordial interview with His Holiness. Then France again, a brief visit to Ireland,—Dublin, Galway, and Derry,—and home to Canada.

When Sir Wilfrid reached Canada in August, he found a country that for the moment knew no party. Never before and never again was public opinion so united in his favour. There had been Opposition criticism because of his failure to demand preference for preference, but discussion had shown that this criticism was based on a misreading alike of English politics and of human nature. His striking achievement in ending the treaties, the leading part he had taken in all the summer's affairs, the new interest in Canada which his visit had awakened in Europe, the felicitous expression he had given of Canada's homage to the Queen and her attachment to Britain, made friends and opponents join to do him honour. In public and political banquets in Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto, approval of his course and pride in his success were given warm and spontaneous expression. His attitude on imperial relations was widely endorsed in English-speaking Canada; Quebec gave little heed. If anything, it was not sufficiently imperialistic for Canada's prevailing mood. Some Toronto newspapers growled at his references to Canada's being a nation; religious journals, the "Witness," the "Westminster," the "Christian Guardian," in their fervent protestations that imperial unity was the goal and imperial federation or defence contributions the way, made it even clearer than the comments of the secular press how the tide was running.

It was two years before the sequel to the Jubilee festivities followed in Canada's participation in an imperial war. On the surface, there was little fresh development of imperial interest or organization. Abroad, the relations with the United States which culminated in the sittings of the Joint High Commission, narrated in the following chapter; at home, the development of the Klondike and of charges against the Yukon administration, the growth of immigration and prosperity, the holding of a plebiscite upon prohibition of import, manufacture, or sale of intoxicating liquors, carried by a slight majority but held of no effect because of the small vote and Quebec's overwhelming opposition, engrossed attention. Yet signs were not wanting that Mr. Chamberlain purposed to push his programme in Canada as well as in other quarters of the Empire. Canada had outdone Britain itself in its expression of imperial sentiment; it would be folly not to seek to translate sentiment into action, to fill out and cash blank cheques given over so lavishly. Mr. Chamberlain was not content to wait on Providence, nor wholly content with the trend of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's thinking. While protesting in public that any step toward closer unity must come from the colonies, he neglected no opportunity of preparing the ground.

In the summer of 1898 a new governor-general and a new commander of the Canadian militia were appointed. Lord Aberdeen had been governor-general for five years; he had shown himself a well-meaning, public-spirited official, and Lady Aberdeen's organizing power and interest in social work had given an enduring stimulus to many women's activities. But he was a Liberal, not inclined to press his own views except in an interregnum such as followed the defeat of the Tupper ministry or on some innocuous subject such as civil-service reform; he would not serve Mr. Chamberlain's purpose; on May 13, [1898](#), he was informed that his "resignation" would be announced in the London press next day. In his place the Colonial Secretary chose a man more after his own heart. The Earl of Minto had not been known to the public save as a soldier; he had seen service under Lord Roberts in Afghanistan, had been military secretary to Lord Lansdowne during his governor-generalship of Canada from 1883 to 1885, and General Middleton's chief of staff in the Riel rebellion. But those who knew him were aware that he was a man of shrewd common sense, of serious purpose, strong will, and, not least, imperial enthusiasm, admirably fitted to carry through a Colonial Office programme with firmness and tact. Major-General Hutton, who was selected to succeed General Gascoigne as general officer commanding the militia about the same time, was also a man of strong views on colonial participation in imperial defence, and, as time was to show, not hesitant in urging them.^[13]

Half-way round the world, the conflict was brewing which was to give occasion for testing the new forces. In South Africa the relations of Boer and Briton were daily becoming more strained. To the memories of past racial conflicts, galling British memories of Majuba, sullen Boer memories of treks ever northward to escape British domination, there was added the strife between a primitive pastoral people and a cosmopolitan host of gold-seekers. The Outlander had just ground for complaint: the Transvaal administration was unprogressive, corruption was undoubtedly rife in the little

oligarchy which surrounded Paul Kruger at Pretoria, particularly among the imported Hollanders, and the fourteen-year franchise shut the newcomers out from a share in the government of the country in which they were fast becoming a majority. Yet the grievances were not so serious as they were represented by the unscrupulous subsidized press of Johannesburg and Cape Town; the Orange Free State, perhaps the best-governed small state in the world, showed what the Boer could do under favouring circumstances; the corruption which existed was hardly sufficient to warrant the Canada of Pacific scandals and McGreevy lootings going Sir Galahading across the world to redress it; and the burgher's fear of being swamped in his own country by a transitory swarm of aliens was not hard to understand. A peaceful way out was not beyond hope; the progressive party among the Transvaalers, led by men like Fraser, Joubert, Botha, was gaining ground against the reactionary forces. Time and good-will would have brought reform. But time and good-will were lacking. In the new imperial temper of Britain and the British in South Africa, the Boer had to be taught his place, and that soon, the map of Africa must be painted red from the Cape to Cairo; on the other side, the stubbornness and slimness of Oom Paul, the conviction among many back-veldt Boers that the victors of Majuba could once more sweep the *rooincks* from the field and give all South Africa to their kindred, were serious obstacles to peace. The reckless Jameson raid, the warm greeting given his imperial heroes in London, the whitewashing of Rhodes by a House of Commons committee,—with Edward Blake vigorously dissenting from the policy of hushing-up adopted by both Front Benches,—the press campaign, the Prussian stiffness of the proconsul, Sir Alfred Milner, revealed the new aggressiveness of British policy. When in the spring of 1899 the British authorities concentrated on the reform of the franchise as the fundamental concession which would ensure other grievances being righted, the Kruger government after much hesitation and wriggling and hair-splitting gave way and accepted substantially what Chamberlain had demanded. But at once the ground of controversy shifted to the vague issue of British supremacy in South Africa, now held to be threatened by Boer plots; new demands were made or foreshadowed, reckless "squeezed-sponge" speeches hurled from Highbury, the anti-jingo British general on the spot, who insisted that South Africa needed rest, not a surgical operation, recalled, and fresh troops ordered to Africa. The Transvaal and Free State Boer refused the advice of his Cape Colony cousins to make further concessions. He was convinced that Chamberlain would be content with nothing short of a humiliating surrender and permanent control, and that his country was doomed unless he fought. On October 9 Kruger launched his ultimatum, demanding arbitration and withdrawal of British troops, or war. On October 12 the Boers fired the first shot.

Canadians, absorbed in their own affairs, had given little heed to the rumblings of war until a few weeks before the outbreak. Of the few who were in touch with the situation, some sympathized with the British policy; others, including men so divergent in view as Goldwin Smith and Principal Grant, until the issue of the ultimatum, had questioned Mr. Chamberlain's tactics. But the great mass of citizens knew little and believed much. They believed that Britain was fighting to free the Outlander from intolerable tyranny. When neutral opinion the world over condemned British policy, Mr. Balfour urged in its defence that the colonies had endorsed it. True, but that approval, so far as Canada was concerned, was not so much an independent and informed judgment on the merits of the issue as an indication of the efficiency of the anti-Boer press service, and still more an expression of trust in British statesmen and in British policy in the past.

Sir Wilfrid had made no special study of the situation. He had followed the development of the crisis in the press despatches, with what care the demands of his own duties would permit. He had no small measure of sympathy with the South African Dutch in their resistance to the inroads of British settlement and German-Jewish finance, but believed that with reasonableness a solution could be found in a confederation of South Africa under the Crown. The consideration which turned him strongly against the Boers in the immediate crisis was their denial of the franchise; like many another Liberal, Sir Wilfrid was influenced by Mr. Chamberlain's clever tactics in clothing imperialist policies in radical formulas.

When war became certain, offers of individual or company service and demands for the despatch of a Canadian contingent rapidly developed. The crisis had precipitated imperial sentiment. The desire to repay British protection in the past, to rival the United States, which had just had a more or less glorious little war with Spain, and those Australasian colonies which had already offered contingents; the wide-spread feeling that with increasing strength and prosperity the Dominion should take a more active part in imperial and world affairs; the spirit of adventure and professional military zeal, called for action. Newspaper appeals, particularly on the part of the Montreal "Star," fanned the flames. Sir Charles Tupper, newly returned from England, put himself at the head of the movement for Canadian participation.

The movement was powerfully stimulated by the British authorities and their agents in Canada. Lord Minto in the spring of 1899 had conveyed to Sir Wilfrid inquiries from Mr. Chamberlain and the War Office as to the interpretation of the Militia Act:

Can the imperial military authorities accept paragraph 79 as sufficiently binding on Canada to justify them in reckoning *officially* upon the availability of Canadian troops outside the Dominion in case of war with a European power? . . . I am inclined to draw a distinct line between the official calling out by the Queen of Canadian troops for foreign service [i.e. outside the American continent], and the offer of Canadian troops by the Dominion, which I feel certain would be enthusiastically made if the Empire were threatened,—the latter would, however, be a sentimental offer, which could not be considered with purely business calculations.

To which Sir Wilfrid replied that the decisive point was not whether the theatre of war was at home or abroad, but whether the action was for the defence of Canada. Again, on July 19, in a letter frank and enthusiastic to the point of naïveté, the governor-general had written urging an offer of immediate material assistance in South Africa, an offer which would definitely commit the Dominion to participation in imperial wars:

The acceptance of the proposal would be a proof to the world that the component parts of the Empire, however scattered, are prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder to support imperial interests. In this particular crisis a demonstration of such strength would be invaluable, but its effects would, I think, reach far beyond the difficulty of to-day; it would signify the acceptance of a principle which I believe would tend not only enormously to strengthen the Empire generally, but which would also consolidate the individual strength, credit, and security of each of the offspring of the Mother Country. . . . It is a principle which appears to me fraught with great possibilities, and personally, as an old friend of Canada, nothing would please me more than seeing her first in accepting it. But as I have said to you already, it is all-important that any such offer as that under consideration should be spontaneous and not merely the result of a desire to meet the hopes expressed at home.

A fortnight later, on July 31, the activities of an agent of the South African League resulted in the House of Commons passing unanimously a resolution, moved by Sir Wilfrid and seconded by Mr. Foster, expressing sympathy with the efforts of Her Majesty's government to obtain justice for the British subjects in the Transvaal. Sir Wilfrid declared:

The object to be sought is that we should extend to our fellow-countrymen in South Africa the right-hand of good-fellowship, that we should assure them that our heart is with them and that in our judgment they are in the right; the object would be to assure the imperial authorities, who have taken in hand the cause of the Uitlanders, that on that question we are at one with them and that they are also in the right; and perhaps the effect might be also that this mark of sympathy, of universal sympathy, extending from continent to continent and encircling the globe might cause wiser and more humane counsels to prevail in the Transvaal and possibly avert the awful arbitrament of war.

Lord Minto, in acknowledging the resolutions, expressed his personal regret that "an offer of material assistance" had not been made instead, though he added:

. . . There has been no question of England asking for troops and no expression of opinion in any way that she could deem herself justified in expecting such assistance; I know, however, privately, as I told you, that if any request was made by Canada to send a force to serve with H. M.'s troops, the authorities at home would welcome such a request. . . . You know my own views but I quite recognize the serious considerations connected with such an offer.

Meanwhile, General Hutton's activities in attempting to frame policy and shape opinion, and conflict of views on matters of administrative detail, had brought about very strained relations with the Minister of Militia, which Lord Minto had sought in vain to ease. No narrow conception of his office, therefore, prevented him from discussing with militia officers detailed proposals for a Canadian contingent.

On October 3, the "Canadian Military Gazette," an unofficial publication, announced that in case of war the Canadian government would offer a force from the militia for service, and gave its composition in detail. War had not yet broken out and despatches from London and the Cape held out some hopes that it might still be averted. In an interview the same day with the Ottawa correspondent of the "Globe," Sir Wilfrid denied the rumour as "a pure invention." He made it clear that under the Militia Act the volunteers might be sent to a foreign land to fight, provided Canada was menaced. In the case of the South African Republic there was no menace; "Though we may be willing to contribute troops, I do not see how we can do so." Nothing could be done without a grant from parliament. "There is no doubt," he continued, "as to the attitude of the government on all questions that mean menace to British interests, but in this present case our limitations are very clearly defined. And so it is that we have not offered a Canadian contingent to the home authorities. The Militia Department duly transmitted individual offers to the Imperial Government."

On the same day Mr. Chamberlain took a hand in the game by a cable to Lord Minto, which was not received until two days later. [14] In this message, whether from haste or design, Mr. Chamberlain, if he did not accept an offer which had not been made, at least assumed that government action would be forthcoming. No further action was taken for some days. In forwarding the despatch, Lord Minto observed:

So far as I know there has been no offer to raise troops in Canada except that of Colonel Hughes, and the question is whether the Canadian

government will itself officially offer troops or whether it will allow individuals to raise them as volunteers on their own responsibility. . . . Up to the present this [a government offer] has not been thought advisable, and you know my views about it, but it may be better to reconsider the question rather than to allow an irresponsible call for volunteers. I can not think it advisable that Colonel Hughes should be allowed to raise an expedition on his own responsibility representing Canada. . . . I think it would be best that any definite action should stand over till you can see me on your return from Chicago.

In accordance with an arrangement of long standing, Sir Wilfrid had left on October 7 to attend an international gathering in Chicago. At the dedication of the new federal buildings, President McKinley, the Vice-President of Mexico, and the Prime Minister of Canada had been invited to officiate. Sir Wilfrid had planned to use the occasion to make a plea for better relations and at the same time to explain why Canada could not give way on its Alaska boundary stand. While his addresses were effective and warmly welcomed, the event was overshadowed by the news from Africa and from home, and he hastened to return to Ottawa.

Sir Wilfrid found a divided country and a divided cabinet. In English-speaking Canada, the war contagion was spreading with the approaching certainty of conflict and the excitement of war preparations overseas. The Opposition, with high imperial patriotism and thirst for office mingled in varying proportions, attacked the government for delay and began to appeal to anti-French-Canadian sentiment. In Quebec, active enthusiasm was almost wholly lacking. The French-Canadian did not share the racial sympathy of his compatriots, and had more appreciation of the difficulties of a non-English people surrounded by English folk. "La Patrie," Mr. Tarte's organ, took its stand on the British principle, no taxation without representation; no share in Britain's wars without a share in Britain's councils. "La Presse," the leading independent journal, emphasized very clearly the fundamental difference which determined the attitude of French-Canadians to imperial affairs, and which it took English-Canadians many a year to understand. "We French-Canadians belong to one country, Canada; Canada is for us the whole world; but the English-Canadians have two countries, one here and one across the sea."

The cabinet had to consider the situation more carefully than irresponsible individuals. Granting that Britain's cause was just, was aid necessary? It was assuredly no life-and-death struggle,—merely, in the eyes of British statesmen themselves, a "promenade to Pretoria"; "Punch" was picturing the Boers as clumsy louts falling over their own rifles; as that fervent imperialist, Alexander McNeill, had declared in the House in July, it was hardly necessary "to render assistance to a hundred-ton hammer to crush a hazlenut." Canada had never taken part in any of Britain's "little wars" overseas; Macdonald had declined in 1885 to raise a contingent for the Soudan campaign. Had the government power to act without the consent of parliament? What would be the effect on racial feeling of action? of non-action? Weighing all these considerations in two days' council debate, a compromise was finally reached. The government would not send a contingent, but it would equip and transport volunteers up to one thousand men, organized as proposed in Mr. Chamberlain's cable. The order in council ran:

The Prime Minister, in view of the well-known desire of a great many Canadians who are ready to take service under such conditions, is of opinion that the moderate expenditure which would thus be involved for the equipment and transportation of such volunteers may readily be undertaken by the Government of Canada without summoning Parliament, especially as such an expenditure under such circumstances, cannot be regarded as a departure from the well-known principles of constitutional government and colonial practice, nor construed as a precedent for future action.

A few days later this action was referred to officially as the despatch of a contingent.

The prime minister had never faced a more difficult situation. His handling of it was criticized by both extremes—by one side for delay and half-heartedness, by the other for sending a contingent at all. More impartial critics, in the light of after events, urged that he should have anticipated the situation and prepared a definite stand. It is true the government lost something of the temporary kudos that attends decisive and spectacular action and suffered the disparagement that attaches to all compromise, but it gained in retrospect in the judgment of all who realized what great issues were at stake. Until the last moment it was not certain that the emergency would arise. Sir Wilfrid was not himself given to enthusiasm, and he did not like to be stampeded by the enthusiasm of others.^[15] Before committing Canada to a new policy which might carry her in far and unseen paths it was indispensable to await a clear and overwhelming popular demand. Sir Wilfrid's belief, albeit conventional, in the justice of the cause and his imperial sympathies, were balanced by his dislike of war and all that it entailed. It was another factor that turned the scale. For him the essential question was not aid to England, for both the public and the British cabinet had made it clear that it was not aid but a binding precedent that was wanted. In that case the question became, what would be the effect on the cause nearest his heart, national and racial unity? Concluding that with English-speaking Canada blazing in its demand for action and French-speaking Canada lukewarm or silent in its hesitancy, action would best advance that unity, he took the stand he did.

In the country, the decision was substantially accepted. Conservative critics, with some non-party support, continued to rail against the decision not to bear the full cost of the contingent. In Quebec, the careful phrasing of the offer brought acquiescence; the Liberal members hastened to announce their support of the government's policy. The chief exception, Mr. Henri Bourassa, grandson of Papineau and member for Labelle, who resigned in protest, was more ominous for the future than influential in the present. Mr. Tarte repeated directly, in a correspondence with a former colleague in the Imperial Federation League, Mr. Castell Hopkins, his contention against "being called upon to raise troops and to pay money without having any right of representation in imperial councils," but nothing followed more serious than the burning of Mr. Tarte in effigy in sundry places. But criticism soon was overborne by the rush of preparation and the news from the front.

In some few quarters criticism was directed not so much against the Canadian government as against the British government for forcing its hand. Mr. Tarte voiced this plainly: "It is all very well to say that the people of Canada or of other colonies have made this time a voluntary offer. In point of fact the Secretary of State for the Colonies has sent a circular to all the colonies, the meaning of which is an invitation to send troops." Lord Minto resented this charge, virtuously, because technically no demand had been made; uneasily, because beyond question in fact pressure had been put: "I have always carefully explained to you," he now wrote Sir Wilfrid in a delightful phrase, "that any offer from Canada must be spontaneous." There did not appear to be much ground for complaint. Mr. Chamberlain was only doing his duty as he saw it in trying to commit the colonies permanently to the support of British policy and British arms. If any Canadians had doubts whether that was well for Canada, it was for them to show the same energy and the same single eye to their own country's interests. "Mr. Chamberlain and others," declared a clear-sighted contemporary, "are not academical imperialists, but rather practical men, who use means as well as frame policies. . . . English imperialists have been working for years to bring about imperial co-operation in defence; they did not stop working just when they had the chance to accomplish something signal."^[16] No pressure from Mr. Chamberlain or from Lord Minto would have had any effect had not Canadian sentiment met them half-way. With some reason, they considered that they were merely providing an opportunity for the practical expression of a sentiment and a purpose deeply rooted and often proclaimed.

Once the decision was made, no time was lost in recruiting and despatching, on October 30, a battalion of some 1,150, all ranks, under Lieutenant-Colonel Otter. In accordance with public opinion, which was strongly shared by the governor-general and the Minister of Militia, it was arranged, after consultation with the War Office, that the Canadian troops should form a permanent unit, instead of being attached to various British regiments. A week after it had sailed, the government offered a second contingent: the success of the Boers in forcing the fighting on British territory, the evidence of their skill in marksmanship and entrenching, made it clear the war was to be a serious affair and hardened the determination to see it through. Not until the "black week" of mid-December, when Gatacre was ambushed at Stromberg and Methuen's men mowed down at Magersfontein and Buller repulsed at Tugela River, was the offer accepted: the second contingent consisted of four squadrons of mounted troops and three batteries of artillery. With a gesture worthy of a feudal seigneur or a railway magnate, Lord Strathcona bore the cost of raising the six hundred mounted rifles known as Strathcona's Horse; other forces, mounted rifles and constabulary recruits, were enlisted through the Department of Militia but at the cost of the British government. All told, some 7,300 Canadians sailed to South Africa, of whom one-third were in the official contingents. In addition, the government raised a battalion to garrison Halifax and relieve the Leinsters for active service. The total direct outlay of the Dominion was some \$2,800,000. The contingents were enlisted for a year; once the back of the Boer resistance seemed broken, the men were unwilling to prolong their service.

The Canadian people shared with their British kinsmen the weeks of doubt and dazed surprise that followed Boer victory and British surrenders, the new hope that came with the sending of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener to take command, the relief that greeted the raising of the siege of Kimberley and Ladysmith and Mafeking, and the wild delirium that marked the capture of Pretoria. They had their special pride and their special sorrow: pride in the showing their men made in many a skirmish from Sunnyside to Mafeking and Hart's River, and particularly in the post of honour Canadians held in the capture of Cronje at Paardeberg, the turning point of the war, and sorrow in the lists of casualties that were the price of victory. Perhaps the politic compliments of English statesmen, the kindly references of Lord Roberts, and the warm eulogies of Canadian correspondents—who proved themselves as efficient as their fighting kin—tended to put their achievement somewhat out of perspective. Anticipating a day when rôles would be reversed, American observers asserted that Canada seemed to think she had won the war: "'Are the Canadians present?' asks Lord Roberts before every battle. 'Then let the advance begin,'" was the summary of a Buffalo paragrapher. But if there was warm pride and intense interest, there was little boasting.

The Canadian government had no share in the direction of the war. It did not shape policy; it did not control strategy. Its work ended when the contingents were landed in Cape Town. Canada's rôle was distinctly that of supporting the mother country. The Conservatives who attacked the government for not doing more did not suggest any share in policy but merely an undertaking to repay the full cost of the Canadian contingents. Incidentally this meant that Canada had little direct share in the controversies which soon were waging in the country where the responsibility did lie, the charges of blundering incompetency and the counter charges of treason, the recriminations over concentration camps and "methods of barbarism," the disputes as to the terms of peace. In Canada the discussion over the war was more limited in range but more fundamental in character. The question of Canada's external policy, of her place in the Empire, had now been raised by a concrete issue, and in parliament and in the general elections which followed debate was vigorous if not always to the point.

When parliament met in February for its fifth session, each party was preparing its fighting ground for the coming contest. The session was long-drawn-out and bitterly personal and partisan. The only new legislation of importance was the budget measure increasing the preference on British goods from 25 per cent. to 33-1/3 per cent., with Conservative attacks upon the government for not demanding from Britain a preference in return. The war overshadowed all other issues. The government was attacked for doing too little and for doing too much. Israel Tarte faced almost daily assaults because of his own utterances and "La Patrie's" editorials. Echoes of student riots or newspaper controversies were reflected in discussions in the House which frequently rose to fever heat. For a quarter-hour, despite the speaker's efforts, Messrs. Foster, Wallace, and McMullen experimented in how often one could call one's opponent "liar" and "blackguard" without infringing the niceties of parliamentary debate. Sir Wilfrid himself was stung into condemnation of the "vile sheets," the "reptile press" that were traducing him. All in all, it was an interesting proof of how war, in Mr. Foster's phrase, "lifted the country to a higher plane with broader ideals and a renovated life."

Sir Charles Tupper attacked the government, and Sir Wilfrid in particular, for doing too little and doing that little late. It had done nothing until forced by the public opinion it had tried and failed to form; it had been niggardly when at last it had acted; out of the fulness of its prosperity Canada could afford to take the honourable, the self-respecting course, and meet the full cost of her contingents. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of Sir Charles' lieutenants added, "had been first in the Jubilee parades, and last in the test of action."

In reply, Sir Wilfrid showed conclusively that the same financial policy, in accordance with the request of the British government, had been followed by all the colonies. Instead of defending Tarte he attacked Tupper, quoting his strong condemnation of imperial federation and imperial war outlays before this present sharp curve. No time had been lost, once the die was cast. Sir Charles had called him lukewarm:

Sir, I have no hesitation in admitting that I was not enthusiastic for that war or for any war. I have no sympathy for that mad, noisy, dull-witted and short-sighted throng who clamour for war, who shouted "On to Pretoria," who complacently prophesied that General Buller would eat his Christmas dinner in the capital of the Transvaal. War is the greatest calamity that can befall a nation.

He was not prepared to go to war automatically. Canada was ready to aid Britain in any life-and-death struggle, but not in every secondary war:

Whilst I cannot admit that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain, neither am I prepared to say that she should not take part in any war at all . . . I claim for Canada this, that in future she shall be at liberty to act or not act, to interfere or not interfere, to do just as she pleases.

While the war might perhaps have postponed or made impossible the one solution which he believed would solve South Africa's problems,—confederation,—he still hoped that after the war, confederation of all the English and Dutch communities would come.

It was nearly six weeks later when Mr. Bourassa made the main attack from the other base. In these weeks temper had been rising both in the House and out; the student riots in Montreal, though exaggerated by rumour, had been serious enough to reveal the abyss of racial passion toward which the country was drifting. The tenseness of feeling and prevailing hostility did not prevent Mr. Bourassa from making fully and coolly an analysis of Canada's position, in a brilliant, closely reasoned, provocative speech. Canada was threatened with ceaseless wars and unbearable burdens; her farmers and workmen would one day be crushed like the peasantry and workmen of Europe. Why had Canada taken part in this war? Because it was just? Let British Liberals answer. Because it was necessary? Necessary to aid forty million people to crush four hundred thousand? Because public opinion demanded? Every French-Canadian newspaper, Rouge and Bleu, had been opposed; was parliament to abdicate in favour of yellow journals? The action of other British

colonies? Their action had been misrepresented; the cable news had been manipulated to make it appear they had all eagerly offered men; it took months for the mails to reveal that in several Australasian parliaments action had been closely fought and in one case carried only by the Speaker's vote. It was said no precedent had been created: "the accomplished fact is the precedent," as Mr. Chamberlain had made clear in his "insolent reply" to the order in council.

In reply, Sir Wilfrid, after citing some rather dubious precedents for action without parliamentary sanction, rested the case on the demand of public opinion: "Public opinion has many ways of expressing itself. There is not only the press, there is what is heard in the street and in private conversation, and what one can feel in the air." But Mr. Bourassa had considered it weak to be guided by public opinion; true, "if public opinion were to ask something against one's honour or one's sense of right or one's sense of dignity"; not so, if it demands what is right and honourable. He differed with Mr. Bourassa as to the right of the war; England never had fought in a more just cause; Kruger's refusal of the franchise was intolerable. They had not been forced to act by Downing Street: "What we did we did of our own free will. . . . My honourable friend says the consequence will be that we shall be called upon to take part in other wars. I have only this to answer, that if it should be the will of the people of Canada at any future period to take part in any war of England, the people of Canada will have to have their own way." He agreed with Mr. Bourassa that if it were to be admitted that Canada should take part in all Britain's wars, it would be necessary to make new constitutional terms; they would have to say to Britain, "If you want us to help you, call us to your councils." But that contingency had not arisen.

The heart of Sir Wilfrid's defence of his action lay in his reference to the threatened cleavage of race:

I put this question to my honourable friend. What would be the condition of this country to-day if we had refused to obey the voice of public opinion? It is only too true that if we had refused our imperative duty, the most dangerous agitation would have arisen, an agitation which, according to all human probability, would have ended in a cleavage in the population of this country upon racial lines. A greater calamity could never take place in Canada. My honourable friend knows as well as any man in this House that if there is anything to which I have given my political life, it is to try to promote unity, harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country.

In the same spirit, but positive rather than negative, was his closing appeal:

My honourable friend reads the consequences of this action in sending out a military contingent to South Africa. Let me tell you from the bottom of my heart that my heart is full of the hopes I entertain of the beneficial results which will accrue from that action. When our young volunteers sailed from our shores to join the British army in South Africa, great were our expectations that they would display on those distant battle-fields the same courage which had been displayed by their fathers when fighting against one another in the last century. Again, in many breasts there was a fugitive sense of uneasiness at the thought that the first facing of musketry by raw recruits is always a severe trial. But when the telegraph brought us the news that such was the good impression made by our volunteers that the Commander-in-Chief had placed them in the post of honour, in the first rank, to share the danger with that famous corps, the Gordon Highlanders; when we heard that they had justified fully the confidence placed in them, that they had charged like veterans, that their conduct was heroic and had won for them the encomiums of the Commander-in-Chief and the unstinted admiration of their comrades, who had faced death upon a hundred battle-fields in all parts of the world—is there a man whose bosom did not swell with pride—the pride of pure patriotism, the pride of consciousness of our rising strength, the pride of consciousness that that day it had been revealed to the world that a new power had arisen in the West?

Nor is that all. The work of union and harmony between the chief races of this country is not yet complete. We know by the unfortunate occurrences that took place only last week that there is much to do in that way. But there is no bond of union so strong as the bond created by common dangers faced in common. To-day there are men in South Africa representing the two branches of the Canadian family, fighting side by side for the honour of Canada. Already some of them have fallen, giving to their country the last full measure of devotion. Their remains have been laid in the same grave, there to rest to the end of time in that last fraternal embrace. Can we not hope—I ask my honourable friend himself—that in that grave shall be buried the last vestiges of our former antagonism? If such shall be the result, if we can indulge that hope, if we can believe that in that grave shall be buried the former contentions, the sending of the contingents would be the greatest service ever rendered to Canada since Confederation.

Nine Quebec members, five Liberal and four Conservative, supported Mr. Bourassa.

Sir Wilfrid had refused to commit himself to any permanent policy or doctrinaire position. The debates had developed three distinct attitudes toward the Empire among his compatriots. There were those, like the distinguished Bleu veteran, T. C. Casgrain, who were grateful for British protection and for the liberties accorded Roman Catholics, and were prepared to continue the colonial connection indefinitely, giving moderate aid when Britain desired. There were those, like Dominique Monet, who looked forward to clear-cut independence, and wanted neither colonial passivity nor imperial entanglements. There were those, like Mr. Tarte, who still looked forward to some form of political imperial federation, but opposed in the meantime any support of military policies they had no responsibility for shaping. To none of these positions did Sir Wilfrid commit himself; only one situation could be met at a time; in every situation, how best to conserve Canadian unity must be the determining motive.

A year later, Mr. Bourassa returned to the fray, and once more gave Sir Wilfrid occasion to set out his own views more comprehensively than in the day-to-day discussion. On March 12, [1901](#), Mr. Bourassa moved a resolution in the House

requesting His Majesty's government to conclude an honourable peace in South Africa on a basis of independence, and declaring against any further despatch of contingents from Canada. It was not, he declared, solely for the British government to advise His Majesty, particularly when Canadian blood and money had been spent in a war not of our making. The Chamberlains of to-day, seeking power and profit out of aggression, had little in common with the men of the past who had made England great. Quebec had been and still was a unit against the war, and elsewhere in Canada the wave of jingoism was receding. It was time for Canada to make her position clear. In reply, Sir Wilfrid noted with surprise that the man who had been opposed to sending troops was so ready to send advice. It was unnecessary to discuss the question of sending further troops, for the war was over, except for guerilla efforts. As to the proposal to restore the two republics to independence, that was now too late: "These men [Kruger and Steyn] appealed to the God of battles, and the God of battles has pronounced against them. They invaded British territory, their territory was invaded in turn, and it was annexed to the British domain in consequence of the terrible logic of war." He went on to review the Boer policy, condemning the merciless taxation and the refusal of franchise privileges in the Transvaal. Not Chamberlain but Kruger was responsible for the war. To his mind the strongest evidence of that crucial fact was the criticism of the Boer policy contained in the published letters of Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice of Cape Colony, to President Steyn.[17] He concluded:

The problem of South Africa is this,—that you have in that country two races, so linked and so intermingled that it is not possible to separate them. These two races must be governed by the same power and the same authority, and that power has either to be the power of England or the power of the Dutch. It has either to be the liberal and enlightened civilization of England to-day or the old bigoted and narrow civilization of the Dutch of two hundred years ago. Let Mr. Bourassa forget for a moment that he and I are British subjects, and in the name of civilization, in the name of humanity, I ask him, which is the power to govern in that distant land? . . . There is but one future for the Dutch. They have been conquered, but I pledge my reputation and my name as a British subject that if they have lost their independence they have not lost their freedom. There is but one future for South Africa, and that future is a grand confederation on the pattern of the Canadian confederation. It is a federation in which Cape Colony and Natal and the Orange Free State and the Transvaal and Rhodesia shall be united together under a federal constitution, under the British flag, and under the sovereignty of England. Mr. Bourassa will agree with me that when they have the British flag over South Africa they shall have that which has been found everywhere during the last sixty years under the British flag—liberty for all, equality for all, justice and civil rights for English and for Dutch alike. For these reasons I have to ask the House that they shall not agree to this motion but shall vote it down.

The resolution was defeated by a vote of 144 to 3.

Before this second debate, the general elections, in which the war was fought over at the polls, had been held in November, [1900](#). Canada's prosperity, the question of a free or a bargained British preference, the administrative record of the government, were all in debate, but in Ontario and Quebec the war issue was dominant. The campaign was intensely personal. The apparent victory of British arms had eased the tension somewhat, but racial appeals were still temptingly easy. Undoubtedly English-speaking extremists had been responsible at first for the rise of racial bitterness, greeting wholly legitimate arguments on the merits of the war and Canada's participation with shouts of disloyalty and threats, in the words of the Toronto "News," that British Canadians would find means, through the ballot-box or otherwise of "emancipating themselves from the dominance of an inferior people that peculiar circumstances have placed in authority in the Dominion." But Quebec extremists also had their share of responsibility, picturing all Ontario as made up of such fanatics, and urging French-Canadians to stand solidly behind a French and Catholic premier. A curious twist in the campaign came with Sir Charles Tupper's endeavour to prove to Quebec that Sir Wilfrid was the real imperialist, and that he himself had chief credit for smashing the Imperial Federation League. "Sir Wilfrid Laurier is too English for me," Tupper declared in a speech at Quebec. While it was true that a strong nationalist, such as Sir Charles was, might with some consistency oppose imperial centralization and at the same time urge an active part in an imperial war as an evidence of growth to the responsibilities of nationhood, yet the double attack and the appeal to the prejudices of both sections was a hard position to defend to fair-minded men.

During the session a severe illness of Mr. Tarte had made it impossible for him to carry on his duties; to secure a change of climate and lighter work he undertook to act as Canadian commissioner at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Yet not even with the ocean intervening could Israel Tarte keep out of politics and of trouble; speeches in Paris, which grew by the time they reached Canada, roused Ontario by their criticism of British policy and Quebec by their advocacy of imperial federation. In correspondence with him Sir Wilfrid reflected the campaign:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte.—Translation)

Ottawa, April 6, [1900](#)

MY DEAR TARTE: . . . Here things are going well. Fielding's budget speech, as you may have gathered from the echoes which reached you, was a very great success. The financial situation is excellent, and it was presented with the clearness and the nervous force which characterize

Fielding. The Opposition do not know which foot to put forward, and are trying to make protection and the preferential tariff march abreast. It is a task too great for them and too great for anybody else.

I am sending you the speech that Sir Charles Tupper made at Quebec, with the obvious purpose of catching our province. You will see that the outstanding feature of the new programme is to identify us, at any cost, with imperial federation. I cabled you yesterday on this subject, and you will understand better now the purpose of my cable. Imperial federation, at the present time, is not a practical question, and there is no use in our playing our adversaries' game. All that we have to do is to set things precisely as they are before the public of our province and to see that the attention of the electorate is not turned from serious things to be affrighted by chimeras. . . .

In referring to incorrect interviews in "Le Matin," and the Montreal "Star's" inaccurate translation of what he had really said to "Le Journal"—opinions "which are true and are not impolitic"—Mr. Tarte showed himself gifted with prophecy, or perhaps only a good memory:

Bear in mind that I am not complaining of anything. I have been in journalism too long to be hurt. Only, it is annoying for me to think that perhaps the Liberal party is being hurt by all these attacks directed against me. And yet, how great a man I would become, in the Tory press, if I were to leave your cabinet to-morrow!

Sir Wilfrid replies:

(Translation)

Ottawa, April 30, [1900](#)

. . . A word now as to the evolution that Tupper is trying to go through in the province of Quebec. It is not being done at all in the way you assume. The campaign in Quebec is not against military imperialism but against parliamentary imperialism. Many of your speeches and a few of mine are the fodder they are throwing to our province. I do not, however, believe that the movement will be serious; so far, it is not. It may produce a certain alarm, but the position in which Tupper has placed himself is a false one. It has been very well analyzed by Tardivel in "La Verité." Tardivel does not love us; he especially he handles without gloves, but he makes very clear the distinction that exists between what he calls parliamentary imperialism, which, for that matter, he declares impossible, unrealizable, and the military imperialism of Tupper, which he regards as a reality.

. . . Nothing is more dangerous, in my opinion, than the reporters. They take a thought on the wing and develop it in the direction of their own opinion. I fancy that something of the kind is what happened with you and the "Le Matin" reporter.

(Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier.—Translation)

Paris, May 7, [1900](#)

MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

Although I have enough here to keep me busy, I will not conceal from you the fact that I am beginning to be bored. Either one is in politics or one isn't; that becomes more and more clear to me. If I were to leave the cabinet to-morrow, my interest would turn in other directions. But so long as I am a minister, I shall worry about my department and my party whenever I am not in the thick of the fight.

Sir Charles Tupper's *volte-face* has completed his discredit in London. Your government is very popular in England, but less so on the Continent, and especially in France. At a reception the other day at the Department of Commerce, M. Delcassé accosted me with the remark: "Ah, you have been giving a preference of 33% to England." I replied that we are very rich, and that we are always pleased to grant favours to countries that admit our products free.

(Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte.—Translation)

Ottawa, May 20, [1900](#)

The session is now distinctly in our favour. The Opposition played a last card on the unfortunate West Huron and Brockville affairs [charges of by-election corrupt practices]. We have got around the difficulty by granting a commission which will not merely concern itself with Brockville and with West Huron, that is to say with our peccadillos, but will look into the peccadillos of our adversaries. They will inquire into all the affairs of this kind whether on the Conservative or on the Liberal side, which have adorned the political history of Ontario for some years past. Our policy on the matter was a surprise to the Opposition; I believe it was a happy inspiration. I expect that a few of our friends, fortunately not in high places, will be more or less sprayed, but our adversaries should suffer more than we as the result of the inquiry. However that may be, the system in vogue in Ontario is deplorable; it must be ended. For my part, I am ready to put an end to it, even if that involves exposing ourselves to blows. That is the only honourable means of extricating ourselves from a deplorable situation in which we have been involved by contemptible jobbers.

Despite the vigorous Opposition assault, the elections resulted in a distinct gain for the government. In Ontario it lost fourteen seats; the larger cities and the constituencies in which in 1896 the strong Protestant vote had gone against the Tupper cabinet, now swung back. Quebec, largely for the reverse of the reasons that brought loss in Ontario, voted nearly solidly Liberal, the Conservatives retaining only seven seats out of sixty-five. The Maritime provinces were not carried away by racial cries as much as either of the larger provinces,—"Imperialism is a local issue," one Maritime politician had parodied—and the West, thankful for the new prosperity, went strongly government. Sir Charles Tupper,

Mr. Foster, and Hugh John Macdonald, who had given up his Manitoba premiership to aid them, were all defeated. The government was given a new lease of life.



CHAPTER XII

THE UNITED STATES: 1896-1903

Colony and Republic—A policy of Friendship—The Dingley Tariff—The Joint High Commission—Success and Failure—The Alaska Boundary—Negotiations for Settlement—Arbitration and Arbitrators—A Diplomatic Decision—Canadian Protests—Laurier and the Treaty-Making Power.

In the Laurier government's early years, as in its last years, the relations of Canada with the United States were a constant preoccupation. They presented a double difficulty. One was the question of status,—the question how far, if at all, a colony could have dealings with a foreign country. The other was the difficulty of the specific issues, the boundary controversies which from time to time threatened the peace of the continent.

The question of status complicated every issue. The course of transition from colony to nation was slow and uneven, and the control of foreign affairs was its last stage. In its participation in the South African War, Canada had made its first venture into overseas foreign affairs. With its own continent, its relations were of much longer and more intimate standing, so much so that many Canadians then as later failed to recognize in these familiar line-fence disputes with its neighbour the very controversies which were the staple of diplomacy in older lands. Canada, it was held, had no voice in foreign affairs: foreign affairs meant the pomp and circumstance of formal diplomacy, the gold and lace of ambassadors, bristling cannon along the border. There was a measure of justification in this failure to see that Canada was in fact dealing every day with "foreign affairs," since her political intercourse with the United States was for the most part indirect, filtered through British agencies. Miss Ottawa had a voice, but etiquette forbade her speaking to Mr. Washington except through Papa London. Yet slowly this convention was giving way. Canadian representatives had come to share in British negotiations with the United States on Canadian issues, first as subordinate purveyors of information, later as full if minority plenipotentiaries of the Crown. Sir Charles Tupper's masterful insistence had even threatened to short-circuit the triangular intercourse, Ottawa-London-Washington. Now a further advance was to be effected.

The specific issues which faced the Laurier government in its relations with the United States were many. Along a three-thousand-mile boundary there was ample room for differences. In the mood that had marked public opinion during the years that had passed, the assured self-sufficiency of the United States, the indifference of Great Britain, the petulant suspicion of Canada,—these differences had hardened into antagonisms. Not a single old issue had been finally settled, and new ones were constantly rising. The question of the rights of United States fishermen in Canada's Atlantic waters had been met in 1888 by a *modus vivendi*, but the Canadian fishermen still sought a permanent settlement on the basis of free fishing for free fish. The rights of Canadian sealers in Bering Sea had been upheld by a court of arbitration in 1893, but the five-year experiment in restricted pelagic sealing then effected was drawing near its close and chaos loomed again. The reciprocal privilege of transporting goods across the frontier in bond to seaport, or to another part of the country of origin, rested on no firm treaty basis. The desire of United States ship-building plants on the Great Lakes to share in building the new navy had led to demands for revising the Rush-Bagot gentleman's agreement of 1817, limiting armament in boundary waters. The congressmen who had enacted, and the De Barrys who had administered, the Alien Labour Law barring the incoming of workmen under contract had created in Canada a demand for repeal or retaliation. The discovery of gold in the Klondike was soon to give new urgency to the settlement of the last undetermined boundary, along the panhandle strip of Alaska through which Canada had to seek access to its own hinterland. Liberal policy in the past and threatening United States developments in the present, gave a new angle to the eternal trade and tariff issue. All told, no lack of difficulties, or opportunities.

The temper of the time was unfortunately not favourable for a frank and friendly settlement. In the United States, the unreckoning, provincial assurance of a people unprecedentedly successful, isolated, flag-worshipping, the anti-British twist which history and the Irish vote had naturally given its diplomacy, and the division of treaty-making power between the Executive and the Senate, made negotiation thorny and ratification a gamble. As to trade, the irony of fate was bringing the Democratic low-tariff régime to an end just when the Liberal low-tariff regime was beginning; the new President, William McKinley, was the chief apostle of high protection, and a swinging tariff had been the foremost Republican campaign plank. In Canada, public opinion was little more auspicious. All the old anti-Americanism born of U. E. L. and 1812 traditions and of uneasy jealousy of its neighbour's worldly prosperity had flamed into new fire. The McKinley tariff, with its prohibitive rates upon Canadian farm products, had roused antagonism, but it was the Venezuela episode, Olney's "the fiat of the United States is law," and "any permanent union between a European and an

American state unnatural and inexpedient," and Cleveland's ultimatum,—and that in spite of, or because of, the certainty that if war came Canada would be the battle-field, that hardened Canadian opinion. The opening of the British market for Canadian dairy and bacon products and the new prosperity that followed the development of the West were giving an assurance and self-reliance which made it possible for Canada to be haughty in her turn.

The cabinet shared in some degree this attitude of resentment and growing indifference, but its leading members were strongly convinced of the need of clearing away all possible sources of friction. Sir Richard Cartwright was especially insistent. For many years he had given to international affairs more study than any other member of the House. He had been able to rise above the prejudices of the moment and had become one of the earliest and most persistent advocates of an alliance of all the English-speaking peoples as the soundest basis for the peace of the world. To Mr. Laurier this ideal did not make so strong a sentimental appeal, and its achievement seemed to him beyond the range of practical politics in his generation, but he was equally determined to make every effort consistent with the country's interests and its honour to end the era of pin-pricks and misunderstanding. At one of the first meetings of the cabinet he had declared that the establishment of close and friendly relations with the United States must be a cardinal feature of Canadian policy, and that whatever the United States authorities might do, the Canadian government must not cater to prejudices. As a means to this end, he insisted that Canada must more and more take negotiations with Washington into her own hands. In London in 1897 he made this clear to Mr. Chamberlain, who acquiesced.

From the point of view of the Canadian government, the question of trade policy required first consideration. The presidential elections of November, [1896](#), had made it clear that Washington would be strongly protectionist, but it was desirable to learn the extent and details of the pending tariff changes. There was no Canadian minister at Washington, and it was not desirable to invoke the aid of the British minister, Sir Julian Pauncefote, until a more formal stage in any possible negotiations should be reached. At this juncture, Mr. John Charlton, who had been born in the United States and still had close business relations across the border, offered his services to visit Washington and sound Mr. Dingley, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and other friends in Congress. Mr. Laurier agreed, impressing the need of making it clear that he had no official standing, a warning which it was soon necessary to emphasize:

(Wilfrid Laurier to John Charlton)

Ottawa, January 18, [1897](#)

MY DEAR CHARLTON:

There is a report current in all the newspapers that you have been sent to Washington on an official mission. I depend on you to contradict this report yourself. In the correspondence exchanged between us, you remember that you told me that it was absolutely useless to send anybody on an official mission to Washington until the new Administration had been installed in office. This seemed to me perfectly reasonable, and my colleagues shared in the same opinion. But while it was inadvisable to send a Commission to Washington, it is quite proper that as many prominent Canadians as possible should visit Washington and come in touch with the leaders of the Republic. In that connection it is therefore quite advisable that you should go, but I wish you would be careful to let it be known that you came simply as a citizen of Canada, and in no other capacity. I wish also that you would utilize your stay there to obtain information and for nothing else....

We must hold our hands free to deal in any direction which the interests of Canada may demand, and whilst for my part I am strongly impressed with the view that our relations with our neighbours should be friendly, at the same time I am equally strong in the opinion that we may have to take the American tariff—if conceived in hostility to Canada—and make it the Canadian tariff.

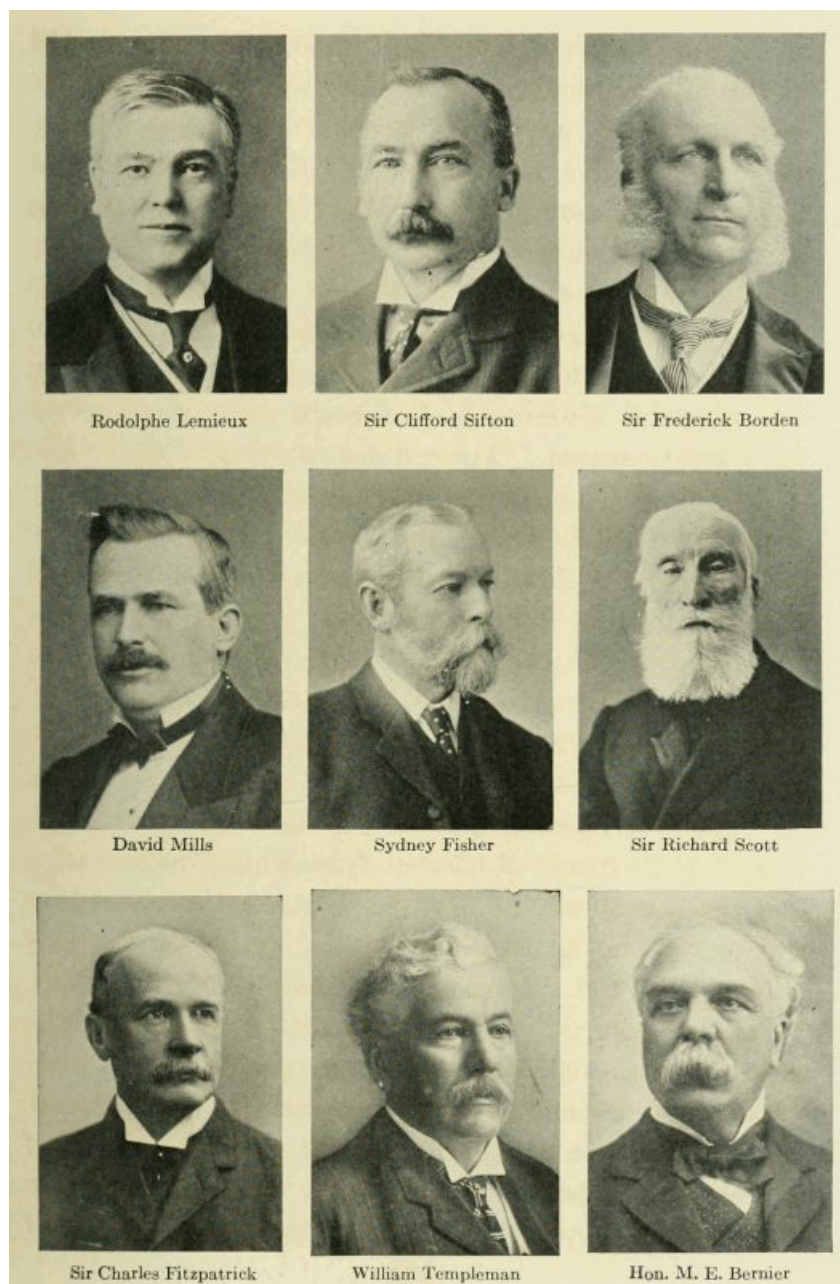
Mr. Charlton, after a conference with Sir Julian Pauncefote, interviewed official Washington. The retiring Secretary of State, Richard Olney, was very friendly and regretted that the Democratic administration was not to have the opportunity it would have desired of framing a reciprocity agreement with Canada. Mr. Sherman, who was to be the new secretary, was equally friendly but more vague.^[18] It was soon apparent that the high protectionists were in the saddle. The Dingley tariff, passed during the special session in the spring and summer of 1897, proved to be the most extreme measure in American annals, out-McKinleying even the McKinley tariff. It was therefore not surprising that the first Liberal budget, instead of proposing reciprocity with the United States as would have been the policy of a Liberal government five years earlier, made the preference to British and low-tariff countries its central feature.

The first step toward a more formal discussion of the situation came from Washington. The five-year restriction on pelagic sealing was drawing to a close, and the United States government was anxious to renew and extend the agreement. Mr. Davies, who had discussed the question with the Foreign and Colonial offices in London during the summer, and Sir Wilfrid, accompanied by the experts who had been studying the case, visited Washington in November. Out of the discussion there emerged a proposal to refer not merely the sealing but all outstanding questions to a joint commission for settlement. Four months later, in May, 1898, Mr. Davies, with Sir Julian, met General Foster and Mr.

Kasson of the State Department and drew up a protocol for the organization and terms of reference of the commission.

Despite the frankness and courtesy of the welcome given by President McKinley and the officers of the State Department, Sir Wilfrid was not sanguine of the outcome. "We have had a warm welcome and some cool proposals," he wrote a friend in Canada. "I confess," he wrote in July, "that I have very serious doubts as to any practical results to be expected from the Commission." Yet these doubts did not lessen the endeavour to form the strongest possible commission, and to press the opportunity to the utmost. As representing Her Majesty, Lord Herschell, the British Lord Chancellor, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Louis Davies and Mr. John Charlton, of Canada, and Sir James Winter of Newfoundland, were appointed, while Senator Fairbanks, Senator Gray, and Mr. Dingley, with General Foster, Mr. J. A. Kasson, and Mr. T. J. Coolidge of the State Department, were named for the United States. Sir Wilfrid had grave doubts as to the advisability of taking a personal part in negotiations which might involve months of absence, but the importance of the issues and his desire to obtain a first-hand knowledge of Washington men and ways, guided his decision. It was significant of President McKinley's friendliness that he had expressed the personal wish that Sir Wilfrid might find it possible to take part. Significant, also, of the changing place of Canada in the Empire was the fact that while on the Joint High Commission of 1871 there had been four British and one Canadian member—though, it is true, the dominant issue was then a British one—and in 1887 two British and one Canadian, proportions were now reversed.

The commission met first in Quebec—another recognition of equality—from August 23 until October 10, [1898](#), and later in Washington, from November 9, [1898](#), until February 20, [1899](#). Despite conflicting duties and the illness and later the death of Mr. Dingley, it made good progress. The atmosphere at Washington had moderated. "There is no doubt," Sir Wilfrid wrote in November, "that there is a new and general good-will observable here." During the Spanish-American War (April to August, [1898](#)), the United States had suddenly realized that Continental Europe was not merely in sympathy with Spain but bitterly and dangerously antagonistic to this audacious and aggressive republic, and further, that Great Britain was genuinely anxious to be a friend. After the war, embarked upon a policy of imperialist expansion, with hostages given to fortune in the Pacific and the Caribbean, Washington found its old policy of isolation and cheerful disdain of all foreign powers somewhat harder to maintain. The common sharing of the White Man's Burden and the common ideals of life and policy drew the United States and Great Britain closer together, so the Anglo-Saxon version ran. "The old pirate and the young pirate are joining forces for moral support," was a Washington diplomat's version to Sir Wilfrid. Alike in London and in Washington the personal factors made for friendship; Lord Salisbury and John Hay, who became Secretary of State in September, [1898](#), were friends and were both convinced that Anglo-American friendship was essential for the peace of the world. Canada, considered as yet merely an adjunct to Britain, shared in the new favour as it had shared in the disfavour of other days. Even so, this new friendliness had its limits. The State Department was quite prepared to take advantage of its friend's greater eagerness to be a friend. What was more, Congress and the general public had not shifted as far as the diplomats whose eyes were in the ends of the earth. Senators were still jealous of their treaty-making powers, and still suspicious of British wiles. "One dubious consolation," wrote Sir Wilfrid, "is that if the Senate sometimes irritates us, it irritates the Secretary of State still more." And again: "I reminded the Senator [Mr. Fairbanks?] of the Canadian saying that the Senate's power of ratifying or rejecting treaties which the Executive has negotiated gives the United States the same advantage as a horse-trader who has the privilege of going back on his bargain if his wife doesn't like the nag when she sees it. He replied, 'Why cannot European powers take a wife?' Perhaps their secrets are not such as may safely be risked to a wife."



GROUP OF MINISTERS

The relations of the members of the commission were frank and friendly. Sir Wilfrid found his United States colleagues straightforward if stiff negotiators. Mr. Dingley, who had been somewhat of a bogey, he found to be honestly anxious for an equitable settlement. His chief complaint was that they were tied and hampered by local interests: "The Commission is bounded on the east by Gloucester cod and on the west by Indiana lambs, no, sometimes on the west by Seattle lions." It may be recalled that Mr. Hay, considering Canada merely a local subdivision in the British Empire, had somewhat the same complaint of localism to make of Sir Wilfrid.^[19] One comforting feature was the ability and zeal displayed by Lord Herschell in advancing Canadian interests. His activity drew from Mr. Hay petulant complaints to London and from Sir Wilfrid warm testimony in private and in public: "He was not only a great judge, he was not only a great statesman, he was not only a clever diplomat, but he was as true a friend of Canada as ever crossed the Atlantic. ... He fought for Canada not only with enthusiasm but with conviction and devotion."^[20] When, at the close of the negotiations, Lord Herschell met with an accident in Washington which resulted shortly in his death, his fellow commissioners felt the loss as a personal blow.

The extent of the agreement reached may be indicated by two letters, from Sir Wilfrid to Principal Grant, with whom he was in constant touch, and from Senator Fairbanks to Sir Wilfrid at a later date:

DEAR PRINCIPAL GRANT:

There has been a great deal of misconception as to the character of the negotiations at Washington. The impression was that we were struggling with might and main to obtain a wide measure of reciprocity. The reverse is the truth. We struggled to obtain reciprocity in lumber, because the condition of things in so far as lumber is concerned is acute and may become worse. I may say, however, that in this we made no progress whatever. We also endeavoured to obtain a fair measure of reciprocity in minerals, in which we were altogether successful; in quarry products, in which we were also quite successful; and in a few agricultural products in which we had some partial success. On the whole, with reference to the reciprocity question, I am quite satisfied with the progress which we made, barring the sole article of lumber, and we can at any moment make a very fair treaty.

Our chief efforts, however, were directed to three subjects: the Atlantic fisheries, the Pacific seal fisheries, and the Alaska boundary.

With regard to the Atlantic fisheries, we made no progress whatever. Concerning the Pacific seal fisheries, we would have obtained a very valuable treaty. Efforts have been made, as you know, to discredit our action on this subject as implying a surrender of national rights. As to this, the seal fishermen are the best judges, and we kept ourselves, at every step, in close contact with them. I have no hesitation to say that the arrangement that we would have made, and with which they were satisfied, would have been acceptable to the whole country and would have shown that we made no surrender.

The stumbling-block was the Alaska boundary. In this, our American fellow Commissioners were at first and almost to the last disposed to come to a reasonable compromise. I may tell you confidentially that the compromise was that they gave us Pyramid Harbour on the Lynn Canal with everything but the official sovereignty in name; in other words, the arrangement which we had practically concluded was that we should have Pyramid Harbour under our jurisdiction, our laws and our administration, but that if, at any moment, we chose no longer to occupy it, it would revert to the United States. This arrangement provoked such a storm in the Pacific states that our fellow Commissioners withdrew their consent. There was nothing left but to arbitrate. We wanted to arbitrate upon the terms of the Venezuela treaty. This they would not consent to. There was nothing else to do but to stop then and there. They offered to go on with the other subjects referred to us, but this we declined to do, and insisted, before we proceeded with the other articles, that they should either settle the boundary question by agreement or by reference to arbitration.

There is the position. But whether we meet again or not, I see no reason not to press forward the three subjects to which you call my attention [the Pacific cable, river and ocean transportation, the Newfoundland French shore dispute]. I differ from you only on one point. I do not think that Canada should share in the compensation to be paid to France for the relinquishment of her treaty rights in Newfoundland. On this question, I think that the burden ought to be taken up by the Imperial government. The first point is to get the French to relinquish their treaty rights. I rather fear that Chamberlain has not facilitated this most desirable object by his recent speeches. Those speeches of his have considerably rubbed the pride of the French, and perhaps, in consequence, for a few years, they may turn a deaf ear to any suggestion of a compromise.

I fully agree with you that the chief problem is the problem of transportation, but I go further than you do. I do not want to give up the project of the fast Atlantic service. We can and ought to have the most popular route for tourists. In addition to that, while I agree with you that the harbours of Quebec and Montreal must be equipped, the one thing on which I have now set my heart is winter navigation of the St. Lawrence to Quebec. This is a subject which I have had in mind for years, and I have been constantly investigating it. I am now very near to be absolutely satisfied that it is perfectly feasible, and I propose to have the experiment made next summer. On the whole, you will see that there is very little difference between you and me. The present opportunity must not be lost, and Canada must undertake an immense step forward. It can be done.

Believe me, dear Principal Grant, with great respect,

Yours very sincerely,

WILFRID LAURIER.

(Senator Fairbanks to Wilfrid Laurier)

Indianapolis, July 18, [1901](#)

... It may be well briefly to review the progress made by the Commission in the determination of the questions submitted to it. There were twelve principal questions embraced in the protocol of May, [1898](#). Most of them were vexatious and of long standing. Many of them had been the source of friction and annoyance to the two governments for many years. The Commission devoted much time and serious consideration to and practically reached conclusions as to most of them. I will refer to them briefly in the order of their submission:

1. Bering Sea seal fisheries: substantially solved.
2. Other fisheries: good promise of ultimate adjustment as to coast fisheries; Great Lakes regulations substantially agreed upon.
- 4 and 5. Bonding privileges: agreement reached except as to traffic passing from points in the United States through Canada to other points in the United States.
6. Alien labor laws: agreement reached and articles drafted.
7. Mining rights: agreement reached and articles drafted.
8. Reciprocity in trade: tentative agreement, though satisfactory conclusion not probable on many articles, chiefly lumber and farm products, on which Canadians urged very considerable concessions.
9. Naval vessels on the Lakes: amply considered and conclusion reached.
10. Frontier definition and marking: substantially agreed.

11. Conveyance of prisoners through other country's territory: agreement reached and article outlined.

12. Reciprocity in wrecking and salvage: agreement reached and article drafted.

I have omitted until the present, mention of article number—

3. "Provisions for the delimitation and establishment of the Alaska-Canadian Boundary by legal and scientific experts, if the Commission shall so decide, or otherwise."

This article, as we are well aware, is unsettled, and by the action of the Commission was remitted to the two governments for their further consideration, pending which the Commission adjourned. . . .

The Alaska boundary dispute, which the commission proved unable to solve, was the last in the long series of controversies over the determination of the boundary between Canada and the United States. The vagueness of early maps and the looseness of diplomats' phrasing as usual gave ground for difference in treaty interpretation, and as usual national pride, touched to the quick by any suggestion of giving up the sacred soil over which the sacred flag had floated, or should have floated, made cool settlement difficult. In 1825 Britain and Russia had concluded a treaty delimiting the boundaries of their territories in North-West America; Canada had succeeded to Britain's claims and the United States to Russia's. From time to time minor incidents urged the necessity of a definite interpretation and demarcation, but settlers were few and governments busy, and matters drifted till the Klondike discoveries compelled action.

Through what channel was the boundary to run from Prince of Wales Island to the mainland? What line was the boundary thence to follow? The crest of the mountains parallel to the coast, and, if so, which mountains, or—the alternative provided in the treaty when these mountains should prove more than ten leagues distant from the ocean—a line parallel to the sinuosities of the coast and never more than ten leagues distant? Canada contended that mountains did exist near the coast and that a line drawn along their crests would leave well within Canadian territory many deep inlets, and especially Lynn Inlet, from which access to the Yukon was chiefly sought. The United States insisted that the coast strip or *lisière* was meant to be a solid barrier, and that the boundary, whether following mountains or the ten-league line, must run around the head of every inlet and shut Canada out of any harbour along the coast. The Canadian case was weak in that for seventy years the assumption of Russia and the United States that the *lisière* was unbroken had gone virtually unchallenged, and British maps as well as Russian and American had shown the boundary running around the heads of the inlets.^[21] It was well arguable as regards the intention shown in the long-drawn-out negotiations preceding the treaty. It was very strong on the basis of the final wording of the treaty itself. It was unanswerable on the ground of relative need, but this was not commonly recognized as a basis of international adjustments. Meanwhile, the United States was largely in possession.

In the discussion in the commission, the Canadian members sought first to secure a compromise, generally, by linking this with other questions on which the United States wished concessions, and specifically, by proposing to acknowledge the right of the United States to the settled harbours on Lynn Inlet, Dyea, and Skagway, if the United States would acknowledge that Pyramid Harbour was Canadian. The United States commissioners made light of the whole Canadian claim as a case trumped up in view of the Klondike discoveries, but through various preliminary stages they advanced to a proposal to grant to Canada for fifty years the full use, but not the sovereignty, of Pyramid Harbour and a strip of land behind it; later, they qualified this proposal by insisting that for purposes of the coasting trade the harbour must be counted a part of the United States,—and thus barred to vessels trading from Canadian ports; then, as Sir Wilfrid's letter to Dr. Grant indicates, a storm of protest from Seattle and Tacoma, which flourished on the Yukon trade, forced the abandonment of this reasonable and friendly plan. Failing agreement, the Canadian delegates urged arbitration of the whole boundary, on the Venezuela basis, by a tribunal of three members, one to be selected by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, one by the President of the United States, and the third co-optated or otherwise chosen, with power to consider occupation and other equities as well as the wording of the treaty. The United States delegates were strongly opposed to arbitrating what they insisted was indubitably and for seventy years unquestioned American territory. In view, however, of their own insistence on arbitration in Venezuela, they were compelled to make some concession, but still endeavoured to avert any chance of losing. They accordingly proposed a tribunal of six impartial jurists of repute, three appointed by each party, and a regulation that in any case any tide-water towns or settlements then under United States jurisdiction should so remain. The Canadian commissioners declined a proposal which might mean dead-lock and would in any case guarantee the United States the most important matters in question. The United States declined to accept a European umpire; Canada, "in view of the policy long maintained and recently reasserted by the government of the United States toward the other countries on the American continents," declined a South American umpire. Neither side would give way, and the commission was forced to adjourn without a solution.

Failure to agree on the Alaskan question involved suspension of action on the other issues. The United States members urged concluding what could be settled, but, for the reasons clearly expressed in a memorandum by Lord Herschell, the Canadians could not agree.^[22] The commission never met again, but its efforts were not in vain. The tentative conclusions it had reached were, at a later period, embodied in separate treaties and for the most part ratified.

For over four years the Alaska question hung fire. It had been agreed that the discussion would be continued through the regular diplomatic channels. For these four years, in a constant exchange of despatches from London to Washington, with subsidiary consultations between London and Ottawa, the effort was made to find common ground. Besides the professional diplomats, amateurs tried their hand; Mr. Farrer had frequent interviews with Mr. Hay and leading senators, and George W. Smalley, the Washington correspondent of the London "Times," in 1902, carried a message from Sir Wilfrid to the President and Mr. Hay. Neither professional nor amateur found the task easy. In 1899 the Boer War broke out, reviving popular hostility to Britain in the United States, and in September, 1901, the assassination of William McKinley brought Theodore Roosevelt and his incalculable impetuosity into the equation.

The anxiety of the United States to secure control of an Isthmian canal, and, as a means to this end, to secure the revocation of the Bulwer-Clayton treaty giving Britain joint rights with the United States in any Isthmian undertaking, seemed to offer an opportunity. Why not barter concessions in Central America for concessions in Alaska? Here was an opportunity to test the value of the imperial connection, the diplomatic resources of a far-flung Empire. Lord Lansdowne agreed, and sought to make a bargain, but without success. The Bulwer-Clayton treaty was replaced by the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the United States was given a free hand in Central America, but no concession was secured in return. As published despatches had made it evident that Lord Lansdowne at one stage had favoured this policy, it was assumed in Canada that the failure to press the opportunity was due to the Laurier government's remissness. In a debate in the House in March, 1902, Mr. Robert Borden and Mr. W. F. Maclean strongly condemned the government for its laxity and neglect of Canadian interests in failing to urge that the United States should give as well as take. Sir Wilfrid said no word in reply, but the fact was that the responsibility did not rest on his shoulders. In February, 1900, when the first Hay-Pauncefote treaty was under consideration, the Colonial Office was informed that in deference to the strongly expressed views of the imperial government that in the interests of the Empire, Her Majesty's government should agree to sign the convention modifying the Bulwer-Clayton treaty at once, and realizing the gravity of those views, the Canadian government would not continue to press the objections to such action contained in their order in council of April 4 previous, but they would still express the hope that Her Majesty's government would strongly urge upon the United States government the considerations there indicated. Probably those observers were right who asserted that with the loss of prestige and the growth of Continental enmity entailed by the Boer War, the British government could not well press any view hard.

In 1901 a modus-vivendi boundary was effected for the Dalton trail, in the Lynn Inlet region. With this breathing-spell secured, Mr. Hay prepared in May, 1901, drafts of two treaties, one to provide for arbitration on the boundary issue, and the other to settle all the remaining questions except trade reciprocity and the Atlantic fisheries. The Canadian government took the stand that all the latter questions should be referred to the commission; as to the draft of the boundary treaty, the provision for an even number of arbitrators prevented finality, and the questions were so framed as to involve surrender of the Canadian claim on important points; the government therefore respectfully but unequivocally declined assent to the treaties, particularly as no concession had been made to balance the Bulwer-Clayton concession. In February, 1902, the British government endorsed and transmitted these objections. Then suddenly opposition arose from another quarter. President McKinley had left the negotiations wholly in Mr. Hay's hands, but President Roosevelt had a policy and a will of his own in foreign as in home affairs. Through the official channels it was reported that Mr. Hay was despondent, that the President was being pressed by Pacific coast interests and by sympathizers with the Boer Republic, and that he had expressed his determined opposition to arbitrating the unquestionable rights of the United States, since arbitration almost certainly involved compromise; and that at most he would consent to appointing a tribunal merely to record a reasoned opinion. Through semi-official British channels it was reported that Canada must give up all claim to the sea-coast, in which case she might be granted some small concession at the Portland Canal end of the frontier; that the President and Mr. Hay were being attacked for their British proclivities and that the sooner Canada came to terms the better. Through unofficial channels the same difficulties were noted; Mr. Farrer reported:

The Republicans under any circumstances would hesitate to draw the Democratic fire by granting arbitration, and as matters stand it would be suicidal to do so before the fall congressional elections. . . . A good many of the leaders are favourable to arbitration: the trouble is they are afraid of the rank and file and of the people at large, who are half disposed to suspect that Mr. Hay is too pliant so far as England is concerned. He himself feels that this suspicion is in the air and is rather nervous about it.

Finally, in the winter of 1902-03, agreement was reached. The elections and the Boer War were over. Mr. Hay had committed himself to arbitration and strove honourably and tenaciously to carry his point. In December, Sir Wilfrid, who had been convalescing at Hot Springs, Virginia, after a severe illness, by request had an interview with Mr. Hay and Mr. Roosevelt. Finally, the President was won over. At the last moment the negotiations were nearly broken off by Britain's sudden flirtation with Germany in the joint debt-collecting expedition against Venezuela. Mr. Farrer reported in January, [1903](#):

Much bitterness has been created in Washington against England by the Anglo-German expedition against Venezuela. I am told on high authority that the President has indulged in some very plain speaking to Sir Michael Herbert and that Sir Michael, whose wife is an American, has been warning Lord Lansdowne all along that an explosion of popular opinion may occur at any time which might hurry the President into rash action. I had a talk with Senator Cullom, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and he frankly said that while he should like to accommodate you, he was afraid that the Venezuela affair had for the moment pretty well undermined the good understanding between the United States and England.

Lord Lansdowne's frank reversal of his Venezuela policy cleared the air, and the treaty deferring the boundary to arbitration was submitted to the Senate, and eventually ratified.

From the Canadian point of view, the treaty was a distinct improvement over the earlier drafts. The whole boundary line was included; the questions as now framed were not question-begging; the decision of the tribunal was to be final; there was no reservation of territory to the United States whatever the decision. The one drawback was the composition of the tribunal,—six "impartial jurists of repute," three appointed by each party. In the opinion of the government, this meant that no decision could be reached unless one member cast his vote with the other side, and it did not seem highly probable that one of the United States members would choose this rôle; if there was dead-lock, the United States remained in possession of the most important territory. Yet it was apparent that no better terms were to be had. The tribunal was to be a judicial body to interpret the treaty, not a conference of diplomats to strike a bargain. The treaty provided that the members should "consider judicially the questions submitted to them" and that each "should first subscribe an oath that he would impartially consider the arguments and evidence presented." The British ambassador foreshadowed agreement upon three or at least two justices of the Supreme Court ("who are here all regarded as Cæsar's wives") and the Chief Justice of England, a judge of the British High Court, and a Canadian Supreme Court judge. Under these conditions, the Canadian government expressed its acceptance of the proposal.

Hopes were high for a fair and final settlement, when on February 13 it was unofficially and on March 6 officially announced from Washington that the United States members of the tribunal were to be Secretary Root, Senator Lodge, and Senator Turner. All were lawyers of eminence, men of outstanding capacity, honourable men, but to term them "impartial" was a wrench to the English language. Secretary Root had been a member of the cabinet which had defended the American case; Senator Lodge had publicly denounced the Canadian contention as a "baseless and manufactured claim"; Senator Turner, who had formerly been a member of a state supreme court, represented the state of Washington, which threw on the toll of Yukon trade, and had himself in the Senate debate opposed any arbitration. It was not surprising that public and government opinion coincided with that of the Brooklyn "Eagle," that there was as much chance of convincing a tribunal so constituted of the soundness of the Canadian case as there was of "a thaw in Hades." On February 18 the British government inquired whether the Canadian government had any comments to make. The Canadian government strongly protested to London, and was considering, so London was notified, whether in the changed situation it should withdraw from further participation; the British government agreed it was awkward, but could not be helped; perhaps British members could be chosen to match. Without waiting for a definite reply from Canada, the British government exchanged formal ratification of the treaty. When the cabinet expressed displeasure at being thus flouted by London as well as by Washington, the Colonial Office blandly replied that no discourtesy had been intended but that the British government had conceived itself bound by its announcement in the Speech from the Throne on February 17 that the treaty would be ratified,—that is, by an announcement which had been made a day before the Colonial Office had gone through the form of asking if the Canadian Government had any opinion to offer.

The failure of the United States government to carry out the understanding as to the members of the tribunal was not due to Mr. Hay. In letters to Sir Wilfrid, Sir Michael Herbert, after stating how sore [sorry?] he himself was over the selection, reported that Mr. Hay had been overruled by the President, "who has got his back up," and that Messrs. Lodge and Turner had not been appointed until after the justices of the Supreme Court had all been invited and had all declined on the ground that it would be incompatible with their position to sit on a diplomatic and political tribunal. Mr. Charlton, who was then in Washington, urged in defence of the President the fact that it was not until the reluctance of the Senate to ratify the treaty had become apparent, that Mr. Roosevelt, anxious to have the matter settled, but more in touch with political realities than Mr. Hay, came to an understanding with the leaders of the Senate as to the composition of the

tribunal. The appointment of Senator Lodge and Senator Turner was therefore the price of any treaty. This was true, but not the whole truth. Mr. Roosevelt was himself as determined as any hostile senator to prevent any risk of losing an inch of the United States claim. He had agreed to arbitration merely "to enable Great Britain to save her face," but if not by the letter of the treaty, then by the composition of the court, he was determined to guard against such a contingency. A further evidence of his attitude was given in a blustering letter which was conveyed to the notice of the British government during the summer through a United States Supreme Court judge, apparently persuaded for once to accept a "diplomatic and political" errand.^[23] So far as the actual decision of the tribunal was concerned, it is doubtful whether the change in the personnel of the court made any material difference. Experience does not show that judges, however fair in the handling of details of evidence, are any more immune than other mortals from the national or social prejudices which unconsciously shape interpretation. But Mr. Roosevelt's action did exasperate Canadian public opinion, and it did make frank and confident international dealing by so much the more difficult in future.

There was no room for choice in accepting the treaty as a settled fact, but there was room for choice in the character of the British appointments. The Canadian government declined to accept the hint of the Colonial Office, and adhered to the intention to appoint impartial jurists. The suggestion that Lord Alverstone, the Lord Chief Justice of England, should be named, was accepted, but instead of one the government nominated two Canadians for the other posts, Mr. Justice Armour of the Canadian Supreme Court, and Sir Louis Jetté, then Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec and formerly puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Quebec. On the death of Justice Armour in London, Mr. A. B. Aylesworth, a leader of the Ontario bar who had declined a Supreme Court judgeship, and who was in England at the time, was nominated in his stead. Mr. Clifford Sifton acted as British agent, assisted by Mr. Joseph Pope and W. F. King, with Edward Blake, and later Sir Edward Carson, with Sir R. B. Finlay, S. A. Rowlatt, John A. Simon of the English bar, and Christopher Robinson, F. C. Wade, Aimé Geoffrion and L. P. Duff of Canada, as counsel. Hon. John W. Foster was appointed United States agent, with Messrs. Dickinson, Watson, Taylor and Anderson as counsel.

During the summer, case and counter case were exchanged. In September and October the oral argument followed. The case was admirably handled on both sides, alike in the preparation of the briefs and in the oral presentation. Yet, throughout, the Canadian members could not escape the feeling that the decision was settled before the case was argued. It was not merely that the London correspondents of United States newspapers were forecasting that Lord Alverstone would hold against Canada; the wish might have been considered father to that thought. But in London society, at dinners and in clubs, they found the same opinion everywhere prevalent. How far this feeling was due to the circulation of Mr. Roosevelt's letter is not clear. As to Lord Alverstone himself, his Canadian colleagues, while finding him perfect in courtesy, quick in argument, fair in attitude, also realized that he considered himself an umpire between two contending delegations; the frequent consultations which took place among the three United States members to decide upon their course had no counterpart on the other side. On October 8 Sir Wilfrid received a cable from a member of the Canadian delegation:

I think that Chief Justice intends joining Americans deciding in such a way as to defeat us on every point. We all think that Chief Justice's intentions are unjustifiable and due to predetermination to avoid trouble with United States. Jetté and Aylesworth are much exasperated and considering withdrawing from Commission.

Sir Wilfrid replied:

Our Commissioners must not withdraw. If they cannot get our full rights let them put up fight for our contention on Portland Canal which is beyond doubt: that point must be decided in Canada's favour. If we are thrown over by Chief Justice, he will give the last blow to British diplomacy in Canada. He should be plainly told this by our Commissioners.

On October 17 and October 20 the members of the tribunal recorded their decision. By a majority of four to two, Lord Alverstone voting with the United States representatives, it was decided, in brief, that the boundary should run around the heads of the inlets and give the United States an unbroken *lisière*, that certain mountains marked "S" upon a map should be considered those meant by the treaty to form the boundary, and that the Portland Canal, which was to form the southern limit of the strip, should be taken to be the channel running north of Pearse and Wales and through Tongass Passage south of Sitklan and Kannaghunut islands, the former islands thus falling to Canada and the latter to the United States.

The question most important in itself was the question of the inlets. Here the decision went against Canada, but no one questioned its fairness, if they still doubted its validity. The opinions given in support of the Canadian contention by Sir Louis and especially by Mr. Aylesworth were powerful arguments, but the opinion filed by the three United States members was also strong, closely-reasoned and effective, and Lord Alverstone's separate memorandum, if less

exhaustive, also an able judgment. A Canadian, reading the evidence and the decisions on this point to-day, may well consider still that the Canadian interpretation of the treaty was sounder, certainly that the allegation that it was a mere bluff was preposterous, and yet may also admit that the opposite case was equally strong and that impartial men might well consider it stronger. The treaty, in brief, was ambiguous and lent itself to more than one interpretation.

The other decisions were much less important in themselves, but they became important because of the evidence they presented that a diplomatic and not a judicial decision had been arranged. As to the "S" mountains, the line was clearly a compromise. The United States had contended that no mountains such as contemplated in the treaty existed and that the ten-league line should therefore be followed. The decision on this point admitted that the Canadian contention was correct, but deprived Canada of any advantage by proceeding to select mountains in many cases well inland and beyond the inlet heads. Not a word of explanation as to why these rather than other mountains were chosen was vouchsafed by any of the majority, and the contention of Sir Louis that the mountains nearest the coast and not others farther inland should be selected was unanswerable. Lord Alverstone's only reply was that he had had to fight hard to get even this line; true, but none the less thereby a compromise line.

But it was the decision with regard to the four islands in or about Portland Canal (or Channel) which most aroused controversy. The United States had contended that the Portland Canal of its discoverer, Vancouver, and of the negotiators, was the body of water to the south of all four islands, which would therefore form part of Alaska; the British had claimed that the Portland Canal ran north of all four. Lord Alverstone stated during the proceedings that he considered the British case unanswerable, and would prepare the opinion. On October 12 he read to the tribunal a memorandum upholding that contention, in which his Canadian colleagues concurred. On the morning of October 17, when the tribunal had assembled but before the vote was taken, Mr. Root, Mr. Lodge and Lord Alverstone at different times retired from the cabinet room together. Then, on putting the question to vote, instead of asking whether Portland Canal ran north or south, Lord Alverstone, as chairman, asked first, whether it ran north or south of Pearse and Wales, to which all six answered north, and then, whether it ran north or south of Sitklan and Kannaghunut, to which they answered south, four to two. Until that moment, Lord Alverstone's Canadian colleagues had had no faintest suggestion that he had changed his mind. Some days later Lord Alverstone filed as his judgment a document which was later shown by Mr. J. S. Ewart, in what has been considered a classic work of legal reconstruction, to be simply the original judgment, slightly and illogically revised and still containing passages wholly inconsistent with the amended conclusion. The United States members also filed an opinion which, after stating fairly the reasons which led them to award Pearse and Wales to Canada, tapered into exceeding thin and scarcely serious arguments for awarding the other islands to the United States: in sum, that Vancouver might have been looking up Tongass Passage when he named the channel beyond Portland Canal, wherefore T. P. was P. C, and that had they themselves done the naming, they would have considered T. P. better entitled to the name.

Mr. Aylesworth and Sir Louis Jetté refused to sign the award. In their judgments they attacked the majority's award as unjudicial. The majority finding as to the islands, declared Sir Louis, was "totally unsupported either by argument or authority and it was, moreover, illogical." Mr. Aylesworth denounced it as "nothing less than a grotesque travesty of justice," "no decision upon judicial principles" but "a mere compromise dividing the field between the two contestants." In a letter in the "Times," they stated, for the immediate information of their countrymen, their reasons for dissent.

The storm of protest that followed in Canada was vigorous, wide-spread, and sustained beyond anything in the country's annals. "Canada again offered as a sacrifice on the altar of Anglo-American friendship," was the theme of a hundred journals. The uncritical assumption which prevailed in most quarters that the Canadian case was much stronger than it actually was, an exaggerated estimate of the strategic value of the islands awarded the United States, as commanding the probable terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific, the belief, only partially founded, that in previous boundary disputes the United States had been presented by British diplomats with great areas of Canadian soil, and particularly the circumstances of the appointment of the United States judges and the summer's rumours of Lord Alverstone's defection, swelled the chorus. Naturally President Roosevelt's joyous shout, "It is the greatest *diplomatic* victory of our time," did not help matters. Not that it was against the jurists chosen by the President of the United States that the Canadian cry was raised. It was not the petulant complaint of a poor loser. It was the just anger of the man who considered himself the victim of a confidence game. Upon Lord Alverstone's head there descended a stream of epithets, and the stock of British statesmen fell far below par. Men began to talk of independence as less dangerous than imperial connection. When Mr. Aylesworth returned, had he given the word, an agitation that might have carried far would have been begun. But Mr. Aylesworth wanted no agitation; at a banquet in Toronto early in November, while reiterating his view of the award, he

spoke of his pride and pleasure in British connection; "*Civis Romanus sum*," was now bettered by Macdonald's "British subjects we were born, British subjects we will die." "Had he told the whole story," declared the Toronto "Globe" next day, "such a fire would have been kindled as neither imperialistic exhortation nor trade preferences would soon put out. That Mr. Aylesworth understood is plainly the secret of his restraint and moderation."

Parliament was about to adjourn after a long and lively railway session, when the decisions were rendered. On the last day, October 23, a short but significant debate was held. At that time few details of what had occurred were available. Mr. Bourassa, who raised the question, defended Lord Alverstone, contending that Canada had no case as to the inlets; the island verdict, however, was plainly diplomatic; Canada could not expect more from British connection. Mr. Robert Borden attacked Sir Wilfrid in a robustly Canadian speech, because he had not linked up the Alaska boundary and the Isthmian canal, because he had accepted an even number of commissioners after previous protests, because he did not appoint three Canadians, and particularly because he did not insist on the findings being subject to ratification by the Canadian parliament.

Sir Wilfrid declared the outcome was a deep disappointment to him. As to the inlets, while there was much to be said on both sides, he had thought, after reading both cases, Canada had the better; but as to the islands, the judgment was simply inexplicable. When he had agreed to the suggestion that the Lord Chief Justice should be appointed, he had believed him fair and sound, and would continue in this faith until he had an opportunity to read his reasoned judgment in full. The treaty was good, better than any previous draft. The United States appointments, however, transformed the situation. The government had protested, but the treaty was ratified over their protest. Then he continued, in an outburst of unusual vigour:

What were we to do? I have often regretted, Mr. Speaker, and never more than on the present occasion, that we are living beside a great neighbour who I believe I can say without being deemed unfriendly to them, are very grasping in their national actions, and who are determined on every occasion to get the best in any agreement which they make. I have often regretted also that while they are a great and powerful nation, we are only a small colony, a growing colony, but still a colony. I have often regretted also that we have not in our own hands the treaty-making power which would enable us to dispose of our own affairs. But in this matter we are dealing with a position that was forced upon us—we have not the treaty-making power. I am sorry to say that the whole correspondence which we have had upon this question since 1896 has not yet been placed before parliament. I am sorry not only that we have not the treaty-making power, but that we are not in such an independent position that it is in my power to place before parliament the whole of the correspondence as it passed between the Canadian government and the British government. But we shall have that correspondence and it will be placed before parliament at the next session,—the whole of it, no matter what protest may come from abroad, we shall have the whole of it, and then this country may know exactly what has taken place and what share of responsibility must rest upon each of the parties concerned in this matter. But we have no such power. Our hands are tied to a large extent, owing to the fact of our connection—which has its benefits, but which has also its disadvantages—the fact of our connection with the mother country making us not free agents and obliging us to deal with questions affecting ourselves through the instrumentality of British ambassadors. . . . The difficulty as I conceive it is not there [with Lord Alverstone]. The difficulty as I conceive it to be, is that so long as Canada remains a dependency of the British Crown the present powers that we have are not sufficient for the maintenance of our rights. It is important that we should ask the British parliament for more extensive powers so that if ever we have to deal with matters of a similar nature again, we shall deal with them in our own way, in our own fashion, according to the best light that we have.

When the full facts arrived, Sir Wilfrid expressed his opinion frankly to Lord Alverstone in correspondence. Lord Alverstone began by sending on October 29 a lengthy defence of his stand. Sir Wilfrid replied, acknowledging Lord Alverstone's good intentions, but insisting that "the reasons which you have given in support of your conclusions cannot be reconciled with such a judicial interpretation of the Treaty of 1825 as was imposed upon and expected from the Commission"; and again, that "the decision rendered in regard to Portland Channel cannot be supported on judicial grounds." "The consideration," he continued, referring to the Chief Justice's letter, "that the two islands of Sitklan and Kannaghanut have no value whatever either strategic or otherwise is not a judicial consideration and has simply to be set aside." Lord Alverstone replied: "I desire to state most emphatically that the decisions, whether they were right or wrong, were judicial and founded on no other considerations. I alone am responsible for them, and while I fully recognize your right to hold the opinion that they were wrong, and to express that opinion, you must forgive me pointing out that you are not entitled to suggest that I acted on other than judicial grounds, be the decisions right or wrong." But curiously, he went on, in reply to Sir Wilfrid's last remark, to illustrate his interpretation of a judicial decision: "I wholly dissent from this view. I am clearly of opinion that in determining judicially the questions submitted to the Tribunal . . . it was our duty to take into consideration the value and importance to the parties negotiating of all parts of the territory to which the Treaty applied."

Not all Lord Alverstone's public or private protests could meet the indictment. The conferences with the United States commissioners, the failure to discuss with his Canadian colleagues his change of heart, the framing of the Portland Channel question to permit the answer agreed upon, the evidence of his own amended judgment, the failure of the majority to offer any reasoned argument for either the island or the "S"-mountain finding, were conclusive. It might be

that "that was the only way there could be any award." That was a matter for diplomats, not for judges, to decide. There was no question of his motives. It was simply that he had conceived himself as umpire, not judge, charged with securing an agreement at any cost. It was absurd to charge that his verdict was a deliberate betrayal; in part it was a judicial finding, in part an illustration of the subtle and unconscious effect of a social and political atmosphere in shaping men's opinion of what is expedient and just. Granting that the position of an arbitrator representing his own country in an international dispute was ambiguous, that he was in point of fact considered sometimes a judge, sometimes an advocate or diplomat, the difficulty remained. A judge would presumably seek a judicial finding, not a political compromise; a diplomat would presumably consult his diplomatic colleagues.

It was urged in Lord Alverstone's behalf, by men who admitted that his action was diplomatic, that the diplomacy was sound, since the whole Alaskan strip was not worth a war between Great Britain and the United States. True, but even assuming that a stiffer adherence to what he himself considered just would not have forced the United States commissioners to grant the point, a failure to agree, followed by the publication of the deliberate judgments, would not have meant war. Canada, which had never involved Britain in war with the United States on her own behalf, and had been involved in a war of Britain's was quite as near and quite as aware of the danger and quite as eager to avert it as Lord Alverstone. The Canadian government would not have dreamed of pressing insistence to the point of war, but neither were they prepared to make all the concessions for the sake of peace, or to yield to an argument or a bluff which might with equal force be urged in every difference between the two countries and compel surrender before discussion began.

The Alaska *lisière* was never again so important. With the decline soon after of the Yukon gold-fields, access through its ports became of less moment. Dyea and Skagway soon became as dead as Tyre and Sidon. The controversy was of significance more for its incidental effects, the occasion it gave for bringing Canadian and United States public men into intimate contact, its effect in demonstrating that the national current in Canadian opinion would not necessarily run thereafter in the same channel as the imperial; and the impulse it gave to independent control of foreign affairs.

Sir Wilfrid did not carry out the threat of his October speech. After discussion, he did not press for publication of the correspondence; there were, it was agreed, some comments which it might be as well for international and imperial amity not to make public. As for the treaty-making powers, no immediate and formal demand was made. Nothing was more foreign to Sir Wilfrid's ruling bias than to urge any policy on general and theoretical grounds; not until a concrete issue arose would the demand for wider powers be renewed. When the occasion did arise, in the Waterways treaty with the United States, in the trade conventions with European powers, in the immigration negotiations with Japan, Canada's control over foreign relations was to be quietly, un-dogmatically but surely and steadily advanced.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MASTER OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Laurier as Leader—His Objectivity and Freedom from Resentment—Three Challengers—Israel Tarte—A Lively Past—Quebec and Ontario Critics—Tarte's Campaign for Protection—Laurier Acts—Andrew Blair—Railway Rivalry and Railway Policy—Attempts at Co-operation—The Grand Trunk Pacific—Blair's Opposition—Lord Dundonald and the Militia—Indiscretion and Dismissal—The Montreal Railway Plot—Its Failure—The Elections of 1904.

In the Laurier government's second term of office three men put to the test the question who was to be master. Supported by powerful forces in the country, they raised within the cabinet or within the outer administration, the banner of defiance. Israel Tarte, backed by the embattled manufacturers, challenged Wilfrid Laurier on the issue of protection. Andrew Blair, backed by railway promoters and ambitious newspaper magnates, challenged him on the transcontinental railway policy. Lord Dundonald, with all the force of imperialist sentiment and militia zeal behind him, raised the question whether the cabinet or military officers were to be supreme in determining the country's policy. When the smoke had cleared away, there was no longer room for question.

One challenge proved serious. His health, sustained by unceasing care, broke down during his visit to Europe in 1902. In the following session, he concluded that it would not be possible to go on, and wrote out his resignation for Council. He was persuaded to withhold it, and found reprieve.

When Wilfrid Laurier had first taken the reins of office, there were many who doubted, even after his nine years of party leadership, whether he would be more than the titular head of the government. They did not think it possible that a man so courteous could show himself firm when firmness was called for. Could a leader who had made his fame by his oratory develop the qualities needed to control a ministry and to guide a distracted country through difficult days? The men nearest him in parliament had little doubt, and to many observers outside its walls his skilful handling of the school issue had given the answer. For the others, his first months in power completed the demonstration. A leader in office, with power to bind and to loose, has in any case a surer seat than a leader in opposition, with only hope and disappointment to divide. It was not long until the critics had shifted their attack, and begun to complain of Laurier's masterful and self-willed ways.

The Laurier administration contained many men of strong will who had for years been autocrats in their own fields. Yet from first to last the prime minister was first in fact as in form. His authority was more than once challenged; on one occasion he was forced to compromise after a public announcement of his policy, but to the end he remained the one indispensable man in the government.

As prime minister, Sir Wilfrid was not a hard task-master. He did not intervene in the details of the administration of his colleagues. He believed in giving every minister wide latitude and large responsibility. A Whig by conviction, he was not eager to govern overmuch, and this theoretical leaning was reinforced by the quality of his temperament. He had little of Blake's devouring and constructive interest in detail. "I'm a lazy dog," he was accustomed to say to his friends in his last years. The saying did not do justice to himself even in the days of failing health, much less in the years of unrelenting effort he had given to party and to country in his prime. He gave conscientious and punctilious care to every question that came before him as minister; day and night he sat patiently through endless debates. But it was true that he was not deeply and vitally interested in more than a few questions, and that in this indifference there was rooted a certain indolence and easy-going trust. He would often defer dealing with a rising question or disciplining a colleague whose public policy or private conduct called for a check, until a crisis forced action. Unfailingly and scrupulously honourable in his own dealings with men and women, he was tolerant of other men's failings when they did not directly affect the State.

Nor was he hasty and arbitrary in determining general policy. In cabinet councils he never played the dictator. Each minister in turn would state his point of view on this side and on that, while he himself sat silent or with only a guiding or inquiring word, until every opinion had been set out, when he would sum up the discussion, with rarely erring faculty for getting to the heart of the issue, and give his conclusions as to the course to follow. Men came to criticize him for opportunism, and it was true that he was an opportunist as to means; on principles he would not compromise an inch. Perhaps no more significant judgment has been passed upon his methods than the words uttered in scornful criticism by a Nationalist leader in whose vocabulary there was no such word as half-a-loaf: "He will ask this minister and that his

view, and then he gives his own; he never asks what is ideally best, but merely what is the best that will work." But once his opinion was formed, it was not easily shaken. He never came rashly to a conclusion, but neither, once decided, would he allow his firmness of action to be hampered by vain doubts and reconsiderings.

In the controversies inside and outside the party in which he became involved, Wilfrid Laurier retained the extraordinary objectivity that had marked his judgment and his conduct from early years. Differences of opinion could not disturb his serenity of spirit or his impartiality of judgment. Personal prejudice played little part in shaping his course. He never cherished resentment against a foe who attacked or a friend who failed him. When one in his household who was a much better Laurierite than he was himself would express in good round terms condemnation of some scheming opponent or some faithless friend, he was always ready to say a word in defence. It was not that he did not feel criticism, for he was a sensitive man, but he was genuinely charitable and sympathetic in his interpretation of the motives of others, and he had schooled himself to bear serenely the misinterpretation of his own motives by other men. The practice of authority, the burden of responsibility, the disillusionment of experience, gave a greater wariness to his wary eye, a greater firmness to his firm features, a deeper inscrutability to his inscrutable face. Yet to his intimates he remained the simple, unaffected, kindly friend of the days before power had brought its opportunities and its tasks.

The first challenge to Wilfrid Laurier's authority came from his old school-fellow, Joseph Israel Tarte. Mr. Tarte was not merely the most vivacious and spectacular member of the ministry; he was one of the most remarkable personalities in Canadian political life. A thin, wiry, dapper little man, a bundle of nerves, always on the verge of a complete breakdown in health, he had the restless energy and the reckless courage of a score of physically stronger men. He was never so ill that a taunt would not rouse him from a sick-bed to combat. He loved a fight; he lived for excitement and the applause of the galleries; he delighted in intrigue and in the making and unmaking of ministers and reputations. Keen and nimble of wit, volatile in temper, frank to the point of indiscretion, imperturbable in defeat, he was feared by his enemies and still more by his friends. Notary by profession, he found scope for his qualities in the business of journalism and the game of politics.

As editor of "Le Canadien" in Quebec and of "Le Cultivateur" in Montreal, he had become one of the powers and institutions of his province. Journalism in Quebec had this in common with the journalism of France, that views counted more than news, literary style more than dry facts, personalities often more than party and government, and patronage more than advertising. Israel Tarte's trenchant pen and his knowledge of the innermost secrets of current politics made him a master in this art. While he had a power of fiery oratory, he was never as successful on the platform as in his editor's chair; on the platform he was often carried to reckless lengths by his own imagination and the applause of his hearers, but with pen in hand he was as shrewd and cool as the surgeon with his knife.

In the game that politics appeared to him, Israel Tarte had played many parts. Never in Canadian politics has even a contractor or a railway promoter made so many and so sharp curves; "chameleon," "weather-cock," were the standard epithets of whoever happened to be his enemies of the moment. At St. Lin in 1874 he had been a Conservative of the Cartier school, leaning to Gallicanism and launching editorial broadsides against "Le Nouveau-Monde." In Quebec in 1875 he was ultramontane, programmist, out-Veuilloting Veuillot, swearing by Mgr. Bourget and Mgr. Laflèche, "every day offering up hecatombs of Liberals, Gallicans, Free Masons in the columns of 'Le Canadien.'" Then he turned upon the ultramontanes of his province, but still held to Rome: "Mon étoile c'est Rome; ma boussole, c'est le Saint-Siège," and then when the Jesuits' Estates question arose, Rome itself lost favour. He denounced Messieurs Sénécal and Dansereau as a shameless and befouling clique, and then in 1883 he made a visit to Paris in their company and came back *sénécaleux*. He denounced Chapleau as corrupt, faithless, disloyal, incapable of friendship, and then became his intimate friend. In 1880 he worked with Langevin to unhorse Chapleau; in 1890 he worked with Chapleau to expose Langevin. He put his flag at half-mast when Riel was hanged and next week defended the hanging. He attacked Laurier as a man without principle, without conviction, without patriotism, without ideals, but with a certain astuteness and ability to hide his lack of principles, and then he became Laurier's lieutenant in Quebec. He was against Mercier; for him; against him; for him again. He accepted McGreevy's money to support "Le Canadien" and later coolly exposed McGreevy and the hoodling from which these very funds had been drawn. It was not surprising that such a career exposed him in his turn to merciless fire, as when Thomas Chapais, son-in-law of Sir Hector, in "Le Courrier du Canada," in 1896, depicted Joseph Israel as "renegade . . . sophist . . . dragging after him, like a galley-slave, the long chain of his treasons, his shameful recantations, his covetousness, now gluttoned, now balked; burning with desire for men's esteem in spite of his past, and raging within under the cruel prick of the scorn with which he feels himself covered even by those who make use of him." To all which Mr. Tarte would jauntily reply that the man who never changed his mind never used his mind.

When in 1891 Mr. Tarte began to print his *petits papiers*, and became for the first time a Canadian figure, he was doubtless more concerned to drive Sir Hector Langevin out of the Conservative party than to leave it himself. But a political quarrel is easier to start than to stop, and soon Sir John Thompson was able to "wish Mr. Laurier joy of his black Tarte and his yellow Martin." Mr. Tarte adopted the Liberal policy on the tariff and on the school question, and in 1896 threw himself vigorously into organizing western Quebec. The portfolio of Public Works was his reward.

Few men knew Israel Tarte better than Wilfrid Laurier. Few men had less sympathy with his indulgence in personalities and his cynical and sudden changes of front. Mr. Laurier was warned that he too would be betrayed: "who has drunk will drink; who has betrayed will betray." Yet he insisted on giving his old enemy a foremost place in the cabinet. Like Honoré Mercier, he "never asked whence a man had come but whither he was going"; he was anxious to win over those men of the old Cartier school who were truly Liberal-Conservatives; he knew that Mr. Tarte was personally honest; he wanted a vigorous fighter; he believed that office would be a better cement than opposition, and, at bottom, he had no little personal liking and esteem for the old schoolmate whose path had crossed his own so often.

The old stalwarts in the Liberal ranks in Quebec could not regard the matter so philosophically. On principle, the men in the Montreal district questioned, as usual, the promotion of any men from the Quebec district, while the Quebecers could not forget old feuds and aching wounds. Uncompromising Radicals wanted no Conservatives of the school of Cartier or of any other. Either Raymond Préfontaine or Dr. Beausoleil or M. E. Bernier could easily have suggested one better choice. But when not only Tarte but all his friends were seen to be in favour, and particularly when it was rumoured that Sir Adolphe Chapleau was to be given a renewal of his term as lieutenant-governor, for his neutrality in the 1896 election, the dissatisfaction broke into open revolt. François Langelier, member, minister, *bâtonnier-général*, Dean of the Law Faculty in Laval, who had fought for the party and for freedom of speech against heavy odds, and who, it was claimed, had himself been promised the lieutenant-governorship in a letter from Mr. Laurier in July, 1896, publicly denounced the Tarte ascendancy in the following December: "I am sorry to see the Tartes, Dansereaus, DeCelles, Drolets, Patersons, Chapleaus, and others of that ilk discussing the party's affairs; they were Conservatives yesterday and they are Conservatives still, while we old Liberals are in the dark. . . . A coalition with Chapleau is under way." When from attacking Tarte and Chapleau, François Langelier's younger brother, Charles, formerly minister in the Mercier government, went on in the following autumn to attack the prime minister in public, and to write him privately to complain of the ostracism of the Langelier family and the folly of rewarding treason by honouring Chapleau, Sir Wilfrid took the position sufficiently indicated in the following letter to Charles Langelier:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Charles Langelier.—Translation)

Ottawa, October 25, [1897](#)

MY DEAR CHARLES:

. . . . Let me say first that I am far from finding anything to criticize in the remarks that you have made in opposition to the idea of giving Chapleau a second term. I appreciate the motive which prompts you, and I appreciate equally the reasoning by which you support your case. I regret that you did not write me this letter a month ago, or our relations would not have taken the turn they have. . . .

What I have to complain of in your conduct is that you did not see fit to write me . . . but instead did your best to stir up public opinion and arouse discontent among my constituents. I am the chief of the party and I bear the responsibility. I am far from pretending to infallibility, and I am ready, on every occasion, to receive the advice and counsel, and even the remonstrances of my friends. I do not say that I will always conform to their way of thinking, but I do assert stoutly that I will always be happy to receive their remonstrances and their counsel and advice, and that I will not make up my own mind until after I have weighed all their representations with care. . . .

I regret quite as much as you do the differences I have had with François. It is true that I did not take him into the cabinet in July, [1896](#), but I do not think that the fault was mine. You must be hunting grievances and ready to create them when you write me that "he was discarded from the ministry, by means of intrigues as to which I have my suspicions, and Mr. Dobell, who a day before had called himself a Conservative, became a minister." I never understood that François wished to be a minister without portfolio. What I have understood since the formation of the cabinet was that he wished to be a minister with portfolio, probably in the place of Sir Henri Joly, but as he had told me before that time of his desire to go on the bench, I thought he would not object to waiting for an opening. I was wrong, and I must bear the responsibility. I regret more than any one that François did not confide to me, before the elections, any intention he may have had to stay in politics. In the only communication that I had with him on this subject he declared to me positively that he intended to withdraw. No one has more esteem than I for François, no one recognizes more fully than I do the great services he has rendered the party.

With François Langelier appointed judge of the Superior Court in 1898,—and knighted in 1907 and made Lieutenant-governor in 1911,—and with Charles appointed sheriff of Quebec in 1901, the storm died down in that quarter,^[24] though there remained many another Quebec Liberal, and particularly Raymond Préfontaine of Montreal, unreconciled to the Tarte régime. On the positive side, the policy of conciliating the old Cartier wing of Conservatism had only a

temporary success. As to Sir Adolphe Chapleau, the relations were close and friendly. Sir Adolphe never found it hard to prefer a Liberal to a Castor. His attitude is indicated in a letter of this period:

(Sir Adolphe Chapleau to Wilfrid Laurier.—Translation)

Montreal, February 21, [1897](#)

MY DEAR LAURIER:

I am going to communicate to-day to your colleague, Mr. Tarte, the information I have gathered as to the position in Quebec. I do not think that the newspapers are correct in forecasting a hostile declaration on the part of the episcopate; the bishops realize now that a movement is impossible, even in the House of Commons, and the clear-cut declaration which will, I hope, be made by the Quebec cabinet as soon as the proclamation is issued for the general provincial elections, will give a finishing stroke, in excluding federal questions entirely from the electoral programme of the government of Quebec.

The election in St. Boniface has surprised no one and will, I think, have no result other than to quiet temper by the satisfaction it will give to the *amour propre* of the Archbishop of St. Boniface. If the result of the provincial elections is what I expect, not to say what I am preparing, I believe that the Manitoba school question will soon become, from the political point of view, a thing of the past, which the moderation, tolerance and good-will of your friends in Manitoba may lead the people to forget before they are once more called upon to choose new representatives in the Commons. We have seen many of these burning questions cool down and settle themselves merely by the passing of time and by the oblivion into which the rapidity of modern life hurls everything. The "Castors," in the battle of June 23, lost their head and their tail; their teeth and claws are worn down; even breath is failing for their cries and their movements, and I hope that before the date of the Queen's Jubilee we shall be able to say that this race of rodents is extinct and figures henceforth only in catalogues of extinct species.

And later, in April:

I have asked Dansereau to tell you that if my witness to the Ablegate can be of service in the cause of conciliation, I shall consider it a duty to give it to him.

The appointment of Sir Adolphe to a second term was considered, but finally rejected. Other arrangements were under discussion when his death in 1898, at the age of fifty-eight, ended his ambitions of this world. Others of his school remained, of whom the most influential was Arthur Dansereau, another schoolmate of L'Assomption, and for many a year the most influential Conservative journalist in the Montreal district. Appointed postmaster of Montreal by the Conservatives, he had still continued to take a hand in politics, and had joined Chapleau in the new orientation. In 1899 this situation was suddenly disturbed by William Mulock, who, knowing nothing of Dansereau in his rôle as a political power behind the scenes, and knowing only that he was a very careless and inefficient head of the most important post-office in Canada, summarily dismissed him. Sir Wilfrid at once insisted on a reversal: appoint an assistant with more business capacity, enlist Dansereau's own interest, but do not dismiss him out of hand. Dansereau's pride was salved, but the incident set him thinking once more of journalism, and journalism of a Conservative trend. In Montreal, the chief French-Canadian newspaper, "La Presse," owned by M. Berthiaume, for many years Conservative with independent leanings, had latterly been independent with Liberal leanings; now the situation was changing again. "La Patrie," founded by an uncompromising Radical, M. Beaugrand, had been purchased in 1897, mainly by Liberal party funds, and was then put under the control of Mr. Tarte's two sons: it was filling the Liberal field. The old Conservative organ "La Minerve," now that the stream of patronage had been diverted, could not make ends meet, and was about to disappear. Naturally, the owner of "La Presse" found it expedient to lean toward Conservatism, and its old editor felt again the call of the chair. Writing to Sir Wilfrid at Washington, Mr. Tarte explained the situation:

(Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier.—Translation)

Ottawa, February 7, [1899](#)

. . . Here is the situation as I understand it. "La Minerve," which Nantel, Leblanc and others have taken over, is at its last shift. It cannot last much longer. Nantel, who has lost twenty thousand in "Le Monde," "Le Canadien" and "La Minerve," has made arrangements with Berthiaume and Dansereau by which he goes in with "La Presse." This settled, Berthiaume's task is to prevent the establishment of another Conservative journal. Taking Dansereau as editor-in-chief, he circulates the rumour that "La Presse" will be independent, which means that if Sir Charles, Beaubien and others establish a journal, he will fight them. While these rumours are being circulated in the street, negotiations are going on with Sir Charles Tupper. In other words, if no other Conservative journal is founded, it will be because "La Presse" has given guaranties to the Conservative party.

"La Patrie" is beginning to cut very seriously into the circulation of "La Presse." This rivalry is causing intense worry to Berthiaume, who, in the past, has been master of the field, and has imposed his terms on the Conservative party before every general election, and on the City Council.

And again, a day later:

The Dansereau incident causes me more chagrin than alarm. . . . I do not blame Mulock, with whom I have always been and am still on the best of terms. The radical element in Quebec has forced us to treat Chapleau as if he had been a common valet. We have refused him even the respite which we gave to the Lieutenant-Governor of the smallest of our provinces, who had always been our opponent. And now the man who, with me, exercised the greatest influence over Chapleau, is dismissed—for that is the meaning of his leave of absence—without you or me being informed. I repeat I have more chagrin than fear. In my day I have not feared many things or many men. But I have always tried, in politics as elsewhere, to cherish gratitude.

To which Sir Wilfrid replied:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte.—Translation)

Washington, February 11, [1899](#)

. . . I agree with you that Mulock was too precipitate with regard to Dansereau, but he retrieved that initial error with much address and *savoir vivre*. . . . In brief, it was not he who provoked Dansereau's dismissal, but Dansereau himself. . . .

I am convinced from the correspondence I have had with Dansereau that he is not going into "La Presse" with the purpose of combatting us. But this result is inevitable. He will be led on by a word, an act, steadily and step by step into a path first of friendly criticism but which will end in open hostility. All that will go on unconsciously and it will only be when the rupture is irreparable that it will be perceived. What I regret in all this, is that we are going to lose in all probability, certainly in great part, all the sanest and most reasonable element in the school of Cartier, which was on the point of joining definitely with us. . . .

All that you say of the radical school and of the difficulties it caused us in the autumn of 1897 has nothing to do with the situation which now presents itself. If Chapleau had lived, it would have been easy enough to prove our gratitude, I believe, for what he did for us, and I know that the proposition of a post on the International Commission would have been acceptable to him. As to Dansereau, he has nothing to complain of in our conduct, and the fact is that he has not complained. More, I am sure that it is still possible to induce him to go along with us openly and squarely, but this subject would be too long to discuss here and must await my return to Ottawa.

But it was not long until Mr. Tarte's critics in Quebec were forgotten in the storm raised by his critics in Ontario. During the South African War, Israel Tarte was the heaviest electoral liability the Liberals carried in English-speaking Canada. In his stand on the sending of the contingents he had shown immensely more courage, more sense of constitutional order and of national self-respect than the mobs that howled at him, and in cooler times his position came to be appreciated, but at the moment it cost the party many votes. His utterances in Paris and in London in 1900 were impromptu indiscretions more difficult to defend, and very serviceable to his enemies. "Shall Tarte rule?" was the Conservative war-cry in Ontario in 1900.

With the government returned for a second term and old issues were forgotten in the rush of unaccustomed prosperity, Mr. Tarte began to expand in new directions. His duties as Minister of Public Works took him from end to end of the Dominion, and turned his thoughts to economic programmes. The tide of immigration had brought to Canada new prosperity and new confidence; the tariff attitude of the United States had quickened the spirit of economic nationalism, and traffic congestion was stimulating programmes of canal- and railway-building. Mr. Tarte constituted himself the chief apostle of a new gospel of transportation and tariff: "Outbuild the Americans in canals, harbours, ships; build a tariff wall as high as Dingley's," became the burden of his speeches. A tariff fight or any other fight appealed to his pugnacity; to promise lavish harbour facilities to cheering audiences in every lake or ocean town, or to let it be gathered that only the short-sighted and small-minded parsimony of his colleagues prevented a definite promise, was a labour of love.

For a time, this programme raised no serious difficulty. Colleagues complained that Mr. Tarte was encroaching on their departmental preserves or affecting to determine the policy of the whole cabinet on important issues, but after all, Israel Tarte was Israel Tarte, and a certain amount of effervescence was inevitable. In the summer of 1902 the situation became more critical. The prime minister was overseas, attending the Colonial Conference in London and interviewing French ministers in Paris. Alarming newspaper reports began to be published of his illness and obvious fatigue. Private reports intimated that the illness was more serious. As a matter of fact, it proved to be touch and go.

To Israel Tarte the news, from a private and reliable source, of Sir Wilfrid's illness, doubtless brought regret, but it also spelled opportunity. Here was a situation made to the hand of an adroit and ambitious politician. If Sir Wilfrid was forced by ill-health to retire, upon whom would his mantle fall? Mr. Fielding had been considered by the public the natural successor, but that was by no means inevitable. Mr. Tarte felt that he himself held the winning cards. Quebec was his, writhing and grumbling it might be, but with opposition beaten down, Ontario could be made his. It might not like his imperial views, but in the long run pocket would come before principles; make himself the champion of high protection, and his political heresies would be forgotten. Accordingly Mr. Tarte speeded up his protectionist campaign. We must

have a strong tariff, he told the cheering Canadian Manufacturers' Association at its annual banquet in August. At Bowmanville he declared that if he were really the "Master of the Administration," as the Conservatives loved to call him, he "would take the tariff item by item and adjust it so as to save to Canada the profit of the exportation of her resources and build up a nation here." At Toronto in September he pictured the benefits of a protected home market to farmers, and urged following the United States' example; in Montreal he repeated "my belief and the belief of the Manufacturers' Association in higher protection." In the same month he began a royal progress, investigating cotton-mills, woollen-mills, boot and shoe factories, receiving municipal addresses, and replying in vigorous protectionist appeals. "From the first of September to the autumn equinox," declared "Le Soleil," "we count over one hundred speeches, one hundred harangues, one hundred pronunciamientos, every one as incoherent as the rest. . . . Sweating, puffing, panting, he did not merely run, he flew, he whirled, from North Bay to Essex,—for Ontario was the key to success."^[25]

Naturally, this audacious campaign did not go unrebuked. Mr. Sifton announced in an interview that any attempt to revive the "discredited Tory policy" of high protection would meet with the strenuous opposition of every Liberal elected west of Lake Superior." The Toronto "Globe," the "Manitoba Free Press," the Halifax "Chronicle," "Le Soleil," the Montreal "Herald" and the "Witness," defended the tariff as a fair and reasonable adjustment and insisted that it was not for Mr. Tarte to speak the mind of the cabinet or of the party: to which Mr. Tarte replied in a telegram to the editor of the "Witness": "May I ask you to state in your paper that I will be in the Liberal party long after you are dead and buried? If your views on the fiscal policy of the country were known to be those of the party, we would be defeated at the next general elections by the same overwhelming majority that the same views received in 1878."

October came, and Sir Wilfrid. He had been kept informed how things were going, and lost no time in acting. He reached Quebec on the morning of October 18 and Ottawa late that night. Next day he called on Mr. Tarte, and the following morning had a second interview. Sir Wilfrid did not temporize; he considered Mr. Tarte's course unpardonable and demanded his resignation. On October 20 Mr. Tarte placed a letter of resignation in his hands:

(Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier)

Toronto, [20](#) October, [1902](#)

MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

I feel it is my duty to place my resignation in your hands, and to ask you to be good enough to have it accepted by His Excellency the Governor-General. . . .

You told me that my utterances are causing you trouble. I have no right and no desire to be a source of embarrassment to you or to the party with which I have been connected since 1892.

My views on the tariff are well known to you. I have on several occasions stated them publicly in your presence, and discussed them often privately with you.

Entertaining the opinion that the interests of the Canadian people make it our duty to revise, without delay, the tariff of 1897, with the view of giving a more adequate protection to our industries, to our farming community, to our workingmen, I cannot possibly remain silent.

I prefer my freedom of action and of speech, under the circumstances, even to the great honour of being your colleague.

Before severing my official relations with you, allow me to express my sincerest hope that you will soon be restored to your health of former days.

You would greatly oblige me by conveying to my colleagues my best wishes for their welfare and their happiness. My personal relations with most of them, have been of a pleasant and cordial nature. I hope they will continue to be the same in future.

Believe me, my dear Sir Wilfrid,

Very sincerely yours,

J. ISRAEL TARTE.

In a personal note, Sir Wilfrid replied: "I thank you for your good wishes; and you may be certain that I regret very sincerely that our official relations are ending in this manner, but the separation was inevitable." In a formal reply he gave his reasons for his course:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte)

Ottawa, [21](#) October, [1902](#)

MY DEAR TARTE:

After having seen you on Sunday last and having expressed to you my well-settled opinion upon the consequences of your recent attitude, my first duty was to wait upon His Excellency the Governor-General to inform him that I was obliged to demand the resignation of your portfolio.

After having seen His Excellency, I had to acquaint my colleagues of the interview which I had had with you.

In accepting your resignation, it is well to emphasize the points of difference between us.

During my absence in Europe, without any communication with me, and without any previous understanding with your colleagues, you began an active campaign in favour of an immediate revision of the tariff in the direction of high protection.

I regret having been obliged to observe to you that this attitude on your part constitutes a self-evident violation of your duty towards the government of which you were a member.

I repeat to you here what I told you on Sunday: I do not wish to discuss, at this moment, the economic theory of which you have made yourself the champion. This question, however important it might be, is subordinate to one still more important.

If you had reached the conclusion that the interest of the country demanded without delay, an increase of the custom duties, the first thing for you to do as a member of the government, before addressing your views to the public, would have been to place them before your colleagues, with the object of obtaining that unanimous action of the cabinet which is the very foundation of responsible government.

If you had not been able to obtain from your colleagues their assent to the course which you recommended, you would have been obliged then either to accept their own views or to sever your connection with them, and then for the first time would you have been free to place your views before the public.

Such was the very simple course which was binding upon you; but to remain a member of the government, and, at the same time, to advocate a policy which has not yet been adopted by the government, was an impediment to the proper working of our constitutional system, and implies a disregard for that loyalty which all those who are members of the same administration owe to each other and have a right to expect from each other.

I thank you for the good wishes which you express for the improvement of my health, and I will make it my duty to convey to your old colleagues those that you formulate for their welfare and their happiness.

A sequel to this exchange may be appended:

(Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier.—Translation)

Montreal, January 26, [1903](#)

MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

. . . I am convinced that a good majority of the Liberal party in the Province of Ontario is in favour of protection. You say that I am wrong. We have reached what in English is called "the parting of the ways." One or other of us is mistaken. My firm conviction is that it is you who are wrong. Questions of fact are in the end the easiest to decide.

(Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte.—Translation)

Ottawa, January 27, [1903](#)

MY DEAR TARTE:

I have just received your letter of yesterday. You forget that Ontario is not the only province in Confederation, and you forgot equally that it is not good politics to try to force the hand of the government. You have thought good to make yourself the champion of protection à *outrance*. I have no more to say on that point, as we have exhausted it. But I believe more firmly than ever that in your own interest and in the interest of the party, you were a thousand times wrong. There is no more reason now than there was three months ago for us to launch out into a new policy when nothing has happened to warrant a different orientation from that we have followed hitherto. It is not, as you contend, merely a question of fact; it is also a question of seasonableness. The question of the tariff is in good shape, if no one seeks to force the issue.

The incident was closed. Israel Tarte went out and Raymond Préfontaine came in. Sadly Mr. Tarte realized how much he had owed to his pedestal. The realization had been driven home the first day. Leaving Ottawa on October 19, he had gone to Toronto to attend a banquet given in the National Club the following day to Colonel Denison, president of the British Empire League, of which he was himself a member. Men were there who had cheered and backed him in his recent crusade, and they cheered him now when he arose, until his frank words, "I am not here as a member of the Dominion government. Am I a member of the Dominion cabinet? Being a minister is a very temporary occupation," explained the situation. Then the cheering broke and died away and if Israel Tarte as he gazed about him had never been cynical before, he must have been cynical then as he saw how suddenly men lost interest when he could no longer serve their cause. Not all, for he could make and keep warm friends. The manufacturers, keen to support him when it was thought the whole cabinet might be induced or bludgeoned into a pledge of higher protection, cooled when it was found he stood alone; they waited for a more promising season.

Mr. Tarte went back to journalism, becoming political director of "La Patrie." When a group of leading Liberals, Senator Béique, Senator Dandurand, Victor Geoffrion, M. P., and Lomer Gouin, M. L. A., requested him to return "La Patrie" for a financial consideration, to the Liberal party which had developed it, Mr. Tarte replied loftily that his pen was not for sale; that "La Patrie" had originally been founded by a few friends who were not represented among those who now approached him; that he was now its political director but had no financial interest, and that he wished them joy if they founded a new organ, to be, like other organs, "purchased, nourished and gorged." Mr. Tarte remained in control and "Le Canada" was established by the Liberal party with Godefroi Langlois as editor. In the next few months he drifted steadily back to his old camp; before the year was over he was contesting F. D. Monk's claim to the Conservative leadership in Quebec, and early in 1904 Mr. Monk felt himself forced to retire. Sir Wilfrid remained friendly, though no longer intimate. When Mr. Préfontaine had an elaborate brochure prepared, raking up all Israel Tarte's past, Sir Wilfrid, despite the fact that Mr. Tarte was criticizing the party vigorously, requested its suppression. He would not fight any man with personalities, least of all one who had been a friend.

The second challenge to Wilfrid Laurier's authority came from his Minister of Railways. Andrew George Blair had not the picturesque personality nor the acrobatic record of Israel Tarte, but he knew as much as any man in Canada of the seamy side of politics. Entering the New Brunswick legislature in 1878 as a Liberal in a hopelessly Conservative house, he succeeded in becoming leader of the Opposition in 1882 and premier after the general elections a year later. For thirteen years he gave New Brunswick cautiously progressive administration. A capable man of business, a plain and somewhat prosy speaker, his chief power lay in his capacity for silence. In the federal cabinet, the importance of transportation questions made his position pivotal.

The opening of the West, with the inpouring of settlers, the shipping out of grain, the quickening of Eastern industries and not least the growth of national confidence it involved, gave fresh urgency and a new angle to canal and railway development: railways to open up new areas of plain and prairie, railways to develop the unknown mining and forest treasures of northern Ontario and Quebec, railways to carry the wheat of the West to Eastern ports, canals and river and harbour betterments to funnel this traffic to the sea, railways to bind the country together, railways to give fat contracts to promoters and merchants, railways to keep the price of real estate soaring, railways to wind through the constituencies of as many M. P.'s as conceivable, were once again demanded. After 1902, "railways are our politics" became true once more.

The transportation policy of the Laurier government was in many respects progressive and efficient. In establishing an independent railway commission of wide powers to control rates and service, in bringing to an end the practice of granting huge areas of Western land as subsidy, and compelling the companies to which land had already been granted to choose and patent their allotment instead of holding, as before, a blanket-mortgage on vast areas, and by extending the Intercolonial to Montreal and doing something to improve its administration, the government lived up to its promises and the country's needs. The problem of ensuring that Canada should have the new roads it needed to serve its new estates, and not more than it needed, was more involved, and the government's success in handling it then and now a matter of more controversy.

In dealing with this problem the government was not working in a vacuum. Its ends and its means were largely predetermined. The political end of welding into one a country which geography had made many, called for new links between East and West, roads far to the north to give breadth as well as length to Canada, roads that would carry Canadian goods to Canadian ports. The economic ends, a network of railways spreading settlers through the prairie West, roads to develop the unknown north of Ontario and Quebec, roads to bridge the gap between Western wheat-fields and Eastern factories, were equally matters of general agreement. Of the means which might serve these ends, the Canadian Pacific was ruled out by the public's fear of monopoly and the hesitancy in new enterprise which had marked the road since the early nineties; the Canadian Northern had not yet fully revealed its ambitions and its potentialities, and the Intercolonial or any other government agency was barred by the distrust of state operation on the part of the majority in the Cabinet. There remained the Grand Trunk, a well-established system serving an excellent territory, long water-logged and under absentee control, but now, under Charles M. Hays, taking a fresh lease of life.

The Grand Trunk in 1902 had determined to seek its share of Western traffic. It had already some share in this traffic; a branch from Toronto to North Bay tapped the main line of the Canadian Pacific and served as the link with Ontario

towns. But this connection was secondary and precarious; the new management was convinced that the Grand Trunk must build its own feeders in the prairies and its own bridge across the Lake Superior wilderness if it was to share in the growing fortunes of the West or even hold its own. Accordingly in November, 1902, George A. Cox, a Liberal senator and successful business man, C. M. Hays and William Wainwright, vice-president of the Grand Trunk, petitioned the government to grant a cash subsidy of six thousand dollars and a land subsidy of five thousand acres, per mile, with tax exemptions, for the construction of a road of twenty-five hundred miles running from North Bay to the Pacific coast. The proposal was not acceptable. The government had determined to make no more land grants to railways; the Grand Trunk plan did not provide for the development of the Hudson Bay basin; it would mean that the existing Atlantic terminus of the Grand Trunk,—Portland,—or one of the southern New England ports toward which Hays was feeling, rather than a Canadian port, would be built up by the traffic of the Canadian West. Negotiations continued, resulting in the summer of 1903 in an agreement upon a project which included the essential features of both the government's and the Grand Trunk's programmes. A new transcontinental was to be built running from Moncton in New Brunswick through Quebec city, and the timber-lands and clay belt of northern Quebec and Ontario, to Winnipeg and thence through Edmonton to the Pacific. The western half from Winnipeg to the coast was to be built by a new company, the Grand Trunk Pacific, aided by a partial government guarantee of bonds; the eastern half, known as the National Transcontinental, was to be built by the government through a commission, and leased for 3 per cent. of its cost by the Grand Trunk Pacific.

It was known that negotiations were under way, but before any official announcement had been made the public were startled by the resignation of Mr. Blair because of dissent from the government's policy. The G. T. P. agreement had been accepted by the cabinet, Mr. Blair alone dissenting, and endorsed in a party caucus, before the resignation was definitely tendered and accepted. On July 16 the correspondence exchanged between Mr. Blair and the prime minister was made public and explanations offered in the House.

There were specific differences of policy between Mr. Blair and his colleagues. Every member of the cabinet had a railway policy, and the Minister of Railways could not be behind. During the winter of 1902-03, he had declared himself in favour of an immediate extension of the Intercolonial to Georgian Bay, linking up by water in summer with the Canadian Northern, and the gradual building of a new government-owned road from Quebec to a Winnipeg junction point and perhaps eventually through to the Pacific. He was opposed to the Moncton extension, opposed to immediate construction of the Quebec-Winnipeg section, and opposed, not so much to entrusting the enterprise to any private company as to entrusting it to the Grand Trunk. While in favour of state construction, he was not committed to state operation, holding open the alternative of lease to any private company. While his colleagues were prepared to enter partnership with the Grand Trunk, Mr. Blair preferred to link up with the Canadian Northern. Still more fundamental as a cause of the break was the lack of complete confidence. Mr. Blair declared to Sir Wilfrid in his letter of resignation:

The Grand Trunk proposition had been made to you, and you had consulted with other ministers and these ministers had met Mr. Hays on several occasions, as I am advised, with your knowledge and approval, long before you made me aware that negotiations or discussions on this subject had been entered upon or were being prosecuted. . . . I reconciled myself to the very obvious slight which had been cast upon me on the ground that probably your knowledge of my views on the general question did not encourage you to expect I would look with much favour upon, or render much assistance toward carrying out, the object you had in view.

Certainly this ignoring of the Minister of Railways in framing a railway policy required an explanation, but the explanation was not the one Mr. Blair supplied. The reason for thus ignoring him in the earlier stages and the ultimate reason for the retirement was simply that in view of the character and ambitions of some of the men who had made Mr. Blair their friend, Sir Wilfrid was not prepared to confide to him the power to determine the general question of policy, or the privilege of allotting or guiding any contract that might require to be let. He was determined that there would be no second Pacific scandal.

No more serious blow could have been inflicted upon the government than the resignation of the Minister of Railways a fortnight before its railway policy was to be submitted to the House. Yet there could be no drawing back, and on July 30 Sir Wilfrid laid the plan before parliament.

That a transcontinental road should be built, Sir Wilfrid declared, all were agreed; agreed further that it must be wholly on Canadian soil. But that it should be built immediately not all were agreed:

To those who urge upon us the policy of to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow, to those who tell us, wait, wait, wait; to those who advise us to pause, to consider, to reflect, to calculate and to inquire, our answer is: No, this is not a time for deliberation, this is a time for action. The flood-tide is upon us that leads on to fortune; if we let it pass it may never recur again. If we let it pass, the voyage of our national life, bright as it is to-day, will be bound in shallows. We cannot wait because time does not wait; we cannot wait, because in these days of wonderful development, time lost is doubly lost; we cannot wait, because at this moment there is a transformation going on in the conditions of our national life which it would be a

folly to ignore and a crime to overlook; we cannot wait because the prairies of the North-West, which for countless ages have been roamed over by wild herds of the bison or by the scarcely less wild tribes of red men, are now invaded from all sides by the white race. They came last year one hundred thousand strong and still they come in still greater numbers. Already they are at work opening the long-dormant soil; already they are at work sowing, harvesting and reaping. . . . We consider that it is the duty of all who sit within these walls by the will of the people to provide immediate means whereby the products of those new settlers may find an exit to the ocean at the least possible cost and whereby likewise a market may be found in this new region for those who toil in the forests, in the fields, in the mines, in the shops of the older provinces. Such is our duty; it is immediate and imperative. It is not of to-morrow but of this day, of this hour and of this minute. Heaven grant that it is not already too late; Heaven grant that, while we tarry and dispute, the trade of Canada is not deviated to other channels and that an ever-vigilant competitor does not take to himself the trade that properly belongs to those who acknowledge Canada as their native or their adopted land.

With this somewhat perfervid beginning, indicating the strain of expected criticism not only from the Opposition but from his former colleague, Sir Wilfrid proceeded in more matter-of-fact terms to analyze in detail the terms of the contract, and to meet objections. It was charged that the Moncton-Quebec line paralleled the Intercolonial: it must be remembered that the route of the Intercolonial had been determined by military, not by commercial considerations, that the new route would be a hundred miles shorter and from thirty to seventy miles distant, with a mountain range intervening. The short line built by the C. P. R. through Maine to St. John could not serve: it might at any time be rendered useless by a denial of the bonding privilege; only a week before, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, in a letter to the London "Times," had threatened this withdrawal if the policy of inter-imperial preference in trade was continued and extended. That menace could not be borne; a commercial route wholly within Canadian territory to Canadian seaports must be secured: "I have found that the best and most effective way to maintain friendship with our American neighbours is to be absolutely independent of them." It was urged the cost would be prohibitive: the cost would not be more than seven years' interest on the mountain section and seven years' rental on the eastern section,—\$13,000,000, or a single year's surplus; for the rest, "We give our credit and nothing else." It was urged that little was known of the wilderness through which the government was calmly proposing to build a standard road: not so, as detailed and authoritative reports on the climate, resources and topography of this new Northern empire made abundantly clear. Why should not the country itself build and operate the whole road if it was to be so profitable? Could any government or any government commission develop the elasticity, the wide range of subsidiary enterprises, from steamships to hotels, and the arrangements with shippers under foreign flags, essential for the success of such an enterprise? "I am well aware," he concluded, "that this plan may scare the timid and frighten the irresolute, but, sir, I may claim that every man who has in his bosom a stout Canadian heart will welcome it as worthy of this young nation, for whom a heavy task has no terrors, which has the strength to face grave duties and grave responsibilities."

The debate thus launched was long and animated. Mr. Borden made a detailed and effective criticism, but his alternative policy, though commendably cautious in some respects, was too incomplete and too patchwork a programme to strike the imagination; at a later stage he came out flatly for a government-owned transcontinental road. Mr. Blair insisted that "not time but Cox cannot wait." Every cabinet minister, Mr. Fielding, Mr. Sifton, Sir William Mulock, who had had a deciding part in shaping the new policy, Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Fitzpatrick, defended the proposals strongly. It was the end of September before the Commons passed the measure, and the end of October before the Senate approved, in both cases substantially on a party vote.

In the country, the complexity of the project at first stood in the way of acceptance, but very soon its sweep and comprehensiveness touched the interests of great numbers and the imagination of many more. The country wanted new roads and felt it could afford them. Weaknesses were found in the government's plan, but no feasible alternative was steadily urged in its stead. The policy which time has shown should have been followed—a union of the Grand Trunk, with its wide-reaching connections and terminals in the East, and the Canadian Northern, with its well-planned prairie feeders, with government aid to bridge the gap—was not then so obvious. Sir Wilfrid had the insight to realize that this would be the wisest plan. He brought Mr. Hays and Mr. Mackenzie together in his office in the attempt to find a basis of union or co-operation. Sir Charles Rivers-Wilson, chairman of the Grand Trunk, and Mr. Hays held conferences with Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann of the Canadian Northern in 1902 and 1903, looking to this end, but in vain. The old road, proud of its four hundred millions of debt, despised the upstart; the new, conscious of towering ambitions and of local influence and knowledge, underrated the old. Common ground could not be found voluntarily, and neither government nor Opposition could see far enough into the extravagant rivalry and duplications, the subsidies, guaranties, lobbying of the future to urge compulsion.



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CARTOON BY HENRI JULIEN

After a Visit to Paris

The Laurier ministry felt that in the G. T. P. project they had a policy which would ensure triumph in the coming elections. Before the winter of 1903-04 was over, their calculations were rudely disturbed by the failure of the Grand Trunk to finance the project on the government's terms. Plans for an immediate election were stayed and another session summoned. Some members of the cabinet urged that the Grand Trunk connection should be dropped and the road built throughout by the state, but the contrary opinion prevailed. Amendments were effected, lightening the load both for the Grand Trunk and for the Grand Trunk Pacific, notably by removing the fixed limit beyond which the government's guaranty of 75 per cent. of the funds necessary to build the mountain section was not to go. Debate was vigorous but changed few views. Mr. Blair was no longer counted in the ranks of the critics; toward the close of 1903 he had accepted the chairmanship of the first Board of Railway Commissioners appointed under the act he himself had sponsored, and seemed to have bidden farewell to politics and controversy. An echo of the dispute of the previous session came with lavish quotations by Mr. Borden from a private memorandum which Mr. Blair had circulated among the members of the cabinet in December, [1902](#), which had now fallen into other hands by means which were not explained. The halt in the negotiations, at first welcomed by the Opposition as evidence that "the bubble had burst," soon reacted in the government's favour. Blessings brightened as they took their flight, and a wide-spread demand for immediate action followed the fear that the project was to come to an end.

Before the general elections were held, a third challenger had joined Mr. Tarte and Mr. Blair. Lord Dundonald's attack was directed not so much against Sir Wilfrid or even his cabinet, as against the principle of civilian control and of complete Canadian home rule in military matters, but it was upon the prime minister that the brunt fell.

While Canada had step by step taken over the control and organization of her own defence on land, and the British regiments stationed in Canada, save in Halifax and Esquimalt, had long since departed, it was still the law and the practice that the general officer commanding the Canadian militia should be an imperial soldier. This practice made it possible to secure men of greater professional experience than were available in Canada, but it was proving incompatible with the new national aspirations. While the G. O. C. was unquestionably subordinate to the Minister of Militia, as British commanders were subordinate to the Secretary for War, the fact that he was still a British officer, possessed of the old ideas of imperial supremacy and latterly chosen by the British War Office to advance its policy of centralizing the military resources of the Empire, made it difficult for a man of strong will to accept his constitutional limitations.

After General Hutton's recall, General O'Grady-Haly had held the post two years without serious friction. After an Englishman and an Irishman, a Scotchman was next appointed. Major-General the Earl of Dundonald, twelfth of his name, came of a famous fighting family. He had no little of the spirit of his grandfather the admiral, daring, resourceful, imprudent. His cavalry work in South Africa and his share in the relief of Ladysmith, had commended him to soldiers, and his frankness, his adaptability, and his keenness in his task soon won wide popularity in Canada. He did much good work, studying the situation carefully and endeavouring to adapt his theories to the needs of a pioneer country without militarist neighbours. The government accepted a large part of his recommendations, as of his predecessor's; largely owing to the experiences of the Boer War, the expenditures for militia purposes had tripled between 1896 and 1904, and the efficiency, while still far from satisfactory, had much increased. Even so, friction soon developed. Lord Dundonald was impatient of what he considered the slow progress, and inclined to place the responsibility not so much upon Canadian conditions and public sentiment as upon the ministry which for the time represented the country. The government did not share his views as to the proportion that military preparations should bear in the country's activities, and in particular his plans for large capital outlays, including fortifications upon the United States border. The impatience frequently felt by the military commander against civilian and inexpert control was intensified by Lord Dundonald's own temperament, the advice of some militia and imperial officers, and particularly by the inherent anomalies of his dual post as a British officer and a Canadian official.

More than once during the two years of Lord Dundonald's service friction arose between the Minister of Militia and the G.O.C. Belleville and St. Catharines regimental squabbles, an unauthorized visit of Lord Dundonald to Port Simpson followed by speeches on the Alaska boundary award, gave cause for difference. Then came the revision in 1904 of the Militia Act, permitting the appointment of a Canadian militia officer as G.O.C., empowering the government to appoint a militia council which, with a chief of staff, might take in time the place of the G.O.C., and restricting the power to call out the militia for active service in time of war, whether in or outside of Canada, to service for the defence of Canada. The act met little criticism in the House and less in the country, but the rejection of Lord Dundonald's advice on various clauses nettled him further, and was undoubtedly the main reason for his outburst. The episode which finally brought an explosion was the action of Mr. Fisher, while acting Minister of Militia, in scratching the name of an active Tory politician in his own Eastern Townships bailiwick from the list of officers of a new regiment of dragoons. Speaking at a military banquet in Montreal, on June 4, Lord Dundonald denounced this "gross instance of political interference," this "extraordinary lack of etiquette," and added: "Lack of etiquette affects me little; I have been two years in Ottawa, gentlemen. It is not on personal grounds that I inform you of this, but on national grounds. I feel, gentlemen, anxious, profoundly anxious, that the militia of Canada may be kept free from party politics."

This outburst was followed by a prompt inquiry by the Minister of Militia as to whether the newspaper reports were correct, and on this being admitted, by a vigorous debate in the House on June 10. Mr. Fisher insisted that he had not cancelled Dr. Pickel's appointment for partisan reasons, but in order to defeat a partisan movement, the attempt on the part of the Baker family—his chief political opponents in the Townships—"to turn that squadron, if not the whole regiment, into a political Tory organization." Sir Frederick Borden confirmed his colleague's statements. Colonel Hughes read a memorandum which Lord Dundonald had sent him in his own defence. Mr. Borden eulogized Lord Dundonald. Sir Wilfrid, in a brief speech, admitted the good motives of the G.O.C. but questioned his discretion; the cabinet was not obliged to accept his recommendations. "We are not accustomed to being dragooned in this country; Lord Dundonald, with all the respect I have for him, must learn that this is a responsible government." In passing, he

referred to Lord Dundonald as "a foreigner,—no, a stranger,"—*étranger* in both cases in French. [26]

Lord Minto, whose term as governor-general was expiring, had continued to take a very direct and personal interest in military affairs. He had deprecated the passing of the Militia Bill, because the minister had declined to include various clauses suggested by the British War Office and to await further suggestions. Now his sympathies were warmly with Dundonald, but in his five years of office he had come to appreciate better both his prime minister and his own constitutional limitations. On June 9, Sir Wilfrid had apprised him of Lord Dundonald's "unpardonable indiscretion," which if confirmed would probably mean that "his usefulness will be gone." The governor-general agreed at once that Lord Dundonald's utterance was indefensible, but he was inclined to shift the issue to what he held to be the still less defensible conduct of Mr. Fisher. When the cabinet decided to take drastic action and dismiss the G.O.C. from his post, Sir Wilfrid sought the governor-general's signature for the order in council.[27] Lord Minto declined to sign without time for reflection. During the day Major Maude, his military secretary, and a group of Conservative politicians urged the governor-general to withhold his signature, and thus to force the resignation of the ministry and an appeal to the country which would put the "disloyalists" in their place. Feeling was running high, pressure was keen and insistent, and Lord Minto's own convictions ran with it. He endeavoured to induce Sir Wilfrid to abandon or postpone the dismissal; Sir Wilfrid declined to alter the order in council and declared that if necessary the government would go to the country on the issue. Finally, Lord Minto acquiesced, but while signing the order he put on record his own dissent. Lord Dundonald was relieved of his command that night.

Lord Dundonald's outburst and the government's vigorous action were followed by a lively controversy. Twice during June the question was debated in the House. Sir Wilfrid made the issue one between military and civil power: "so long as there is a Liberal government in Canada the civil power shall rule the military." He denounced the bitter personal attack which unscrupulous newspapers in Ontario were making upon him for his reference to Lord Dundonald as a "foreigner" or "stranger," and made a statement of his own standards in controversy which shamed his critics.[28] Outside parliament a vigorous effort was made to turn the incident to the government's hurt, and particularly to rouse the voters of Scottish blood to resent the dismissal of the distinguished Scot. Mass-meetings were held in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Lord Dundonald gave interviews and speeches dealing with "the difficulty between myself and the Government of Canada," in which he declared that he had been balked in his plans throughout, and that Canadians were living in a fool's paradise as regards military preparedness. "Keep both hands on the Union Jack," he repeatedly told the crowds. There was some question of his contesting a seat in the coming elections, but eventually prudence or a hint from Britain prevailed, and he left Canada late in July.

Mr. Tarte, who "held Quebec in the hollow of his hand," Mr. Blair, who had ruled New Brunswick unchallenged for nearly a score of years, Lord Dundonald, with all the prestige of an honoured name and, it was hoped, the clannishness of the Scot to back him, had one by one measured strength and one by one departed. What would be the cumulative effect of these incidents in the general elections which were to be held on November 3? It soon became clear that the Dundonald episode, whatever the sensation it created for the moment, would have little electoral effect, and that without the manufacturers Mr. Tarte would count little in Ontario, and, against Sir Wilfrid, little in Quebec. But Mr. Blair, or the powerful forces which approved Mr. Blair's stand, was not so easily ignored. The Grand Trunk Pacific was the outstanding issue of the campaign, and while its magnificent promises of benefit to every section of the Dominion were certain to rally wide support, it was also clear that rival railways and disappointed promoters, as well as many disinterested doubters of the soundness of the plan, could be counted on to oppose.

The discussion in the country on the railway issue followed much the lines taken in parliament. It was behind the scenes that the real interest of the campaign developed. During the autumn an extraordinary conspiracy against the government and its railway policy was hatched in Montreal, which for sheer melodrama and sheer fatuity has never been equalled in Canada. The moving spirits were David Russell, a well-to-do promoter of St. John and Montreal, and J. N. Greenshields, a Liberal lawyer of Montreal who was solicitor for Mackenzie and Mann. Hugh Graham, the proprietor of the Montreal "Star," which then had the largest circulation of any English newspaper in Canada, and who, after some preliminary coquetting with the Liberals in 1896, had fought them then by every means, and fought them again in 1900, with ill success but with what consolation could be derived from the memory of having done more than any other agency to stampede and discredit the government in connection with the South African War, was also involved. A fourth figure was Arthur Dansereau; Sir Wilfrid had foreseen the possibility of a gradual weakening of "La Presse's" support, but he had never dreamed of the sudden blow that was now in preparation. The plan, in brief, was to defeat the government by the purchase of important Liberal or independent newspapers, by a scandal campaign against members of the cabinet, by

buying off Liberal candidates in Quebec, and by inducing Mr. Blair to take the stump against his former chief. The purpose, so far at least as Russell and Greenshields were concerned, was to secure control of the new government in order to unload bankrupt railways upon it and to secure fat contracts for government railway construction; other railway interests of more permanent character would also be served.

The plot began well. Mr. Russell secured control of the St. John "Telegraph," a Liberal newspaper which had been Mr. Blair's special organ, and of the St. John "Evening Times." In October, "La Presse," the chief French-Canadian newspaper, with the largest circulation of any newspaper in Canada, and which was still continuing its policy of independence with a friendly leaning toward Sir Wilfrid, was acquired from its owner, Hon. Treffe Berthiaume, for a sum slightly over one million dollars. Rumours of the transfer at once leaked out, only to meet vigorous denial. Early in October, a very elaborate public dinner was tendered Hon. Mr. Pugsley, Attorney-General in the New Brunswick cabinet, organized by Messrs. Russell and Greenshields, and presided over by Mr. Blair, avowedly as a forerunner of Mr. Pugsley's entrance into a federal cabinet, the existing—or some other. Then on October 18 a message from Mr. Blair appeared in the "Telegraph": "I authorize the announcement that I have resigned my position as Chairman of the Railway Commission and have notified the premier that beyond reaffirming my strong objection to the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme, I have no present intention of re-entering political life." The "Telegraph," on Mr. Russell's authority, announced two days later that Mr. Blair would take the stump against the government. Mr. Blair himself informed his fellow-commissioners that he was about to accept much more profitable employment.

Mr. Blair's announcement, following the Pugsley banquet, and the newspaper purchases, created a national sensation. It was evident that an audacious and aggressive movement was on foot. Both Liberals and Conservatives waited for the next development. But day after day passed and nothing happened. Mr. Blair did not take the stump. "La Presse" did not materially change its tone. Mr. Pugsley did not contest a seat. No more newspapers were bought. No scandal charges were launched. Somehow the bomb had failed to go off. Sir Wilfrid had taken a hand with "La Presse," informing its managers that if it changed its policy he would expose the sale of the chief French-Canadian journal to a group of English-speaking speculators, and denounce it throughout the province. He had an interview with Mr. Blair, but, contrary to rumours, did not seek to bring any pressure as to his future course. David Russell had induced Mr. Blair to resign, by inducements which were never made public, but which must have been weighty to lead to the abandonment of the most desirable post in the gift of the government; a cog slipped in the further negotiations; Mr. Blair did not receive the important appointment he anticipated, and he did not say a word in the campaign. Mr. Borden, who had evidently been counted upon to implement some of the wild promises given, flatly and vigorously declined to have anything to do with the conspirators; in a significant statement issued on October 24, he gave a warning that the Conservative party would not regard campaign subscriptions as giving any claim to consideration in matters of policy, and that if any subscriptions had been given in other spirit they would be returned on application. Before election day had come it was plain that the amateur and leaky conspirators had over-reached themselves, and that the net result of the incident was to confirm confidence in the leader whose unquestioned honour and integrity and straightforwardness afforded a refreshing contrast to the fatuous and tortuous plottings on which a corner of the curtain had been raised.

After the election, more light was given, but some aspects remained shrouded in mystery. "Le Nationaliste" of Montreal, which had first announced the "La Presse" deal, the Toronto "World," in a startling article which mingled fact and rumour, and the Toronto "Globe," in a series of reports by a special Montreal correspondent, laid bare some of the incidents. Mr. Blair denied that he had been paid or promised any sum for his resignation; Mr. Russell insisted that he had merely been looking for good business investments; "La Presse" proclaimed itself "the organ of the people"; the "Star," making no denial of the charges, suggested, quite safely, that either the government or the Opposition should make full inquiry. The Opposition wanted no publicity for a conspiracy in which they were cast for the rôle of tool. The government, as victors, were prepared to forgive. More accurately speaking, Sir Wilfrid, as usual, was more concerned with making certain that the weapons would not be turned against him in future than with seeking vengeance for the attempts that had failed. As to "La Presse," a further transfer, or rather a reshuffling among the new owners, followed in January, [1905](#). In contrast with the amateur leakiness of the October transactions, these later endeavours to save what could be saved out of the wreck of failure were carried on with extraordinary care, with elaborately casual suggestions of desire for conciliation conveyed through third parties, correspondence in the third person, and with cryptogrammatic references to Sir Wilfrid as "Roberts" and Mr. Greenshields as "Peters" and so on; eventually the new owners undertook to keep "La Presse" independent but "giving Sir Wilfrid Laurier a generous support." The trend of the negotiations and their conclusion are sufficiently indicated by two brief documents:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Hugh Graham)

Ottawa, January 12, 1905.

DEAR MR. GRAHAM:

I would much prefer to deal with that whole matter on the lines which you suggested in our interview of Tuesday, the 10th, or even on those of your letter of the same date. Such a course would be much more in accordance with my own inclination. It is, however, preferable that the business part of the question should be disposed of in more tangible and concrete form. I have therefore asked a friend of mine who was approached by D. M. to take charge of this subject. I have no doubt that D. M. will confer with you. For my part, I will agree with what my friend accepts. When this part of the difficulty has been removed, the rest will be easily disposed of. You already know my views.

Yours very truly,

WILFRID LAURIER.



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HENRI JULIEN'S "BY-TOWN COONS"

St. James Club,
Montreal, January 18, [1905](#).

It is distinctly understood as a condition of procuring the consent of the holder of the majority of the stock of La Presse Company to sell to us, that the paper "La Presse" is not to be a Tory organ, that it is to be independent, and that it is to give Sir Wilfrid Laurier a generous support.

Mackenzie, Mann & Co.

[Signed] Wm. Mackenzie, President.
D. D. Mann, Vice-President.

Shortly before this time Mr. Edward Farrer had investigated the conspiracy; his interim report to Sir Wilfrid may suffice to make clear the ramifications of the plan, and incidentally Mr. Farrer's reportorial powers:

The Montreal conspiracy to overthrow the Government appears to have been formed early in September. Messrs. Greenshields, Dansereau, and Russell were the moving spirits from the first. . . .

[After referring to sundry stock-market speculations, in some of which Mr. Blair was interested on joint account with Mr. Russell, Mr. Farrer continues:]

From all that I can gather from inside sources Mr. Hugh Graham of the "Star" and Mr. Greenshields were the first to get together. Greenshields then brought in Russell and Dansereau. Graham on his part brought in the Canadian Pacific, Mackenzie and Mann, and the Forgets. The project which was developed bit by bit finally took this shape:—

"A." To defeat the Government and hang up the Grand Trunk Pacific scheme.

"B." To make Mr. Blair Minister of Railways under Borden.

"C." To lease the Intercolonial to the C.P.R.

"D." To bring about the purchase by the Government of the Canadian Northern lines west of Lake Superior at a good figure.

"E." To purchase from Russell and Greenshields derelict railways in the Maritime provinces, such as the Caraquet and Temiscouata, on which Russell had options, and make them part and parcel of the Intercolonial.

"F." Also to purchase through them the Dominion Atlantic Railway in Nova Scotia and the South Shore Railway of Nova Scotia now being built between Yarmouth and Halifax by Mackenzie and Mann.

"G." To extend the South Shore from Halifax eastward to connect with the Cape Breton extension, the road built a few years ago by Dr. Seward Webb, and now controlled by Mackenzie and Mann.

"H." In short, all the independent lines in the Maritime provinces were to be bought by the Government, either through Russell and Greenshields, or Mackenzie and Mann, and annexed to the Intercolonial which was to be leased in whole or in part to the Canadian Pacific.

"I." As said above, the Grand Trunk Pacific project was to be suspended indefinitely on the ground that the surveys did not warrant the construction of the line, the country traversed being too poor, while construction in some places between Quebec and Moncton would be impracticable. . . .

The means that were to be adopted were as follows:—

"A." Russell was to get Mr. Blair to resign and take the stump against the Government.

"B." "La Presse" newspaper was to be purchased and turned against the Government.

"C." Shortly before nomination day scandals were to be sprung against the Government in the Tory press. The chief scandal affected Mr. X. . . .

"D." Immediately after the publication of these scandals a number of Liberal candidates in the Province of Quebec, who were to have been bribed in advance, were to retire. This part of the business was suggested by Greenshields and Dansereau. They said they could induce at least twenty Liberal candidates to retire on nomination day on account of the scandals just mentioned. For this service they would require \$250,000 or something over \$10,000 for each Member. In a memo to Graham on the subject Greenshields said that he could bring influence to bear on Mr. Z. to get him to resign from the Cabinet at the same time. He did not suggest that Mr. Z. was to be bought like the twenty members, but merely that he could be got to resign because of his ill-health, his dislike of Senator Choquette, and for other "private reasons."

This programme, it must be allowed, reads like the programme of a parcel of lunatics. Nevertheless, stripped of detail, it is precisely what was proposed. All sorts of minor suggestions reached Graham from Greenshields, Dansereau and Russell. . . . They were drawing fresh agreements, or making fresh suggestions of a wild character to Graham. Graham himself is cool-headed enough in his own business, but in politics he is excitable, almost hysterical, and can be made to believe anything that promises to bring the Conservative party into power.

In due course Russell got Mr. Blair to withdraw, and to send a telegram "reaffirming his hostility to the Grand Trunk Pacific." Blair's friends say that while he undoubtedly wired the Premier his resignation, he did not of his own volition use the words just quoted, that they were inserted in the

telegram furnished to the newspapers by Russell. They allege, in short, that Blair's telegram to the Premier was merely an announcement of his resignation to the Premier, whereas the telegram as furnished by Russell to the newspaper correspondents made Blair "reaffirm my hostility," etc.

I have nothing to say on this point. In fact I have not been able as yet to devote any attention to the part Mr. Blair played in the conspiracy.

"La Presse" was purchased according to the programme. Dansereau was employed to manipulate Berthiaume. They met at the concert of the Garde Républicaine in the Arena on the night of October 11, and went from there to Greenshields' house, where they remained until six o'clock in the morning of the twelfth. Russell and Mr. A. J. Brown, of Hall, Cross & Co., lawyers, were also present together with Mr. Beaudin, lawyer for Berthiaume. A draft agreement for the purchase of the paper had been prepared in advance by Brown. A good deal of liquor was consumed during the night. Berthiaume says he had not drunk liquor before for a long time, that two or three glasses of champagne overpowered him and that his mind was a perfect blank when he signed the contract about five in the morning. He signed it, he says, because Dansereau told him that everything was all right. In the draft contract made by Brown, no provision was made for Dansereau. It was not until the party had assembled at Greenshields' house that a separate clause was drawn—drawn on a separate sheet of paper—whereby Russell covenanted to pay Dansereau \$1,000 per month for ten years, whether he worked for "La Presse" or whether he did not. It would appear that the drafting of this special clause satisfied Dansereau, as well it might, and thereupon he told Berthiaume to sign. But the story told by Berthiaume, that his mind was a blank, that he imagined Russell and Greenshields were acting for Sir Wilfrid Laurier in purchasing "La Presse," and so on, is ridiculous and false on its face. The sum of \$10,000 was paid to Berthiaume that morning, when he signed the contract. A further sum of \$240,000 was paid to him later on when a clean copy of the contract had been prepared with the Dansereau provision inserted. Berthiaume was sober then and must have known when he read the contract that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was not the purchaser, but, on the contrary, that the paper was falling into the hands of persons hostile to Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Immediately after this, Russell and Greenshields, through Godin, Business Manager of "La Presse," caused that paper to abandon its attacks on the Forget interests, and to lean in its news columns, particularly in its reports of political meetings, towards Mr. Borden and the Conservative Party. Articles reflecting on the Grand Trunk Pacific project were sent by A. J. Brown, who seems to have acted for Greenshields, to Godin for insertion in "La Presse," but these and other attempts to turn the paper against the Government were frustrated by the action of Mr. Thos. Côté, Managing Editor of the newspaper. Greenshields and Russell attempted to buy up Côté in the same way, but he refused to have anything to do with them unless it could be shown to his satisfaction that the paper was to remain as before, that is, independent in politics with a friendly feeling for Sir Wilfrid Laurier. During one of Côté's visits to Greenshields, whom he met at Russell's room at the Windsor Hotel, Côté was told by Greenshields that Mr. Melville of Boston had been selected as the person who should instruct "La Presse" as to the course it should take relative to railway and other matters. Côté saw Melville in the room at the time, and recognized him as one of the promoters of the Great Northern Railway of Canada in which Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann have an interest. Melville is also mixed up with Mackenzie and Mann in the Chateaugay and Northern Railway. Berthiaume told Côté more than once that Mackenzie and Mann were the chief parties if not the sole parties for whom Greenshields and Russell were acting.

The contract of purchase of "La Presse" I have not as yet been able to obtain. I am able, however, to say that over and above the Dansereau clause it contained some curious provisions. Thus Berthiaume bound himself to deny in the paper that "La Presse" had been sold; he was to make it appear that the paper had merely passed into the hands of a new company composed of old friends and that he (Berthiaume) was still in control. In order further to hide the transaction Russell furnished Dansereau with a letter, dated October 12 (the day the paper was purchased by Russell and Greenshields).

This letter was to enable Dansereau to say that the policy of the paper was not to be changed, not at any rate until after the elections. . . .

By the contract with Berthiaume, Russell and Greenshields, having paid the \$250,000 in the two sums mentioned, were to assume absolute control of "La Presse" newspaper on and after Nov. 12. Before the elections took place they shipped Dansereau to France in company of a friend. Dansereau had given out, had indeed stated in "La Presse" itself, that he was about to go to France to act as agent for a French syndicate in New York. This was untrue. Russell bought him his ticket for France via New York, gave him \$500 in cash and a draft for \$2,500 more, with a letter granting him leave of absence from "La Presse" until the end of the year.

One of the strangest features of this strange transaction is the purchase of "La Presse." A newspaper property is wholly unlike any other form of property. Its value rests on its circulation, that is to say, on the sentimental attachment of its clientele. If that attachment is weakened or destroyed in consequence of the property passing into hands objectionable to its readers, the value is at once greatly impaired and may easily be wiped out altogether. One can hardly imagine how Greenshields and Russell, still less how Graham, Forget and the rest, could have supposed that "La Presse" could be bought and sold in this cold-blooded fashion and transferred to the control of persons hostile to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Administration, without putting the property in grave jeopardy. Obviously a statement by Sir Wilfrid setting forth the bargain and sale would at once rob the paper of all its Liberal readers, besides weakening the attachment of its independent readers. In this way the value of the paper could be reduced by fully one-half in the twinkling of an eye. Russell and Greenshields possibly did not realize this danger, but Graham must have done so. . . .

Where did the money come from? The \$10,000 and the \$240,000 paid to Berthiaume for "La Presse" came through the — Bank, of which all the directors are Tories. . . . The best information I can obtain from the Bank is to this effect: The \$250,000 was furnished to the Bank by a credit from New York, from the Morton Trust Co. The conspirators were not obliged to make a second payment until six months from October 12, [1904](#). They had agreed to pay for "La Presse" \$250,000 in cash on the signing of the deed of purchase and \$450,000 in six months. They had further obligated themselves to assume the debts of "La Presse" consisting of a mortgage on the building of over \$200,000, an indebtedness to the Canada Paper Co. of \$112,000, and some other small liabilities. But they had so arranged matters that, had the Laurier Government been defeated, they would have paid the \$450,000 within a month of the installation of Mr. Borden, and at the same time would have redeemed the mortgage on "La Presse" building and the debt to the Canada Paper Co., besides which they were to pay in \$100,000 as working capital for the newspaper and to improve its news service and circulation by every available means. This, it will be seen, presupposed the possession of a very large sum of ready money. . . .

That Mackenzie constantly visited Graham is beyond doubt. He also saw Greenshields at the latter's office on Notre Dame Street on a Sunday evening at 8 o'clock immediately on his return from a distant journey—possibly on his arrival from Europe—as he was staying at the time at the Windsor with a lot of baggage without being registered. There is the best authority for saying that on the occasion of this visit to Greenshields he left with Greenshields a large envelope containing securities, designation and amounts not known. While he was conversing with Greenshields a

person described as a stout man with red hair and wearing blue glasses was waiting for him in the hall. The only person whom this description fits is Mr. Lukes, the accountant for Mackenzie and Mann. It is not often that one comes across such a description—red hair and blue glasses—and certainly Lukes is the only person answering to that description who travels with Mackenzie; indeed, he is possibly the only man in Canada to whom the description would apply.

The statement obtained from an official of the — Bank that the funds were pooled in New York seems to be well founded. An investigation in New York has already been set on foot with the object of ascertaining, if possible, how much was contributed by each of the interested parties. Greenshields, Russell and Dansereau made several visits to New York during the progress of the conspiracy, stopping at the Manhattan Hotel. On November 8 last, information was obtained from Russell's office in the Windsor that a meeting of the conspirators was to be held in New York forthwith to determine what was to be done with "La Presse" newspaper, and to discuss other matters, now that the plot had failed. On Thursday night, November 10, Greenshields started for New York. Mr. Carrington, Chief of the Montreal Branch of the Thiel Detective Agency, was employed to go to New York and watch events. He was told nothing regarding the facts of the case, but merely instructed to watch the persons with whom Greenshields might communicate. His report is appended herewith. . . . Such in brief are the facts furnished by the detective. They go to confirm what has been ascertained from other sources.

The unearthing of a plot of these dimensions is necessarily a slow and difficult task. Every effort is being made to get complete details. Meanwhile this interim report shows that the conspiracy was probably a more formidable one than any of us at first supposed.

In the election campaign, Sir Wilfrid, in spite of growing fatigue, did not spare himself in Ontario and Quebec. His fortnight's tour through Ontario in October was a triumphal procession. At public meetings in Hamilton, Guelph, Toronto, Chatham, Wingham, Uxbridge, Orillia, Peterborough, Cornwall, Carleton Place, Alexandria, and in many an improvised word from the train platform, Sir Wilfrid defended the record of the past and urged the new railway policy as the assurance of continued prosperity. The welcome he received was enthusiastic and whole-hearted. Toronto accorded him what many observers considered the most striking demonstration in its history: "You cheer me," he told a Toronto audience later, "but you do not vote for me." There was no question of the pride that Canadians, irrespective of party, felt in the leader under whom Canada had attained a new place in the world, a new prosperity, and a higher level of political life. Among thousands of party followers, the blending of dignity and distinction with frank and unfeigned kindness and friendliness in his bearing, his remarkable memory for old friends' faces, the twinkle in his eye as he made a friendly thrust at some of his companions in the informal receptions that followed every meeting, quickened pride to what was not far from adoration. In Montreal, Three Rivers, Valleyfield, Farnham, Sherbrooke and Quebec the same story was told. No one had any question after his Quebec tour that his native province would not merely cheer but vote for Laurier. East and West he was forced to leave wholly to his lieutenants, particularly Mr. Fielding in Nova Scotia and Mr. Sifton in the West.

The result of the polling on November 3 was yet another overwhelming Liberal victory. The majority in the House increased by eleven, nearly doubling the majority of 1896. The most notable changes occurred in the East and the West. The ten additional seats accorded the West in redistribution had in effect all fallen to the government, British Columbia going solidly and the prairies predominantly Liberal. The decline in the representation of the Maritime provinces, four seats, had virtually been deducted from the Conservative column. While New Brunswick was slightly Liberal and the Island distinctly Conservative, the surprise of the election was the clean sweep made in Nova Scotia, with eighteen Liberals and not one Conservative returned, even Mr. Borden failing to retain his seat. Quebec gave the Opposition four seats more than in 1900, and Ontario seven seats fewer. Toronto remained solidly Conservative, and St. John followed Mr. Blair into opposition, but Halifax, Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Kingston, London, Winnipeg, Victoria and Vancouver made it clear that the cities were predominantly with the government. It had a majority of over forty in Quebec and of over thirty, omitting Quebec altogether. The margin in the popular vote was much less than in the House, conspicuously so in Nova Scotia.[29]

The unquestioned prosperity of the country, the glowing prospects opened up by the construction of a new transcontinental, the prestige and popularity of Sir Wilfrid, the strength of his colleagues, and the lack of any comparable group of leaders on the other side had given the Liberal party its third opportunity. The government's policies had received the emphatic endorsement of the country. Incidentally, the departure of the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Railways and the G. O. C., had evidently had little permanent and general effect. The Master of the Administration had met all challenges.

CHAPTER XIV

SCHOOLS AND SCANDALS

At the Height of Power—Decline of the Administration—The North-West School Question—A Crisis and a Compromise—The Crisis Passes—The Lord's Day Act—Sharretti and Shearer—Changes in the Cabinet—Provincial Party Fortunes—Parliamentary Standards and Administrative Records—Personal Charges and Counter Charges—The Patronage System—The Award of Titles—Laurier Refuses Peerage—Cleaning House—The Elections of 1908.

In the election of 1904 the Laurier administration reached the height of its power. From 1896 to 1904 it had steadily advanced in parliamentary majority and popular prestige. From 1904 to 1911 it marked time or went backward. In great measure the decline was inevitable. The country was prosperous, the administration progressive, its leader pre-eminent, but the swing of the pendulum could not be averted. After eight years of active government, touching the interests of classes and communities from Atlantic to Pacific, grievances and discontent began to accumulate: the memory of benefits faded and the memory of hurts remained. Some slackening of energy in the administration, some carelessness in party organization and neglect of the never-ending work of popular education in the principles of the party, some growth of personal demoralization and departmental corruption, gradually sapped strength and confidence.

The decline of the administration did not at once involve a decline in the power of its leader. Sir Wilfrid Laurier had now become an institution of the country. In the eyes of Canadians and of outsiders alike he was the embodiment, if he was not the maker, of the new position Canada held in the world. He stood head and shoulders above all other men in public life. The subtle note of distinction in all he said or did, in all he was, the blending of reserve and of friendly interest which fascinated and gripped the men who came in personal contact with him, the adroitness in handling a tangled situation, the prestige of nearly thirty years in high place, made him an incomparable leader. He was more indispensable to his party in 1911 than he had been in 1896. But this very strength of his was the party's weakness. It was becoming too much a one-man party. Neither in parliament nor in the party organization were sufficient new recruits being enrolled and trained. And one man's smile could not hold a party together indefinitely from Halifax to Vancouver.

The Liberal party was going through the same evolution as its predecessor in power. The Conservative administration had held and tightened its grip on the country from 1878 to 1887; it declined rapidly from 1887 to 1896. Sir John Macdonald had grown in authority and indispensableness as his party had weakened, and with his death the party had disintegrated. History was not to repeat itself exactly. The demoralization of the Liberal party did not go to the lengths suffered by the Conservatives. Laurier held power for a longer unbroken stretch than his great rival, and was destined to remain for a further term at the head of a strong Opposition. Yet as Sir Wilfrid looked back to the career of his predecessor, as he often did, some premonition of coming fates, some memory of the fickleness of the electorate, must time and again have flitted through his mind.^[30]

In the Dominion's tenth parliament, which met for the first time in January, [1905](#), this decline seemed far in the future. The government was sustained in the first test of the session by a vote of 93 to 47. The Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental were well under way, the stream of immigration was still mounting fast, and the prosperity which had come in with the Laurier régime was still unclouded. The prospect of any shift in public opinion seemed remote.

It was the very success of the Laurier administration in opening up the West which led incidentally to its first serious check. The growth of population in the Western territories made it necessary to advance them to provincehood, and the framing of provincial constitutions raised once more the issue of separate schools. The Manitoba school question had broken one government; the North-West school question threatened for a time to break its successor.

The Western Territories which had been purchased by the Dominion from the Hudson's Bay Company had for a generation been evolving from dependence to equality. In the beginning, with only a handful of white men scattered over a vast wilderness, it was plainly necessary to rule the territories from Ottawa as the Western areas of the United States had in the beginning been ruled from Washington. Riel and his Red River comrades compelled the grant of home rule and the founding of the province of Manitoba earlier than had been planned. The territories farther west acquired self-government step by step as they acquired population and local confidence. A council of outsiders, a lieutenant-governor with a resident but nominated council, in the Chartering Act of 1875, the addition, as provided in that charter, of elected members in 1881, and the substitution of an elective assembly in 1888, the practical control of the executive in 1891 and

the full control in 1897, were the chief stages in the evolution of responsible government, as Frederick Haultain, Frank Oliver and James H. Ross were the chief figures in the achievement. Now the building of the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific, and the Sifton immigration policy were doubling and trebling the population in five years, and leading to demands for complete provincehood. The Territories had a parliament and a premier, but they could not borrow money, they could not charter railways, they could not administer criminal justice. These powers and the formal status they now sought. And just as in the United States where the dividing line in the older states ran on geographic and economic lines, the admission of new territories involved a contest between North and South as to whether the new states were to be bond or free, so in Canada, where the dividing lines in the older provinces were lines of race and creed, the admission of new territories involved Eastern quarrels as to whether the new territories were to have national or denominational schools.

During the election of 1904 Sir Wilfrid announced that in accordance with the repeated requests of the people of the North-West, he would, if returned to power, introduce a measure providing for autonomy.^[31]

After the election, Mr. Haultain, the Conservative premier of the Territories, and Mr. Bulyea, his Liberal Commissioner of Public Works,—party lines had not yet been drawn in the territorial government,—came to Ottawa and urged their case. The federal government was represented by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir William Mulock, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Scott. Mr. Sifton, who naturally would have taken a leading part in these negotiations and in the drafting of the resultant measures, was absent in the South, on account, it was stated, of ill-health.

On February 21, [1905](#), Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced the Autonomy Bills, providing for the establishment of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. All but the last step in the development of the Territories had been taken: "The metal has been in the crucible and all we have to do now is to put the stamp of Canadian nationality upon it." Four questions presented some difficulty: the number of provinces, the ownership of the public lands, the financial terms, and the educational provision. The territory was too large for a single province, and the diversity of climate, soil and resources warranted division; it had been decided to create two provinces with the dividing line running north and south. As to the public lands, the bills would continue federal ownership, in accordance with Canadian tradition, United States precedent and the need of linking land policy with immigration policy. The financial terms would be generous, providing an initial subsidy of over one million for each province. The exemption from taxation promised the Canadian Pacific by the Macdonald government, unwise and oppressive though it was, must be continued: faith must be kept.

There remained the school question. Past experience and recent rumblings had shown the dangers that lay in this question; it must be approached with care, in the light of history, in the spirit of tolerance through which Confederation had been achieved. Protection for minority rights had been an essential feature of that compact: George Brown, lifelong opponent of separate schools, had agreed to guarantee their preservation in the constitution as an indispensable condition to any union. When, in 1875, Alexander Mackenzie introduced a measure for the government of the Territories, it made no mention of separate schools, but Edward Blake, warned by the New Brunswick controversy of the dangers of vagueness or omission, urged that some general principle should be laid down; settlers should know beforehand to what conditions they were going; as the general character of the population would be like that of Ontario, a school system like Ontario's should be provided. Mr. Mackenzie agreed, a clause was inserted, and passed unanimously by the House. In the Senate it had met some objection,—notably from Mr. Brown, on the ground that if now introduced, separate schools would be established for all time,—but had been passed by a large majority of both parties. To-day, the government proposed to continue this tradition. The bills provided that the minority should have the right to establish their own schools and to share in public funds, as was the law to-day. He concluded with an unexpected defence of religious teaching in schools and a comparison between Canadian and United States school and social conditions:

In everything that I have said I have refrained from saying a single word upon the abstract principle of separate schools. I approach the question upon another and broader ground, I approach the question not from the standpoint of separate schools, I approach it upon the higher ground of Canadian duty and Canadian patriotism. Having obtained the consent of the minority to this form of government, having obtained their consent to the giving up of their valued privileges, and their position of strength, are we to tell them, now that Confederation is established, that the principle upon which they consented to this arrangement is to be laid aside and that we are to ride roughshod over them? I do not think that is a proposition which will be maintained in this House, nor do I believe it is the intention of the House. I offer at this moment no opinion at all upon separate schools as an abstract proposition, but I have no hesitation in saying that if I were to speak my mind upon separate schools, I would say that I never could understand what objection there could be to a system of schools wherein, after secular matters have been attended to, the tenets of the religion of Christ, even with the divisions which exist among his followers, are allowed to be taught. We live in a country where in the seven provinces that constitute our nation, either by the will or by the tolerance of the people, in every school, Christian morals and Christian dogmas are taught to the youth of the country. We live by the side of a nation, a great nation, a nation for which I have the greatest admiration, but whose example I would not take in everything, in whose schools, for fear that Christian dogmas in which all do not believe might be taught, Christian morals are not taught. When I compare these two countries, when I compare Canada with the United States, when I compare the status of the

two nations, when I think upon their future, when I observe the social condition of civil society in each of them and when I observe in this country of ours, a total absence of lynchings and an almost total absence of divorces and murders, for my part, I thank Heaven that we are living in a country where the young children of the land are taught Christian morals and Christian dogmas. Either the American system is right or the Canadian system is right. For my part I say this and I say it without hesitation. Time will show that we are in the right and in this instance as in many others, I have an abiding faith in the institutions of my own country.

Sir Wilfrid had anticipated criticism. He was not prepared for the outburst of denunciation that followed. Mr. Borden was mild, and expressed the hope that the school question would not be made a party issue. In the West itself, there was little excitement; the new measures were welcomed, even if not in all respects conceding all that had been hoped. Mr. Haultain launched a vigorous attack, demanding a single province, provincial ownership of public lands and no restriction on the province's control of education, but it did not come until three weeks later, as an appendix to the Eastern agitation. It was in Ontario, as might have been anticipated, that the chief outcry arose. Orange lodges denounced the measure as reactionary, iniquitous, insidious, vicious. Dr. Carman, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church, termed it mad, monstrous, hideous and oppressive, and Goldwin Smith, who retained little of his Protestant faith save a rooted distrust of ecclesiastics, declared it bound the new provinces for ever to maintain and propagate the Roman Catholic religion. Presbyteries, Baptist conventions, ministerial associations demanded its withdrawal. The Toronto "News," now owned by Mr. J. W. Flavelle and edited by the former helmsman of the "Globe," Mr. J. S. Willison, vied with the Toronto "Telegram" in bitter attack upon this "endowment of clerical privilege," this "fastening the dead hand of denominational control" upon the young provinces.

Of more immediate concern was the criticism from within the ranks of the party. The "Globe" voiced much Ontario dissent in its insistence that while the federal parliament might set up separate schools in a territory, it had no power to perpetuate them in a province: the Liberal principle of provincial rights must be maintained and the educational clause unflinchingly opposed. But it was within the cabinet that the serious difficulty developed. Mr. Sifton had been in touch with the prime minister by correspondence, and the draft bills were in harmony with his wishes and in some clauses drawn at his suggestion. He had not, however, seen the proposed educational clauses, and had not expected that the bills would be introduced before his return. Now he hurried back to Ottawa, and expressed his dissent in an interview with the prime minister. Sir Wilfrid gathered that the difference was one of words and assumed that it could be adjusted; he was surprised on February 27 to receive Mr. Sifton's resignation from the cabinet. Two days later the resignation was announced in the House, Mr. Sifton stating that he dissented from certain principles set forth in Sir Wilfrid's speech and from the specific provisions made in the educational clauses. At the same time it became known that Mr. Fielding, who had been absent in Europe during the negotiations, was out of sympathy with these provisions, and might follow Mr. Sifton's example. Rumours that the Western and Nova Scotia members would take the same stand filled the air. There was no question that the government was faced with a serious crisis.

Sir Wilfrid was at a loss to understand the attack upon the bills. He had no doubt as to the constitutional power and duty of parliament: the Imperial Act of 1871 gave parliament power to frame a constitution for new Western provinces; the compact of Confederation was to apply to all provinces, to protect all minorities; parliament, while bound to apply Section 93 of the British North America Act in spirit, was free to vary it in detail to meet local conditions, as the precedent of Manitoba and the countless variations in the constitutions of the other provinces made clear. It was nonsense to say that education was a matter falling wholly to the provinces; the very section which gave this power to the provinces limited it by restrictions in the interest of the minority, whether Protestant or Catholic. Provincial rights must be protected, but equally so minority rights, and the rights of Catholic minorities equally with those of Protestant minorities. Minority rights conferred by action of parliament itself and made the basis of policy and of settlement for thirty years were fully as much entitled to protection by parliament as rights conferred by local action. He was particularly surprised by the criticism within the Liberal ranks, since the bills were merely continuing a compromise introduced by Alexander Mackenzie and Edward Blake. The bills safeguarded the existing system, which was essentially a system of national schools with very moderate provision for separate religious teaching, and was accepted in the West with practically no dissent on the part of Protestants.

At an early stage in the controversy, Sir Wilfrid's position was expressed clearly in a letter to an old friend, the editor of the Montreal "Witness," militant champion of Protestantism, but none the less fair and tolerant:

(Wilfrid Laurier to J. R. Dougall.)

DEAR MR. DOUGALL:

The "Witness" has always been so generous to me that you must not be surprised if I attach to its criticism a greater weight than to that of any other paper.

Will you permit me therefore to place before you the views which have influenced me in the education clauses of the bills for the admission of the new Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan into the Dominion?

I need not remind you that upon many questions, Confederation was a compromise. It is doubtful if Confederation could have been established without important sacrifices of opinion on many points.

The education clause of the B. N. A. Act was the most remarkable of all and in that clause George Brown, who was a most determined opponent of separate schools, agreed not only to admit the system in his own province, but to make its continuance part of the constitution. Nor is this all, but a similar provision was made for the minority of any province which might enter the Dominion with a system of separate schools. Can you doubt that if the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan had been admitted into the Dominion in 1867 instead of 1905, they would have received the same treatment as was given to Ontario and Quebec? I do not think that this can be denied.

The proposition in the bill is to give the minority the guarantee of the continuance of their system of schools as they would have had it in 1867.

I am well aware that the idea of having schools partaking of ecclesiastical domination is repugnant to the spirit of our age. Even such an objection could not hold against the spirit of the constitution, but I truly believe the true character of the

schools in the North-West Territories is not known; under the name of separate schools, they are really national.

The law of the North-West Territories subjects separate schools to the following conditions:

1. All teachers must hold their diplomas from the Board of Public Instruction.
2. All schools must be examined and controlled by Inspectors appointed by the Board of Public Instruction.
3. All books used therein must be the books approved by the Board of Public Instruction.
4. The tuition of the pupils must be in the English language. This secular instruction is absolutely under the control of the provincial authorities. The only privilege in religious matters is that at 3:30 p. m., such religious instruction can be given to the pupils as is thought advisable by the trustees of the schools.

Do you not believe that children so instructed can make good Canadians? Why, then, refuse to do for this minority what has been done for the minority of Quebec and the minority of Ontario? If this be refused, the minority of the North-West Territories will smart under a sense of wrong and injustice. They will believe that the public faith of the country is violated against them and to their prejudice, and who will pronounce their complaint unfounded?

For my part, I feel very strongly that it is essential, as essential now as it was in 1867, to make all parties feel sure that under our British constitution, in our Confederation, the first duty is to keep faith with all classes in the very manner which was set down as the basis of our Dominion. If this is not the idea that ought to guide us in this matter, I confess that I made an error, but if it is, you will agree with me that I am following the right course.

Believe me, as ever, dear Mr. Dougall,

Yours very sincerely,

[Signed.] WILFRID LAURIER.

He denied any inconsistency between his stand in 1896 and his stand in 1905. On both occasions he supported the right of the minority to religious teaching; his opposition in 1896 had been to the method of safeguarding this right. He was not overriding any local action. The degree of separation in the North-West schools was even less than in the Manitoba schools under the Laurier-Greenway agreement. On both occasions he had opposed intolerance, then the intolerance of Roman Catholic ecclesiastics who would deny freedom of thought to their co-religionists, now the intolerance of Protestants who were willing to accept privileges for a Protestant minority in Quebec, privileges always honourably preserved, but who were unwilling to carry out their share of the compromise when a Catholic minority was involved. He sympathized with the ideals of those who urged the need of national schools to hold together a country of many diverse origins and creeds, but he could not agree that in the schools or out national unity involved a drab and compulsory uniformity. For the most part, he had changed his front but not his base. Not wholly so: there was undoubtedly in his present stand a more lively sympathy with the minority's position than in 1896, born of growing conservatism, or of the irritation at Ontario's insistence, as in the South African War, that Quebec must provide all the sacrifices on the altar of harmony.[32]

There were two points where exception could legitimately be taken. It was undoubtedly a mistake to introduce the bill before consulting Mr. Sifton as to the educational clause. In the clause itself there was an undesirable ambiguity. Under the federal Act of 1875, empowering the majority of the ratepayers in any district to establish such schools as they thought fit and the minority therein to establish Protestant or Roman Catholic separate schools, local ordinances had been passed, establishing dual or denominational schools much as in Quebec or Manitoba, with complete ecclesiastical control of the separate schools, in finance, inspection, teaching and text-books. Then in 1892, as a consequence of the

agitation in Manitoba, the Territorial Assembly had passed other ordinances, limiting the right to establish separate schools to those sections in which the Catholics were in a minority, and limiting religious teaching in all schools to an optional half-hour at closing; later ordinances and regulations provided for uniform teachers' qualifications, curriculum and inspection in all schools, public or separate. Sir John Thompson had questioned the validity of these ordinances, but as the time for disallowing an earlier instalment of the changes had been permitted to go by, he did not disallow them. In 1901 the law was further consolidated. It had been Sir Wilfrid's understanding that the school system which was to be maintained was the system de facto, but under the clause which Mr. Fitzpatrick had drafted, repeating verbatim the words of the Act of 1875, there was some ground for believing that the minority could claim the re-establishment of the out-and-out denominational schools which had at first existed. In the later debate on the question, able constitutional lawyers expressed the most widely varying opinions as to the possible effect of the original Clause 16. It was certainly desirable that the new act should provide a settlement, not a litigation.

It is not likely that either pique at not being consulted or doubt as to the scope of the clause would of themselves have led Mr. Sifton to resign. Sir Wilfrid had made it clear in their interview that if there was ambiguity, it could be cleared up. The personal antagonism between Mr. Sifton and Mr. Fitzpatrick, and the personal attacks which were being made or prepared against Mr. Sifton from other quarters doubtless had their part in his decision. The Autonomy Bill gave an opportunity to withdraw with kudos.

Nearly a month of private discussions followed. Sir Wilfrid was moved at times to seek to carry through the bill as it stood rather than make even nominal concessions; and again he considered offering his resignation as leader. Mr. Sifton's resignation did not facilitate an amendment; it added fresh complications by arousing personal antagonisms and by making any amendment appear an unwilling result of pressure rather than a voluntary attempt to make the real meaning clearer. Eventually an agreement was effected. A new clause was drafted, stipulating that the minority rights to be safeguarded were those arising out of the ordinances of 1901. In explaining the new clause on the second reading, Sir Wilfrid, after emphasizing the fact that the original minority clause had been introduced at the instance and in the interest of the Protestant minority of Quebec, declared that in view of the changes made in 1892 and 1901, to enact Section 93 or the original clause of the Autonomy Bill would create confusion and litigation: "We therefore thought it was preferable to have the law made absolutely certain and in order to do that we have incorporated the ordinances under which the law as it is to-day, has been established. It may be disappointing to some but we believe that on the whole it is preferable to have a clear understanding."^[33]

In parliament, the amendment reunited the party. Mr. Sifton emphasized the difference between the original clause and the amendment, as the difference between a system of complete ecclesiastical control and a system with secular control of secular teaching, and ecclesiastical provision of religious teaching after hours. He could not forbear from remarking that "when my honourable friend, the Minister of Justice, employed a draughtsman to draught this clause with instructions to maintain only the existing state of affairs in the North-West Territories, the draughtsman either wholly misunderstood his instructions or possessed a most remarkable faculty for covering things which were not covered by his instructions." He was prepared to accept the new version, as it retained the essential principles of a national school system and removed "the taint of ecclesiasticism." Mr. Fielding, while declaring that he did not like the principle of separate schools, added that there was something to be said in these lax days for religious instruction in the schools; the system in the North-West was virtually a national system, and certainly there was not enough to which objection could be taken to warrant a governmental crisis and a consequent struggle on religious lines. Sir William Mulock emphasized the variations in provincial constitutions which made it impossible to apply Section 93 automatically, as Mr. Haultain himself had proposed. Mr. Bourassa broadly defended the tolerance and the patriotism of the French-Canadian and insisted that if the people of Quebec were sometimes provincialists, it was because outside their province the French-Canadian was denied liberty, equality, full respect; Mr. Fitzpatrick, declaring that he himself had drawn the original section, "with my own hand, line by line, clause by clause, word by word," defended it as simply a continuation of the policy laid down in 1875, and explained the privileges guaranteed under the new clause as the right of a minority, Protestant or Roman Catholic, in an existing public-school district, to a separate building and a separate trustee-board which would choose the teacher, and the right, common to Protestants and Roman Catholics, and to public and separate schools alike, to half an hour's religious instruction. Mr. Borden made an able and acute analysis of the constitutional issue, and Mr. Foster a slashing attack on the government's inconsistencies. A number of their followers, Mr. Herbert Ames, Mr. Pringle, and Mr. Bergeron, defended the government's policy; Mr. Monk, urging the need of positive enactment to safeguard and make clear the meagre privileges left to the minority, and protesting against the tendency to imitate the drab uniformity of the United States, concluded by attacking the myth that the voter in Quebec was to any

greater degree under clerical influence than his fellow-Canadians: "if the parish priests of my county were to unite to seek my election, I would lose my deposit." Throughout, the debate was of a very high order, moderate in tone, acutely reasoned, often eloquent, distinctly superior to the discussion of press and platform. It was no surprise that the second reading was carried on May 3, by a vote of 140 to 59. One Liberal, Mr. L. G. McCarthy, voted against it, and thirteen Conservatives, of whom ten were from Quebec, voted for it: the government had a majority of twenty outside Quebec and a majority of fourteen excluding all Catholic members.

Outside of parliament, the critics were less ready to accept the compromise. From the Toronto "News" and the Winnipeg "Tribune" to the "Christian Guardian," the "Presbyterian" and the "Canadian Baptist," the cry was still for complete exclusion of any reference to the schools. The "Globe," now under the editorial control of the Rev. J. A. Macdonald, accepted the compromise reluctantly and uncertainly; the influence of Hon. G. W. Ross and of Mr. John A. Ewan made for acceptance, but the new editor was a man of strong impulses, and the "Globe" consequently followed a somewhat zigzag course. A few Conservative journals, such as the Montreal "Gazette" and "Star," approved the government's course. Fresh fuel was thrown on the fire by an effort of Mr. Robert Rogers, of the Manitoba government, to implicate the government in an indiscreet attempt by the new Papal Delegate, Mgr. Sbarretti, to induce Manitoba to restore Catholic school privileges as the price of the extension of her boundaries to Hudson Bay. Sir Wilfrid at once declared that if Mgr. Sbarretti had made any such proposals he had done so wholly of his own motion, and without any shade of authority or knowledge on the part of the federal government.

It soon became clear that there was no wide-spread popular revolt in the English-speaking provinces, and that the critics, though not without influence, could not inspire a crusade. Protestant opinion could be stirred as ever, but in the absence of any strong complaints from the West itself, the fire soon burned out. It was difficult to keep passion at white heat over the teaching of the Roman Catholic catechism from half-past three to four o'clock. In two hotly contested by-elections in Ontario—London and North Oxford—the Autonomy Bills were made the issue. The success of the Liberals in both seats, with an increased majority in London and a decreased majority in Oxford, was variously interpreted, but at least it showed that no tidal wave of opinion was rising against the government.

In the West itself, where Toronto prophets had foretold a rebellion, the electors, particularly after the modification of Clause 16, showed a disappointing calm. When Frank Oliver, the most characteristic old-timer in public life, was appointed Minister of the Interior in Mr. Sifton's place, he was returned for Edmonton by acclamation on April 25. It was not easy to oppose a minister in a by-election, and particularly a minister with Frank Oliver's personal hold on his constituents, but all the explanations left something still to explain. Then followed the election of the new provincial legislatures. In September, Mr. A. E. Forget was installed as lieutenant-governor of the new province of Saskatchewan and Mr. Bulyea in Alberta. Mr. Bulyea, on his own discretion, called upon A. C. Rutherford, a Liberal member of the Territorial Assembly, to form a government in Alberta, while R. B. Bennett was chosen leader of the Conservative Opposition. Walter Scott, a Liberal member at Ottawa of much promise, for whom Sir Wilfrid had a very warm affection, was summoned in Saskatchewan, and Mr. Haultain, who, but for his active hostility to the Autonomy Bills, would have been the natural choice, organized a Provincial Rights party in opposition.^[34] In the contests which followed late in the year, the Liberals had the advantage of government prestige and official favour, but this was counteracted by Mr. Haultain's personal popularity and by the compromising support which Archbishop Langevin, who in April had vigorously denounced the amendment as "a consecration of robbery," "a sacrifice once more to sectarian fanaticism," now tendered to Mr. Scott by calling upon all Saskatchewan Catholics to vote for him. The result was an overwhelming Liberal victory, 16 seats to 8 in Saskatchewan and 23 to 2 in Alberta. Clearly, the West was contented.^[35]

The crisis had evaporated. Manitoba's schools had troubled Canadian politics for seven years, the North-West schools for seven months. Sir Wilfrid had his acts through, the principle of accepting the Confederation compromise accepted, and his majority, and, save for Mr. Sifton, his cabinet intact. Yet the result had been to shake his position not a little. No explanation could fully explain. Critics contended that if he had intended to re-establish denominational schools of the earlier type, then for the first time he had been forced to retire from a position which he had deliberately taken; and if he had merely meant to continue the existing schools, this should have been made clear beyond question. In Ontario and in some measure in the other English-speaking provinces, the suspicion had been planted that he was under the thumb of the hierarchy, and though thus far the harvest had disappointed the industrious sowers, they had hopes of better days. Equally important, the extremists in Quebec were given an opportunity which they did not neglect. Mr. Bourassa, who had voiced no dissent from the amendment in the House, held a great mass meeting in Montreal in April, and found ardent support for his uncompromising defence of separate schools and his denunciation of the amendment as a sacrifice of the

minority's rights, a ratification of the "unjust, illegal and oppressive territorial ordinances." It was the first time in ten years that a critic of Sir Wilfrid had found a popular following in Quebec. The Nationalist movement had begun.^[36]

A year later religious differences once more disturbed, but in a minor degree, the course of legislation. For some years a vigorous agitation had been carried on, particularly by the Lord's Day Alliance, for more effective legal protection of Sunday as a day of rest. Slackening religious faith, Continental immigrants, United States Sunday newspapers, the speeding up of industry, golf and country clubs, were making inroads upon the quiet Sabbath of earlier days. A recent Privy Council decision had thrown doubt upon the power of the provinces to legislate comprehensively in a field covered in some measure by the federal control over criminal law. The cabinet agreed to introduce federal legislation, and after full consideration had been given in committee, a bill was drafted. The measure broadly forbade working for gain on Sunday; there were many exemptions in favour of transportation and other public services; and provincial laws present and to come were validated, but even so the provisions were strict enough to run counter to many industrial and transportation interests as well as to the social convictions of many communities. In Quebec, where Sunday, after mass was over, had long been regarded as a day for political tournaments, family visiting and friendly games, the feeling was strong. Mr. Tarte, in one of his last utterances, attacked the bill as a retrograde and autocratic invasion of the liberty of the individual, while Mr. Bourassa denied that any man who tried to force such iniquitous legislation down the throats of the people could call himself a Liberal; Archbishop Bruchesi, on the other hand, joined the majority of the Protestant clergy in warm support. Sir Wilfrid defended the measure as not merely in accord with the religious convictions of the vast majority of the people, but essential to protect the working-man from the persistent encroachments of industry upon his day of rest. When Mr. Bourassa attacked the government for capitulating weakly to agitators and lobbyists, and particularly to Rev. Dr. Shearer, the general secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance, and thereby putting a premium not merely on agitation but on "hypocrisy, drunkenness, idleness and the vices that develop in any country where the attempt is made to make people virtuous by law, instead of relying on the individual conscience and the moral quality of the Church," Sir Wilfrid adroitly turned the attack to his own advantage. It enabled him to take up his favorite rôle of the moderate man attacked by the extremists. "Last year the cry was Sbarretti; this year it is Shearer." The measure passed the House without substantial variation, but it was modified by a Senate amendment, later accepted by the House, making prosecutions depend on the initiative of the attorney-general of the province concerned; eventually Quebec and British Columbia contracted themselves out. Even so, the Presbyterian General Assembly the year following was able to endorse the measure as "the best piece of Lord's Day legislation ever passed by any parliament."

The legislative achievement of the third Laurier parliament was not limited to autonomy and Lord's Day acts. The tariff was revised in 1907, with the addition of intermediate or negotiating tariff rates half-way between the general and the British preference rates. A Civil Service Commission was established to control the inside or Ottawa service. The Election Act was revised to make more stringent the enactments against corruption, and incidentally to prevent hostile local Tory governments abusing the good Liberal principle of accepting the provincial franchise lists for federal elections: a warmly debated measure, which, as Sir Wilfrid frankly stated, "reduced itself to this, that you gentlemen on the other side of the House do not want to go before the country on electoral lists prepared by your opponents and we, on this side of the House, do not care to go to the country on electoral lists prepared by our opponents." The Railway Commission was reorganized, and telegraph and telephone companies brought under its jurisdiction. Fresh ground was broken by the establishment, under Sir Richard Cartwright's guidance, of a system of government old-age annuities, on a voluntary basis, and by the passing of a measure for compulsory investigation into labour disputes in public utilities, framed by Mr. Lemieux and his young deputy-minister, Mr. Mackenzie King.

It was not, however, in legislation, nor in the determination of foreign and imperial policy that the political interest of this period centered. The changes in the personnel of the federal government and in the provincial situation, and particularly the charges of maladministration and corruption brought against the Laurier government, were of much greater political moment.

Time had transformed the Laurier cabinet of 1896. Many of the original stalwarts had departed; others had lost their earlier zeal; new men had come and gone, and younger lieutenants were taking their place.

From the Maritime provinces, only Mr. Fielding and Sir Frederick Borden remained. Sir Louis Davies had gone to the Supreme Court in 1902; Mr. Blair had retired a year later, and Henry R. Emmerson, who had given up his New Brunswick premiership to take his place, resigned in 1907. The New Brunswick post in the cabinet, after much jockeying, had fallen to Mr. William Pugsley, Attorney-General in the Tweedie cabinet which had succeeded Mr. Emmerson, and premier for a brief space until a seat in the Commons and the portfolio of Public Works fell to him in

1907. Mr. Fielding's skilful and prudent handling of the country's finances, and his moderation, judgment and probity in all relations, had steadily strengthened his position in the House and in the country. Sir Frederick Borden had proved an effective administrator of militia affairs, but had of late been under fire on grounds of personal conduct. Mr. Pugsley, shrewd, suave, resourceful, a relentless fighter on occasion, brought with him all the experience and all the feuds of a lifetime of New Brunswick politics.

In Quebec, only Sir Wilfrid and Sydney Fisher remained of the original six ministers. Mr. Geoffrion had died in 1899 and Mr. Dobell in 1902; Sir Henri Joly had gone to Government House in Victoria in 1900, and Mr. Tarte had read, or rather spoken, himself out in 1902. Mr. Fitzpatrick, after six years in the junior legal post and four in the senior, had taken the Chief Justiceship of the Supreme Court in 1906. Nor had the second generation of ministers had a longer life; M. E. Bernier had gone on the Railway Commission after four years, Henry Carroll had held the Solicitor-Generalship for only two years, and Raymond Préfontaine's stormy career was cut short by death in 1905. But the Quebec delegation was strong, and the younger men who took their place added strength and distinction to the government,—Rodolphe Lemieux as Solicitor-General in 1904 and Postmaster-General and Minister of Labour two years later, Jacques Bureau as his successor in the Solicitor-Generalship, Louis P. Brodeur, as Minister of Inland Revenue in 1904 and of Marine and Fisheries in 1906, and Henri S. Béland at a slightly later period. The Ontario representation had not fared so well.^[37] Sir Richard Cartwright, Sir Richard Scott and William Paterson still held their posts, but none of these veterans was now able to take the active part in parliamentary debate or party organization of the days of old, though Sir Richard, who had retired to the Senate in 1904, was still potent in council and an alert critic of all doubtful expenditure. Sir Oliver Mowat had rounded off his career by a six year term in Government House and David Mills, by a seat in the Supreme Court. The severest blow came with the retirement of Sir William Mulock, who was not only an unusually effective administrator, but was strong with the general public, and able to rally the old Reformers. Impaired health compelled him in 1905 to take a less onerous position on the Ontario bench. James Sutherland and Charles Hyman in turn filled a term, which ill-health made brief, as minister without portfolio and Minister of Public Works. Fresh strength came when A. B. Aylesworth agreed to give up his flourishing legal practice to enter federal politics; Postmaster-General in 1905 and Minister of Justice a year later, his intellectual vigour and distinct individuality proved invaluable assets. The Ontario delegation was still further strengthened in 1907 by the appointment of George P. Graham, who had succeeded George W. Ross as Liberal leader in Ontario, and had proved his quality in that difficult post, as Minister of Railways in 1907, and of Charles Murphy, a vigorous and outspoken Ottawa barrister, with a fresh viewpoint, to succeed Sir Richard Scott, on the eve of the 1908 elections. From the West, which had had one representative in the nineties, and two after 1902, Frank Oliver had succeeded Clifford Sifton, and William Templeman had given British Columbia its first full cabinet post.

The situation in the provinces had changed. That this affected federal fortunes was plain; in what way, was matter for dispute. A party victory in a provincial contest encouraged the party workers, ensured the local government's moral or other support, and had its influence on those who wished to swim with the tide. Yet there were observers who contended that there was a political law of compensation, whether due to the different adjustment of pendulum swing in the federal and in the provincial timepieces, or to the desire of independent electors to hold the balance even, which gave the party in opposition in the province a better chance in the federal contest. There was some ground for this interpretation in the political history of Ontario and the Maritime-provinces, but on the whole experience told against it. Certainly the Liberal leaders at Ottawa found little consolation in the growing power of the Conservative party in the provinces.

Five out of the nine provinces were still Liberal. In Nova Scotia, George H. Murray still led invincibly the administration he had organized on Mr. Fielding's retirement in 1896, and in 1908, a year of elections, Francis Haszard continued, though with a reduced majority, the Liberal tenure in Prince Edward Island which had begun in 1891. In Quebec, after Mr. Marchand's death in 1900, Simon Napoleon Parent had succeeded to the premiership and an overwhelming Liberal majority. Four years later, when the premier dissolved the Assembly suddenly the day after the Liberal victory in the Dominion, the Conservative's in protest officially abstained from the contest; during the elections and in the new Assembly a bitter contest between two wings of Liberals took place, and Premier Parent gave way in 1905 to Lomer Gouin. The new premier continued the reform of administrative methods, begun by Mr. Marchand, which soon made Quebec the best instead of the worst administered province in the Dominion; the Conservative party was able to offer little resistance in 1908, though the new Nationalist group gave some trouble. In the West, the Rutherford government still held control of power in Alberta, and Premier Scott had secured a new lease of power in Saskatchewan in the election of August, [1908](#).

Elsewhere the prospect for the Liberal party was less encouraging. In New Brunswick, where Mr. Blair had been followed by a rapid succession of Liberal or faintly coalition premiers,—James Mitchell, Henry Emmerson, L. J. Tweedie, William Pugsley, Clifford Robinson,—the end of a twenty-five-year Liberal régime came with the decisive victory of Douglas Hazen, the Conservative leader, early in 1908. In Ontario, after Oliver Mowat's retirement, Arthur Sturgis Hardy and George W. Ross in turn endeavoured to carry on, but despite their ability and the quality of the new men they gathered around them in the cabinet, the fight was a losing one. After thirty-two years' unbroken power, the electors were prepared to listen to the cry, "It is time for a change," and the more so since in the last years of Liberal government, when numbers were desperately close, disreputable machine methods gained the ascendancy. The Ross government was swept out of power in January, [1905](#), and in June, [1908](#) a Conservative victory with 86 seats to 19 made it clear that Sir James Whitney's progressive administration assured him in turn of a long vista of office. In Manitoba, the Greenway government had gone down to defeat in 1900, and though the Roblin government was fast building up a reputation as the most shamelessly and colossally corrupt administration in provincial record, it was still able to secure or to count a majority of the voters. In British Columbia, after a period of chaos in which Joseph Martin played a spectacular part, the non-party basis of government, with its instability and constant personal intrigue, was abandoned, and a frankly Conservative government under Richard McBride held power from 1903. The provincial swing was distinctly toward the Conservative camp.

It was not, however, the indirect influence of Conservative gains in the provinces that the Laurier government had to fear so much as the attacks made upon its own conduct of public affairs. Its administration of the country's business was constantly and vigorously under fire in this period. The sessions of 1906, [1907](#) and 1908 were largely scandal sessions, and the general election that followed was a scandals election. The government was attacked as wasteful, demoralized, corrupt, false to all the principles and promises of the sanctimonious Liberalism of Opposition days. The government forces retorted in kind. If half what each side alleged of the other was true, Canadian public life had sunk below the depths it had reached in the nineties. How much fire was behind the campaign smoke?

So far as the conduct of parliament itself was concerned—or at least of the Commons, for the Senate changed not—there was no question that the years had brought a marked and welcome raising of standards.



GROUP OF MINISTERS

The amenities of debate were better observed, personalities were less extreme, the possibility that the other side of the House might not all be imbeciles or scoundrels more freely recognized. At times when a long session had frayed men's nerves or the discussion of scandal charges had come close home, there were outbursts which did the House little credit, but they were fewer than of old, and rarely shared in by the front benches. How much of the change was due to the lessening use of whiskey, how much to the guidance of a notable succession of Speakers, J. D. Edgar, Thomas Bain, Louis Brodeur, N. A. Belcourt, R. F. Sutherland, and later, Charles Marcil, it would be difficult to assess. There was no doubt that it was in very large part due to the character and example of the leader of the House. His dignity and courtesy pervaded the whole Commons; the standards of a great gentleman became part of the traditions of parliament. The influence of Mr. Borden, always fair and always more interested in principles than in personalities, made strongly in the same direction.

As regards administration, a stock-taking did not reveal such steady progress. There was much to set to the government's credit. It had shown an energy and a competence in many fields in refreshing contrast to earlier days. In the administration of the Treasury, in immigration and settlement, in agriculture, in the post-office, and in less degree in the public works, the country had received progressive and careful service.

The work of the Railway Commission had given stability and fairness to transportation. Yet there was also another side. There was an uncomfortable amount of inefficiency, of waste, and of misuse of public funds. Some of the abuses were due to individual wrong-doing, from which any corporation might suffer. Some were due to broader causes, particularly to the effect of party organization and methods on the country's business.

Who shall muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn? It was difficult to prevent occasional officials, high and low, from making use of their opportunities for illicit gain, and yet so far as came to light, there was not any substantial degree of speculation within the administration. Extensive petty graft was found in the Marine and Fisheries Department, upon investigation by a commission in 1907, due in part to the wasteful and careless methods in force in that department in the past dozen years, and partly, so the Liberals replied, to mistaken leniency in permitting practically all the old Conservative office-holders to retain their posts. Wholesale graft was charged in the affairs of the Interior Department under Mr. Sifton's régime; timber and grazing leases that yielded rich profits to the concessionaires, sales of land to colonization companies at unduly low rates, a contract with the North Atlantic Trading Company, a group of European shipping agents, for bonussing immigrants, kept secret because of Continental laws against emigration propaganda, were all charged to be devices for enriching men on the inside. The North Atlantic contract was never proved to be other than what it purported, and the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company's operations were shown to have brought settlement and prosperity to a wilderness. There was ground, however, for the charge that in some timber and grazing contracts, if there had not been collusion, there had been neglect of the country's interests. The Liberal tactics were to deny any wrong-doing, to dig up old Conservative deals, and to attack prominent members of the Opposition, particularly Messrs. Foster, Fowler, Bennett, and Lefurgey, for abuses of private trust or for securing secret information from railway magnates as a basis for speculation in Western lands. An investigation into life insurance conditions by a royal commission in 1906-07, following upon the revelations made by the Hughes inquiry in New York, revealed much waste, instances of indefensible manipulation in some of the smaller companies, and a dangerous interlocking between trustee and private interests in some of the larger, and provided the basis for substantial improvements in insurance legislation the following session. By many Conservatives, however, the chief purpose of the inquiry was charged to be the discrediting of Mr. Foster for his handling of the funds of a fraternal society and its subsidiary trust company. The debates on the question in 1906 and 1907 were prolonged, the attack pointed, Mr. Foster's defence vigorous and circumstantial.

It was not merely the eighth commandment but the seventh that was claimed to have been broken by Liberal ministers and by Conservative members. During a debate in February, [1907](#), on these charges, Mr. G. W. Fowler, Conservative member for Kings, New Brunswick, jumped to his feet and threatened reprisals:

I want this House and the Right Honourable the First Minister and the government to understand that if matters in connection with my private business are to be discussed in this House, I shall take an opportunity to discuss the private character of members of the Administration and members on that side; . . . I shall call a spade a spade and when I speak of the indisposition of an honourable minister which keeps him out of the House, I shall tell exactly what it was and how it was brought on. . . . I shall discuss the character of honourable members opposite, whether they be ministers or private members and their connection with wine, women and graft.

Mr. Fowler carried the matter no further, but Mr. Bourassa, professing to voice an outraged public opinion and to be anxious to defend the honour of the House, repeatedly urged investigation into these and the other charges; he himself had no evidence, but the rumours were thick and strong; there should be no saw-off; the prime minister should intervene as Mr. Gladstone had done in the case of Sir Charles Dilke. Sir Wilfrid, in reply, on March 26, refused to pay heed to "insinuations and the tittle-tattle of the street": "The House of Commons has never either in this country or in the mother country ordered an investigation except upon a charge which the man against whom it is levelled can face and to which he can give an answer." The insurance inquiry was complete; it did not require to be repeated. Mr. Bourassa had referred to certain gossip and had declared that if he had the proof he would bring it: "if he has not the proof, why does he mention it at all? The rumours which have been floating in the air at last fell into the gutter, and the honourable gentleman gropes in the gutter and brings those rumours into the House." There had been rumours about an absent minister: "Last fall, a certain rumour came to me, and I spoke to a mutual friend who is now in this House and hears my words, and I said to him: I have been a friend of Hyman for many years; you are still more a friend of his than I am . . . ; go to him and tell him he must let me know what truth there is in this." Then and afterward his colleague had sent direct and circumstantial denial. Mr. Gladstone had advised Parnell's friends to compel his withdrawal from public life; but when? When his offences had been revealed in court, when they were no longer a private affair but a public scandal. It was not his duty to act as a detective: when facts as to other men were brought to his knowledge he would act as he had done in Hyman's case. Let direct and responsible charges be made and the freest and fullest investigation would be given. The debate ended, and the discussion was continued in the Calgary "Eye-Opener." A week later one minister resigned and fought an unsuccessful libel suit. A second had already retired. A third fought the charges and retained Sir

Wilfrid's confidence and his seat.

It was not a pleasant episode. Undoubtedly in some quarters power and prosperity were relaxing moral standards, or at least encouraging men to flaunt their personal misconduct in public. The wave of speculation which was sweeping over the whole country, and particularly the opportunities for getting rich quick in Western real estate, had affected the whole country; the city banker, the village storekeeper, the Western farmer, each had his flier, and members of parliament were not immune. The lime-light on the political stage revealed the misdoings of public men, but whenever a corner of the curtain which concealed private business was lifted, it was found that graft and turned heads were not confined to politicians. It was the seamy side of prosperity, part of the price the country paid for the sudden development of the unexploited wealth of half a continent. Fortunately, the infection did not wholly pervade either public or private life, and after the first intoxication there came a sober return to simpler ways. In other cases the criticism was the outcome, rather, of rising public standards. Thirty years earlier, it would have caused little comment had a minister appeared, drunk, in the House, much less out of it. Sir Wilfrid was blamed for not intervening earlier as regards the personal charges against his colleagues. He did intervene whenever definite statements reached him, and after 1908 this phase of politics troubled the country little.[38]

Sir Wilfrid's position may be gathered from a letter to one of the guardians of the Liberal conscience, Senator McMullen:

Quebec, [28 July, 1908](#)

MY DEAR MCMULLEN:

I have your letter of the 25th instant. I never knew anything of the charge made by Boyce until it was brought in the House. I admit that it has a look upon it which I do not like at all, but before making up my mind I shall wait until Sifton has had an opportunity of giving his version of it.

Boyce could and should have preferred that charge when Sifton was in the House and as Sifton was Minister at the time the transaction took place and is primarily responsible for it, it seems to me Boyce should have given notice of his intention to bring the matter up, so as to give Sifton an opportunity of meeting the charge. Whatever may be Sifton's faults he is no coward, and he has denied the personal charge made against him, it seems to me only reasonable and fair to suspend judgment.

Moreover, let me tell you frankly that in this matter you take a very unfair and unjust position toward the government. You say that once the impression gets abroad that corruption exists in the ranks of any government, it is sure to end disastrously. I do not dispute that by any means, but is it fair, reasonable or just to apply it to the present government? If Sifton were still in office, in view of the charge which is made against him, I could understand your construction, but as he is no longer a member of the Government I do not see how we can reasonably be made to suffer for an offence which took place seven years ago. If the offence were such as you represent it and if Sifton were still in the Government, I would be bound to ask him an explanation, and if the explanation were not satisfactory, the responsibility would be on the Government either to keep him or to force him out.

I know that we are weak in the Province of Ontario and one of the causes of our weakness there is that our friends are prone to believe everything bad of us without preliminary investigation and to hold us responsible even for things which it is not in our power to remedy. . . .

Allow me to say in conclusion that there is in your letter a pessimistic tone which ought not to exist. Governments are born to die, but I do not think that we have yet come to our end and certainly we can win again and win easily, if our friends will not be stampeded by the attacks of the Tories. The Tories are very virtuous when they are in opposition; when they are in office they can swallow anything without wincing.

These charges and counter charges had to do with individual and more or less incidental wrong-doing. More serious were the charges of wrong-doing in the interest of the party, of fraud or waste or inefficiency declared to be inherent in the party system, as that system had developed in Canada in recent years. Electoral corruption, the waste, unfairness and demoralization of the patronage system, the sinister aspects of campaign funds, were made the ground of vigorous indictments of the Laurier administration, and of *tu quoque* replies. The methods adopted to secure a victory at the polls, the sources of the aid required, the patronage and privileges given in return, were widely debated.

That democracy involved the party system, no man with practical experience questioned. That it involved the two-party system seemed a just deduction from the last half-century of Canadian politics. With political power divided among a million voters, how were half a million plus one to be induced to act together? The leader's personal prestige, the instinct of loyalty, of hero worship, would go far. Thousands of electors cheered and voted not for the Liberal party but for Wilfrid Laurier, as thousands had cheered and voted for John A. Macdonald before him; "Follow my White Plume," Sir Wilfrid called not in vain to young Quebec, as age silvered his black locks. Party spirit was strong, the group prejudice, the combative instinct which shared with the larger loyalty of national patriotism a good side and a bad, an unquestioning cleaving to the flag of Grit or Tory under which one had chanced to be born, a readiness to stand by one's party, right or wrong. Principles moved a few, disinterested convictions on one's own side, rooted prejudices on the other. With judicious stimulus or from the accident of events the interest, or what was considered the interest, of a religious body or an economic class or a local community could be rallied, and with skill and the favouring distances of

a continent, opposing groups could sometimes be induced to support the one party. The policy of state aid to industry inevitably brought the parties into close touch with every large and organized economic group; the transition from aid in the country's interest to aid in the party's interest was easy. Parties could give or promise tariff or bounty privileges to manufacturers, railway extensions to a mining-camp or a prairie settlement, a post-office or an armory or a harbour wherever it would do the most good. The Laurier government made less political use of the tariff than its predecessors; the manufacturers at best were neutral, and the new publicity of tariff hearings was a marked advance on the old Red Parlour days. Public works were used more freely, for money was more abundant, and it came easily, extracted painlessly in tariff dues. A hostile constituency could not ask for more than "cold justice," and members unblushingly recited the wharves and custom-houses and bridges they had secured for their constituents. "I obtained two years ago \$174,500 as government subsidy for your railroad, and this year nearly \$100,000; \$90,000 for the construction of the dam; \$7,500 for ice-breakers, \$3,000 for an iron bridge; in all, I have obtained for the two counties more than \$375,000. Does that count for nothing?" was one candidate's account of his stewardship, while another calculated that his string equalled \$125 per head of the voting population. Sometimes this wholesale bribery with the people's own money shredded into retail bribery, as where in the 1908 election a defeated candidate reported meeting on election day the free and independent voters on their way to the polls, each hauling his share, three logs for the new breakwater.

To drive home these arguments, to instil true principles, to rouse the indifferent, to convert the hesitating, to stiffen the backsliding, to counteract the machinations of the enemy, all the resources of press and platform and poster were called into action. Of late years there had been less political discussion between elections. Members met their constituents in single or in joint debate less often than of old. The newspapers gave less of their space to politics, more to business, sport, society and personal news. A more concentrated and strenuous campaign at election times, increased reliance on organization, head-lines and posters and cartoons which he who ran might read, a shriller note in all the contest, became inevitable.

There remained the hopelessly indifferent and the hopefully corrupt. Manhood suffrage had increased their numbers, the single-member constituency maintained their importance, the gerrymander increased it. A few score of purchased votes (retail) would turn many a riding. For this situation the Liberals had a share of responsibility. They had championed manhood suffrage, and they still believed that in the long run their faith would be justified. They had not taken any definite step toward proportional representation. Sir Richard Cartwright, with Mr. Monk, warmly urged it, but tradition was too strong for them; Sir Wilfrid had come sufficiently to their view to declare that if in power, he would ask its consideration at the next redistribution. They had, however, done away with the gerrymander; the redistribution of seats in 1903 had been the fairest since Confederation, effected by a committee representing both parties. The extent to which bribery prevailed varied from constituency to constituency. It was probably less than a generation earlier, despite a greater floating vote. A few close constituencies, such as London, where a party fight was a family vendetta and men were ready to go great lengths for victory, were badly demoralized. Sometimes teams were hired or cattle bought at high prices where five dollar bills would not be taken: in one constituency a hotel keeper kept open house for all comers and sent in the bills to the two candidates on the basis of the votes finally polled for each; boxes of whiskey labelled "Choice Tomatoes" did duty for the Conservatives in Colchester, and also for the Liberals in campaign retort.

A newer phase of electoral corruption was the manipulation of the ballot. The hiring of bogus deputy returning officers in West Elgin; the spoiling of ballots by thumb-nail pencil crosses in North Grey; in the Sault, the voyage of the *Minnie M.* with a boat-load of personators, sworn, to save their consciences, on specially provided bogus Bibles; the resort in West Hastings to boxes with secret compartments to switch the ballots as desired;^[39] aroused the public more than bribery. Practically all these and similar incidents took place in Ontario, which was frequently too busy saving the souls of the other eight provinces to have time for its own; though it was long experience of Quebec that had led Israel Tarte to declare that "elections are not won by prayers." The bulk of the offences lay at the door of the provincial Liberal party, which had permitted the most brazen machine in Canadian annals to take control of its electoral affairs. The federal organization was relatively free from these gross abuses, but not wholly, and federal offices sometimes rewarded provincial offenders.

For all these efforts, the work of canvassing and organization, the work of honest persuasion, the work of loud propaganda and lowly whispers, the work of the briber and ballot-box stuffer, workers and payers were required. Many men worked for loyalty, for principle; many worked for office or for glory; many took the cash and let the credit go. Some newspapers gave free and independent support; others had to be sustained by government printing or advertising;^[40] others were maintained directly out of party funds. As business outweighed politics, there came a

gratifying increase in newspaper independence, but in many cases a journal became independent of party only to become dependent upon advertisers, or the organ of railway or corporation interests. Payers, too, were needed; there were men who subscribed to local or central campaign funds as they would to their church funds, without hope of gain in this world, and there were others who subscribed to one or both parties on a business basis, expecting thousands per cent. profit.

The sequel was the patronage system. If workers and subscribers would not work and pay for loyalty or principle or class or community interest, they must be rewarded by direct individual gain. Seats in the Commons, judgeships, senatorships, knighthoods, clerkships at Ottawa, jobs as postmasters, excise officers, customs landing waiters, immigration inspectors, must be filled and where possible filled by the faithful. Supplies must be bought from firms on the patronage list. Subsidy-hunters, contract-seekers, found the way smoother if they had subscribed to campaign funds.

The distribution of patronage was the most important single function of the government. Sir Wilfrid frequently repeated the story of Lincoln, asked during a crisis in the Civil War whether it was a change in the army command or complications with foreign powers that wrinkled his forehead, and replying, "No, it is that confounded postmastership at Brownsville, Ohio." No other subject bulked so large in correspondence; no other purpose brought so many visitors to Ottawa. It meant endless bombardment of ministers, ceaseless efforts to secure a word from the friend of a friend of the premier, bitter disappointment for the ninety and nine who were turned away. While the members of the cabinet from each province usually determined the appointments which could be localized, all the more important came to Sir Wilfrid before decision, and to him the prayers of most of the seekers were turned. Some of his supporters tried to save themselves trouble for the moment by recommending to him each candidate in turn; in reply to a protest, one such practitioner naïvely replied: "True, I recommended both C. and D. It was C. I really wished considered. D. is one of a class of people who hound my office, ask me for letters of recommendation, exalt their services or the services of their friends, whom they often bring along, and offer themselves to put the letter in the post-box. What am I to do?"^[41]

Some men worked through their friends, some applied direct. Particularly in applying for the higher posts, it was *comme il faut* to make it clear that it was only the insistence of the general public that had overcome the candidate's reluctance: "It has been represented to me that the Liberals of Ontario with whom the name of Z. is a household word would be much gratified if I were appointed to Government House," or "My friends insist that my tact and diplomatic talents would find suitable scope in the High Commissionership." For the Senate, the orthodox grounds were being "the only one left of the old guard who stood so loyally to their colours in the dark days of the eighties when there was no silver lining," or having "run six elections and paid all my expenses out of my own pocket." A Roman Catholic bishop would write to note that all the last five appointments, formerly held by his co-religionists, had gone to Protestants, or a layman would argue that because the last holder was a Catholic so should the next be, or that as the last holder was a Protestant, it was a Catholic's turn; a Methodist friend would write to point out that there were only two Methodist county judges out of eighty, and a Presbyterian to complain that the percentage of Presbyterian senators was falling. It was a Quebec follower who wrote Sir Wilfrid shortly after the elections of 1896: "If anyone had told me when I was fighting the battles of Liberalism in my county, striving without fear of attack or hope of favour to advance the cause of the people, determined that no designing cleric and no corrupt politician would be allowed to shackle our noble country,—if anyone had told me that six months after you took office, I would still be without a job, I would not have believed him." It was an eastern Ontario seeker who wrote: "To think that after naming my only son William Lyon Mackenzie, I am still denied any post by a government that calls itself Liberal." Acquaintance in youth; descent from two United Empire Loyalist great grandfathers; having seventeen living children, one named Wilfrid, and this in Ontario; being the daughter of a Conservative minister and the mother of ten potential Liberal voters; finding that "if poverty is not a crime, it is very inconvenient," were typical grounds set forth in the appeals which poured in upon the prime minister.



LADY LAURIER

Posts were limited and many of the applicants were obviously unsuited for any post whatever. Sir Wilfrid rarely, if ever, made a promise until he was sure he could carry it out. To the great majority of his correspondents it was necessary to say "no"; to some, future consideration could be assured. Yet he found time to give individual attention to every request that reached him, and to return a fitting answer. To a pompous member of an old family who was graciously prepared to honour the party and the country by accepting a high post, the reply was curt and deflating; to an illiterate old Cape Breton fisherman who had voted Liberal all his life and had not received even any road work, and now wished to be relieved of his (municipal) taxes of eight dollars, the reply was warm and sympathetic. To a young lawyer who sought a government berth he gave not only refusal but the advice to stick to his calling and force success by his own endeavours. Some appeals which had no claim upon the country had a claim upon his personal sympathy. Out of their own purse he and Lady Laurier eased the last years of old friends, and provided the training that an ambitious boy or a girl with musical gifts had hoped for in vain.

It should not be assumed that the appointment never sought the man or that importunity greatly counted. That the higher appointments should be restricted to members of the party in power, whether Liberal or Conservative, might be deplored as unduly narrowing the range of choice, but within this field public merit as well as party service was carefully weighed. In connection with judicial appointments, Sir Wilfrid's correspondence, particularly with his Ministers of Justice, reveals a frank and deliberate sifting and an insistence on professional attainments and personal qualities, for which credit was not always given. Sometimes offers of senatorships or knighthoods were declined: writing to a colleague of Sir Wilfrid, a generous Liberal backer explained his reasons:

I am not ambitious. I am for "the house with the narrow gate which I take to be too little for pomp to enter at." Any interest I take in political affairs is, I am sure you will believe me, unselfish. There is no one, however, who benefits more by good times than I do, and I am not of the foolish ones who can remember the years from 1890-96 and then from 1896 to the present, without coming to the conclusion that the vital interests of Canada are bound up in Sir Wilfrid's government. I can see the sacrifices made by yourself and confrères; the strenuous life you are forced to lead, and the very many pleasures of which you deprive yourself. I would be ignoble indeed if in the face of this I did not with pleasure make my

little effort toward lengthening the period of power of the best government Canada ever had or is likely to have.

Not often, however, did a wife write one day to urge the appointment of her husband to the Senate, and the husband write the next day to urge the selection of a fellow-townsmen.

The letter just quoted sets forth a side of the question too often ignored by critics of public men. Public life was an engrossing occupation. Few men could do justice even to a private member's task and to their own affairs. With the growing complexity of the task of government, the session lengthened to cover the greater part of the year: in the parliament of 1873-78, the average length of a session was 72 days; in 1891-96 it was 116, and in 1904-08, [178](#) days. For the minister, office meant prestige, power, and to some, relative prosperity, but at the end there often came defeat and a vain endeavour to pick up the threads of a broken professional career. It was this consideration which led the government in 1905, along with an increase in sessional indemnities from \$1500 to \$2500, to propose and carry a pension for all cabinet ministers, past and future, who had held office for five years. The public outcry led a year later to the repeal of the pension provision. An innovation which time has sanctioned was the establishment of a salary for the leader of the Opposition, who is as busy and as essential an officer of government as any member of the cabinet; despite criticism the experiment was continued. It was a recognition of the same fact that led friends of Sir Wilfrid to subscribe a fund, to which no one in business relations with the government was allowed to contribute, to recompense him for his sacrifices and assure him peace of mind in his declining years.

Of all patronage questions, none gave more difficulty than the award of titles. The uncertain division of authority between the Canadian cabinet, the governor-general and the British cabinet, the conflict and interaction of radical principles, social ambitions, and imperialist propaganda, made the recommendations a ticklish matter. It was one of the few points in which the governor-general retained an independent initiative, and differences of opinion, particularly with Lord Minto, were frequent, though not acute. Few titles were given to men who had not done the country some service, but the influence of the growing spate of knights and peers in building up class barriers and reinforcing social snobbery, and their frank use by the imperial authorities to encourage public men to support imperialist views, counteracted, in the eyes of many Liberals, any value they might have as stimulating public service. Men like Mr. Fielding declined proffered honours, but others moved earth and heaven to get them. The usual alibi was that "this sort of thing does not appeal to me but my wife thinks it would be fitting." Or the wife would write: "We really care nothing personally about it ourselves, but naturally do not wish not to be appreciated or humiliated before our world." A member of the Bench would declare that "as you know, I am not anxious for a title; I would rather remain as I am," but if one must be accepted, why merely a K. C. M. G. when an Australian in a parallel post receives a G. C. M. G.? The rapid demoralization of an old guard Liberal is revealed in a series of letters beginning in March with a flat refusal to accept a title, agreeing in April to accept it as an incident of the new official position if the prime minister insists, going on in September to speak of the "surprise and annoyance occasioned by the invidious withholding of the honours that were so generally known to have been suggested," insisting on January 4 that "it will be necessary for you to take some decided notice of the Colonial Office's ignoring your recommendations . . . ; that title has come to be a fixed idea in my mind and a curious sense of injury rankles in my breast about it," and ending happily on May 25 with grateful thanks.

Sir Wilfrid did not propose to abolish all titles. Sir Richard Cartwright urged that ministerial responsibility should be increasingly observed in this last survival of prerogative. Sir Wilfrid was dubious, preferring to assume no responsibility, but steps were taken in the direction Sir Richard advised. The Governor-general still took the initiative in preparing the lists, and the prime minister would make objections or additional suggestions. Sir Wilfrid did endeavour to limit the number. A letter to a colleague in 1901 gives his view of the inexpediency of too many titles in the cabinet: his colleague's reply was, "If two titles in the cabinet are too many, one is too many."

Ottawa, [31](#) August, [1901](#)

MY DEAR X:

In view of the approaching visit of the Duke of York, I have had to discuss with Lord Minto, the question of honours to be distributed by him. I consider it my duty to inform you that His Excellency not only suggested but strongly pressed that your name should be on the list. It is also my duty—though not such a pleasant one—to tell you frankly that this I opposed.

I do not know what are the views which you hold on the subject of accepting honours. I do not remember that I ever discussed this with you. It is, however, quite obvious to me, that the granting of a decoration or title under such circumstances would be very gratifying to your family, and that for that reason, if for no other, it might have proved acceptable to you.

I may also add that in my own estimation, there is no one—I make no exception—who is more entitled than yourself to recognition of any kind either from the Crown or from the people. And yet, as I told you above, I strongly objected to the suggestion of Lord Minto, that your name should go on the list.

This I did for political reasons, which I am sure, are not new to you. I have not changed my own view that the acceptance of honours by a public man in the active and daily struggles of political life, is a mistake. I further believe that we have enough titles in the Cabinet already.

I am very much in earnest about all this.

Some one, if not yourself, might perhaps tell me, that I did not apply this rule to my own self; but to this statement I absolutely demur. The title which I now wear, was thrust on me, without any previous communication to me, and against my protest that it was a political mistake. I was then so situated that it would have been at the moment, a greater political mistake to have refused, for it would have been most ungracious, in the enthusiasm of the Jubilee, to meet by a denial the public announcement of the Queen's favour. Notwithstanding my course at the time could not have been else. I have often had occasion to realize that this conferring of a title on me—which was the result of the mistaken kindness to me of Lord Aberdeen and Lord Strathcona—was a serious political error, and I have never ceased to regret it.

From all this I have made up my mind, that at present we have enough titles in the Cabinet. If your views on this point do not agree with mine, I sincerely hope, that with your unvarying friendship to me, you will sacrifice them for my sake.

Sir Wilfrid, it may be added, twice declined to accept a peerage. It was strongly pressed upon him by Lord Minto, but on personal and political grounds he resolutely declined to consider it.

Lord Minto thus refers to the first of these occasions:

(Lord Minto to Wilfrid Laurier)

London, [23](#) Charles Street,
Berkeley Square, July 27, '02.

MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

I hope that though you refused the peerage which I know was offered to you, I may all the same be allowed to offer you my sincerest congratulations on the honour. I felt sure from what you often said to me, that you would refuse it, and I can fully appreciate your reasons for doing so, but all the same, as a friend, I cannot keep to myself the congratulations on the distinction which all your friends would have enthusiastically rendered to you and Lady Laurier if you had seen your way to accept. At the same time, I hope the day is a very long way off when after having fought and won the battles of public life you may feel at liberty to accept any of the distinctions you have so splendidly gained. . . .

As regards our list of honours, I am surprised at the omissions, which you also will have noticed. . . . If I had been told only a certain number of C. M. G.s were to be given for Canada, I could have understood it: but I had no such information, and no comment was made on the names submitted. Those who have received the C. M. G. have been selected from the list I sent in without any communication with me. I am going to the Colonial Office this morning to see if I can get any explanation, and believe me

Yours very truly,
[Signed.] MINTO.

The danger of electoral and administrative corruption and the unfortunate results of the patronage system called for immediate action. The Laurier government took energetic and constructive steps to ensure reform. Ministers resigned and peculating civil servants were dismissed. In 1907 all patronage lists for purchasing supplies in all the departments were abolished, and patronage was further restricted by the appointment of a permanent Civil Service Commission, with Adam Shortt and M. G. Larochelle in charge, to apply the merit system to the inside service. An order in council provided that timber licenses were to be granted only by public auction after survey and advertisement. Mr. Aylesworth's Election Act of the same year forbade corporations to contribute to campaign funds, required publicity of contributions, and set heavy penalties for ballot tampering,—an evidence at least of good intentions. A dangerous corner had been turned.

In the general elections, which were held on October 26, [1908](#), the Conservative party was much more aggressive than in 1904. Mr. Borden attacked the government's scandal record and emphasized clean administration and public ownership as his constructive planks. In view of the disclosures of 1904, it was interesting to note that a quarrel between Mr. Borden and Mr. Hugh Graham as to the 1904 election fund led the "Star" to take a neutral stand, while the St. John "Times" and "Telegraph" once more passed to Liberal hands, with Mr. Russell accommodatingly assisting. Another feature was the issue of a pamphlet—"The Duty of the Hour"—by the "Orange Sentinel," urging all Orangemen to strike a blow against clerical ascendancy by voting against the Laurier candidates; it was circulated by the Conservatives where it would do most good, and reprinted and circulated by the Liberals where it would do most harm. The Liberals defended Mr. Sifton by attacking Mr. Foster, and relied on prosperity and progress. "Let Laurier finish his work," was the keynote of their campaign.

Sir Wilfrid once more took an active part in the campaigning. As in 1904, he confined his efforts to Quebec and Ontario. In seven open-air meetings in western Ontario he spoke to 50,000 people; not all could hear, for his voice, while still silvery and mellow, could not carry as of old. He touched the personal chord, as at Sorel: "Not many years now remain

to me. The snows of winter have taken the place of spring, but however I may show the ravages of time, my heart still remains young," and at Montreal: "One task finished but calls to a new task. As Cecil Rhodes said, 'So much done, yet so much to be done.' I have things in my thoughts and if God grants me life there are many, many things which I would undertake to do, but unhappily the years are piling on my head and this is probably the last time that I shall appeal to my fellow-countrymen of Canada." He met the charges of wrong-doing: "There have been abuses. . . . There was a Judas among the twelve apostles, there may well be one or several black sheep in our flock, but if there are . . . it is for us and not for the Conservatives to rid ourselves of them." The government stood on its achievement: "We have been twelve years in office and these years will be remembered in the history of Canada. In them Canada has been lifted from the humble position of a colony to that of a nation. In 1896 Canada was a mere colony, hardly known in the United States or Europe. In 1908 Canada has become a star to which is directed the gaze of the civilized world. That is what we have done."

For the fourth time polling day brought decisive victory. The completed returns gave a Liberal majority of forty-seven, as against sixty-two in 1904. Ontario and Quebec showed no change in the total, though there were many shifts in individual constituencies, and the popular majority in Quebec was small; Nova Scotia was more Conservative, and New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island more Liberal; Manitoba and British Columbia decidedly Conservative, and the mid-West provinces firmly Liberal.^[42] Six provinces gave the government a majority; outside Quebec, it held a majority of four.

CHAPTER XV

NATION AND EMPIRE

National and Imperial Currents—The Imperialist Campaign—Laurier and Colonial Nationalism—The Colonial Conference of 1902—Chamberlain's Disappointment—His Tariff Policy—The Conference of 1907—Laurier and Botha—The Rise of Quebec Nationalism—Henri Bourassa—The Naval Panic of 1909—The Canadian Navy Resolution—Imperialist and Nationalist Dissent—The Campaign in Quebec—The Drummond-Arthabaska Election—The 1911 Conference.

With the ending of the Boer War, the broad question of Canada's national status and particularly its relation to the British Empire, had ceased to hold a leading place in public discussion and party programmes. With the entrance of the rivalry of Britain and Germany for control of the sea upon an acute stage, it became once more a warmly debated issue. During the years that intervened, Mr. Chamberlain's tariff campaign, the recurring Colonial Conferences, and the activity of propaganda groups had given occasion for debate and decision, but opinion, though rapidly developing, was still in the making, and no minor issue could precipitate a definite and nation-wide conviction.

The currents of sentiment continued to run much in the same channels as before, but with varying intensity. Imperialism was still in the ascendant. The desire for a closer union of the Empire and for the assumption on Canada's part of a greater share in the control and the responsibilities of a unified imperial policy, was wide-spread and vigorously expressed. The world was still in an imperialist mood, still being swept on toward the precipice of war by the rivalries of national egotism and trade interests, and no part of the British Empire could wholly escape. Pride of race was strong in English-speaking Canada. School and press emphasized the British tradition. The rapid immigration from the British Isles, of which a disproportionate share went to the cities, renewed and invigorated the affection for the mother country. The flood of British capital pouring in for investment in railways, lands, government bonds, influenced sentiment, unconsciously with some, directly and crudely with others. Sympathy with British Liberal or Labour movements, the dazzling glitter of royal and aristocratic circles, appealed in one or other quarter. Resentment against United States aggression or indifference urged in the same direction. Canada might be weaker than the Republic, but the Empire was stronger.

Yet at the same time, national sentiment was attaining a new scope and a new power. Every year that passed increased the background of national memories and national consciousness. Prosperity gave new confidence and assertiveness. The attention paid to Canada by the world outside was reflected in a new pride which may not always have observed proportion, but was none the less a reality for that. The opening of the West and the industrial development of the East brought about an intermingling of the people which in some measure broke down provincial barriers and developed Canadian feeling. Even participation in the Boer War had made for national more than for imperial sentiment. A popularly exaggerated idea of the achievements of the Canadian contingents, friction in Africa with imperial officers and loss of confidence in the War Office and the staff, the feeling that the slate had been cleaned of a large part of any debt due to Britain for protection, quickened the consciousness of Canada as a distinct national entity.

Nor had the old passive colonialism by any means disappeared. Inertia, fear of the unknown, the force of old traditions, made many reluctant to consider any change. Canada was getting on very well as she was: why assume any greater share of responsibility and risk either as an integral part of a centralized Empire or as a distinct nation within the Empire? Imperial duties, national responsibilities, meant a share in Europe's military madness. The ranks of those who took this position consciously were reinforced by the hosts of the indifferent, the vast proportion of the people who had no clear-cut convictions or active sentiments impelling them in any direction.

These tendencies were not embodied in distinct and organized movements. There was an active group of conscious and convinced imperialists, there was the beginning of the formulation of a nationalist creed, but for the most part the tendencies still hung in solution. The great majority of citizens wore no label. A few broad distinctions of sympathy were apparent. English-speaking Canada leaned more to the imperialist or the national solution, Quebec more to the colonial. The city was much more imperialist than the country, and particularly keener on the military side of empire; with the growing concentration of population and industry and power in a few large centres, and the greater facilities for organization and publicity that the city offered, the city counted for more in the nation's councils than the deeper currents of opinion warranted.

Canada was not left to work out its own conclusions unaided. The outstanding feature of these years was the vigorous

and persistent endeavour of official and unofficial circles in Britain to reorganize the Empire, to centralize authority and reinforce the power and prestige of Britain by the definite and bound support of her overseas possessions. Practical statesmen from Joseph Chamberlain to Lord Milner, theoretic propagandists from the British Empire League to the Round Table group, enthusiastic admirals from Colomb to Beresford, did all in their power to bring the colonies more closely within the imperial orbit. A unified British Empire, strengthened by mutual ties of trade and defence, directing its vast unused resources by a single will, keeping the world's peace and any unattached trifles in the way of territory, carrying on its mission as Heaven's chief deputy, would, they believed, benefit the colonies as well as Britain, and harmonize with the loyal aspirations Canada and Australasia had been voicing of late years. The need was urgent. Britain was losing her supremacy, rivals were aggressive, the colonies were coming to parting ways. Now or never was the Empire's hour.

The centralizing movement took three chief forms, of which now one, now another was emphasized. Political centralization, the establishment of some central parliament or imperial council or cabinet, was urged persistently. Military centralization, the contribution by the colonies of men and money for imperial fleets and armies, at the disposal of the British government or some new joint authority, was another path to the same goal. Economic centralization, the cementing of the Empire by trade and tariff privileges, found less universal but more aggressive support.

It was Wilfrid Laurier's fortune to hold a strategic and determining post in the settlement of this issue. As the prime minister of the colony to which population, prosperity, central position and priority in the working out of responsible government gave pre-eminence, as the senior and seemingly permanent prime minister of the Empire, outruling the Salisburys, Balfours, Campbell-Bannermans, the Chamberlains, the Bartons, Deakins, Watsons, the Seddons and the Jamesons, he held a unique place in imperial counsel. As the representative of the non-English-speaking peoples of the white Empire, he typified a problem which the racial Imperialist had to solve or abandon his endeavour. As a Canadian, heir to eight generations of Canadian pioneers, student of the long struggle for self-government, builder of the new Canada that was achieving its own distinct place in the world, he was the natural exponent of colonial nationalism. As Wilfrid Laurier the man, master of rhetoric but wary of enthusiasm, shrewd, tenacious, he was not likely to be moved from a deliberate position by the nod of a statesman or the smile of a duchess.

In forming his policy on imperial relations, Sir Wilfrid did not follow solely his individual preference. As leader of a party and ruler of a country of many shades of view, he had always to keep in touch with the central body of opinion. More important than personal preferences was the need of preserving national unity, or preventing a division on racial lines. His constant effort was to find a policy and a formula which would keep the country not only moving in what he considered the right direction, but moving abreast. As a responsible administrator, he was more concerned in settling concrete problems than in framing abstract theories of empire. His formulas were never very formal. He was the despair alike of Mr. Henri Bourassa and of Mr. Lionel Curtis, who called for precise and comprehensive and neatly labelled programmes. Whether or not he could have been positive and constructive, it is a fact that his most important work in this field was negative, the blocking of the plans of the advocates of centralization, who suffered from no shortage of theories. It is an opinion, but an opinion strengthened by the experiences of later years, that this work, negative though it may have been, was the work his day demanded, an essential stage in the development of Canadian nationality.

Writing in 1911 to a correspondent who reported the criticism of an imperialist friend that Canada and the Empire were "drifting," Sir Wilfrid replied:

Your crusading friend considers that in imperial matters we are drifting. Drifting is a question-begging word. It may be that we are without a course and without a pilot, or it may be merely that your friend does not greatly like our course nor greatly trust the pilot. There has been some tacking, there have been unexpected tides and currents, but we are making, in my opinion, rapid and definite progress. At least as we look back upon it, the course seems steady. We are making for a harbour which was not the harbour I foresaw twenty-five years ago, but it is a good harbour. It will not be the end. Exactly what the next course will be I cannot tell, but I think I know the general bearing, and I am content.

In his first year in office, and in the festivals of the Jubilee, it has been seen, Sir Wilfrid frequently used words which made the supporters of imperial federation count him a convert. His desire to meet Ontario at least half-way, the lack of any other formula than that of the federationist to express the policy of imperial connection, the influence upon his own sentiments of the imperial surge of the time and of United States hostility, undoubtedly carried him for a time in this direction. But not for long. The responsibilities of office soon made it clear that in any scheme of parliamentary federation Canada would give up more power than she would gain. Experiment broadened new paths of independent action. The cold douche of the South African War quickened a realization of the dangers of imperialist perorations. The stolid resistance of Quebec to that adventure in imperialism warned him of the danger of too great concession to Ontario

sentiment, or what passed for Ontario sentiment. The federation tack soon ended.

The conception of Canada's status which Sir Wilfrid developed in his later years of office was that of a nation within the Empire. He became convinced that it was possible to reconcile what was sanest and most practicable in the ideals of independence and of imperialism. Canada might attain virtual independence, secure control of her own destinies at home and abroad, and yet retain allegiance to a common sovereign. As for the Empire, its strength and its only hope of permanence lay in the freedom of the component parts; centralization would prove unwieldy and provoke revolt. The conception was not new with him; he did not give it its most definite or detailed or thoroughgoing exposition; it was a natural, though by no means an inevitable, outcome of broad forces of interest and sentiment, and of the trend of events by which he, like his contemporaries, was affected. Yet he was the first responsible statesman to seize and hold fast to this idea, and it was his flexible yet tenacious advocacy that made it in the end the accepted theory of Empire. He approached the question in his own distinctive fashion. He would not draw up any elaborate theory or programme; he could meet only one problem at a time, and only when occasion compelled. He disliked sudden changes. His mind lacked what some would term the constructive, some, the doctrinaire bent. He was a responsible politician, working out each day's task as it came. He was anxious, again, to find a policy which would unite and express the dominant currents of Canadian opinion. Not merely obvious party interests, but his master passion for reconciliation and unity urged such a policy, and the compromise of nationhood within the Empire appeared to afford this basis. At the same time he was desirous of keeping the country from being irrevocably committed as long as might be. This conception might suit to-day and not suit to-morrow. It might break down on some unforeseen application. How it could be worked out to the full, particularly in the field of defence and foreign affairs, he was by no means sure, and would therefore take one slow step at a time. He did not believe that this nicely balanced compromise would prove an eternal solution. That Canada's eventual goal would be independence, remained his conviction. But that was not for his time, and sufficient for the day was the principle thereof.

The first occasion for testing and recording the shift of opinion came with the Colonial Conference of 1902. It had been agreed in 1897 that it was "desirable to hold periodical conferences of representatives of the Colonies and Great Britain for the discussion of matters of common interest." The stubborn length of the war in South Africa prevented an early meeting. Then with peace assured and with the coronation of Edward VII to provide the pageant background, Mr. Chamberlain invited the premiers of the Empire to attend a conference in June and July, [1902](#). An agenda was prepared, toward which Canada made no suggestions, though New Zealand and the Commonwealth had many to offer. In acknowledging the proposals, the Canadian government declared that it did not consider any useful result would come from discussions of political change or of imperial defence. The reply gave Mr. Borden opportunity for a cautious and non-committal criticism and a request for a statement of the government's policy. Sir Wilfrid in reply emphasized reciprocal preferential trade as the subject in which Canada was chiefly interested. As to defence, he and his colleagues felt no useful purpose could be served by discussing it:

If it be intended simply to discuss what part Canada is prepared to take in her own defence, what share of the burden must fall upon us as being responsible for the safety of the land in which we were born, and to which we owe our allegiance, in which all our hopes and affections are centred, certainly we are always prepared to discuss that subject. Nor do I believe that we need any prompting on that subject, or that our attention should be specially called to it. . . . There is a school abroad, there is a school in England and in Canada, a school which is perhaps represented on the floor of this parliament, a school which wants to bring Canada into the vortex of militarism which is the curse and the blight of Europe. I am not prepared to endorse any such policy.

The Conference began in London on June 30. The sudden illness of the King delayed both coronation and Conference, and it was mid-August before the last meeting was held. Mr. Chamberlain was himself in charge, with Lord Selborne and Mr. Brodrick representing the Admiralty and the War Office. Sir Edmund Barton came as premier of a confederated Australia, with Sir John Forrest as Minister of Defence. Richard Seddon of New Zealand, Sir Gordon Sprigg of the Cape, Sir Albert Hime of Natal and Sir Robert Bond of Newfoundland spoke for the smaller colonies. From Canada came Sir Wilfrid Laurier, along with Mr. Fielding, Sir Frederick Borden, Sir William Mulock and William Paterson.

Mr. Chamberlain made it clear that a great step forward in imperial organization was expected from the Conference. The blank cheques of imperial enthusiasm and colonial loyalty were to be filled out and cashed. "I cannot conceal from myself," he declared in the opening address, "that very great anticipations have been formed as to the results which may accrue from our meeting." The establishment of an imperial council, a definite pledge of naval and military contributions from every colony, some approach to union in trade, were the ends toward which the Colonial Secretary was working.

The political federation of the Empire, Mr. Chamberlain declared, was within the limits of possibility. He would prefer

the demand to come from the colonies. Quoting, out of its context,^[43] Sir Wilfrid's phrase, "If you want our aid, call us to your councils," he expressed Britain's willingness to grant the colonies a share in the policy of the Empire proportionate to the share of the burdens they assumed. "The weary Titan staggers under the too vast orb of his fate": it was time that her children should assist in supporting the burden. Such a voice in policy might come through representation in the British House of Commons or the Lords; he himself preferred "a real Council of the Empire to which all questions of imperial interest might be referred." This council might at first be advisory, but in time should be given executive and perhaps legislative functions. Or, as he had elsewhere defined it, this central council would develop into "a new government with large powers of taxation and legislation over countries separated by thousands of miles."

Mr. Chamberlain's appeal awakened no response. Not even ardent imperialists like Richard Seddon were anxious to set up at that moment a body superior to their own parliaments. The only action as to political machinery taken by the Conference was in the contrary direction; a resolution providing that the Conference itself should meet at intervals not exceeding four years expressed the desire to keep in touch with all parts of the Empire, but to do so through a meeting of governments responsible to their own peoples, not through a new body exercising direct control over the whole.

As to trade, Mr. Chamberlain had expressed sympathy with the proposal of free trade within the Empire. True, no colony had endorsed that policy; the counter policy of a colonial preference on British goods had been adopted by Canada alone, and the value of the Canadian preference, or of any preferential rates which though lower than rates on foreign goods were still prohibitive, he held doubtful. Here again there was little concurrence. The imperial Zollverein found no friends. The Canadian members energetically combated Mr. Chamberlain's disparagement of the preference, demonstrating that it had arrested the decline in British trade and given it new life. Greater preference would be given in return for corresponding concessions in the British market; the Canadians were prepared to make definite proposals. A resolution affirmed the impracticability of imperial free trade, approved the principle of a preference on British goods, and recommended reciprocal preference to colonial products "by exemption from or reduction of duties now or hereafter imposed."

But it was on defence that the discussion centred. Since the last Conference, Britain had been at war on the Indian frontier, in the Soudan, and in South Africa. The desire for colonial aid in bearing the burden was strong. Either imperial policy must be curtailed or imperial burden bearers extended. British authorities assumed without question that by participating in the South African War the colonies had committed themselves to a share in all future wars, and that it merely remained to secure a formal recognition of this duty and a definite agreement as to details. Lord Selborne lectured the Conference on the strategic heresies of local defence and the necessity of "a single navy under one control," pointed out that Britain spent fifteen shillings per head for naval defence to Australia's tenpence and Canada's nothing, and urged contributions of both money and men to the Admiralty, preferably in squadrons of the imperial navy assigned but not tied to local waters. Mr. Brodrick declared Britain needed a large striking force, ready for instant service abroad, trained to compare with European troops, and proposed that each colony should set aside one-fourth of its militia for intensive training, pledged to go overseas whenever their government proffered assistance to the imperial forces.

The appeal met a measure of response, but little wool for much cry. The Commonwealth premier was persuaded to promise a renewal and extension of the Australian contribution to the British navy, reluctantly, knowing, as time proved, that he would find it difficult to carry his parliament with him. The smaller colonies all agreed to give unconditional money grants or aid to local naval reserves. The Canadian representatives declined to make any offer of assistance, though they stated they were contemplating the establishment of a local naval force. The suggestion of military contingents earmarked for overseas wars met with favour from the smaller and more dependent colonies, but Canada and Australia would have none of it: "To establish a special force," they declared in a joint memorandum, "set apart for general imperial service, and practically under the absolute control of the imperial government, was objectionable in principle, as derogating from the powers of self-government enjoyed by them, and would be calculated to impede the general improvement in training and organization of their defence forces."

The outcome of the Conference was an intense disappointment to Mr. Chamberlain. In Sir Wilfrid Laurier he had met a man of equal firmness, equally adroit in argument and tactics, and better informed in the lessons of the Empire's past and in the realities of colonial interests and opinion. In a long interview he frankly voiced his surprise. He could not understand how Canada and Australia failed to see that strength and safety lay in union, or how they could consistently with self-respect decline to bear a fair share of imperial burdens. Sir Wilfrid was equally frank in reply. He was surprised at Mr. Chamberlain's surprise. The secret of the Empire's strength, he insisted, lay in local diversity and

freedom. Canada was prepared to bear her just burdens, but according to her own conception of her interest and duty. When the safety of Britain or the whole Empire was challenged, Canada would not stint aid, but what Mr. Chamberlain termed the Empire's interest and the Empire's policy, were in most cases Great Britain's interest and Great Britain's policy. Britain was always thinking of war and of the extension and strengthening of her domain. Canada had a greater domain than she could develop in a century. Canada was far from European quarrels, and a uniquely close neighbour to the United States. She was impelled by the newness of the country and by the lack of natural unity to spend vast sums on internal development, on her land-ways, as Britain by her position was called upon to spend vast sums to keep open her sea-ways. Mr. Chamberlain, still a Little Englander in his imperialism, would not agree. He considered all English-speaking Canadians, Australians, and Afrikanders, as Englishmen living overseas, and expected French and Dutch to be made over into more Englishmen. He made no concealment of his belief that Sir Wilfrid was a very imperfectly assimilated Englishman, and that his reluctance was due to his French blood. Accordingly Sir Wilfrid suggested that he should have a private interview with his English-speaking colleagues. Mr. Chamberlain jumped at the proposal. A dinner was arranged and a long discussion followed. To his surprise, the Colonial Secretary found that these four men of the chosen race, Anglo-Saxons all, two of Nova Scotia and two of Ontario birth and breeding, took substantially the same stand as the son of Quebec. Mulock and Borden talked particularly straight from the shoulder. They were loyal to the King, they desired to retain Canada's connection with the Empire, but they were Canadians. Like Mr. Chamberlain himself, they believed that the Empire began at home. [44]

Meeting a few weeks after peace had been signed in Pretoria, the members of the Conference had the fate of South Africa distinctly in mind. No formal discussion was raised, but Sir Wilfrid took advantage of the opportunity to urge a policy of faith and conciliation. He had been reluctant to intervene while the war was still in progress, and he was careful now to avoid any semblance of official pressure. Yet he was so deeply convinced that only through the confederation of South Africa and the speedy granting of self-government could peace come and British policy find justification, that he repeatedly emphasized this policy not only to Mr. Chamberlain but to other public men.

The summer months were crowded with banquets, the conferring of the freedom of cities, public receptions and country-house week-end parties. In his public addresses Sir Wilfrid emphasized the same notes. At the Constitutional Club, "The British Empire was founded and must be maintained by the arts of peace more than by the arts of war"; at the Guildhall, "The British Empire is a charter of freedom, united, prosperous; there is no need of organic changes; it would be a fatal mistake to force events"; in Edinburgh, "Cecil Rhodes's one serious mistake was his impatience"; at the National Liberal Club, "The devolution of legislative power has been the bond of union of the British Empire." The long and exhausting summer, following a wearing session, brought a breakdown in health, and the treatment followed in Paris, where Lady Laurier and Sir Wilfrid had gone from London, accentuated the trouble. It was a much shaken man who returned in October to find Israel Tarte in possession of the quarter-deck. On the subject of the Conference, Canadian opinion showed marked diversity. Conservative newspapers criticized Sir Wilfrid's negative attitude. Premier Roblin declared a golden opportunity had been thrown away; Principal Peterson reported that the impression in England was that the Canadian delegates had gone with the intent of putting a drag on the Conference and had succeeded. Yet there was no general disapproval. There was a considerable measure of support, and no little indifference. The country was more interested in Tarte than in Chamberlain, in box-cars than in battle-ships. Right or wrong, Canada's mood was one of reaction from the heady imperialism of the Boer War and Laurier was guiding and interpreting its new mood.

When in Paris, Sir Wilfrid found opportunity for a quiet but momentous stroke of diplomacy. The Boer War had greatly embittered French feeling against Britain. In two long discussions with President Loubet, Laurier deplored this drift and urged the need of a close friendship as the basis of European peace. Three years later, at Raymond Préfontaine's funeral services, the President publicly acknowledged that in bringing him to feel this need, no influence had been so great as Wilfrid Laurier's. Laurier had thus no small share in effecting the entente cordiale between Canada's two mother countries.

The Conference of 1902 convinced Mr. Chamberlain that the political and the military paths to his goal would give slow progress. He therefore turned to the pathway of trade, along which there had been some greater willingness to walk together. The launching of his imperial preferential trade campaign in 1903 was a direct result of the check in the Colonial Conference of 1902. Let Britain adopt a customs tariff, useful incidentally to protect her own industries and to give bargaining leverage with other powers, and let her grant preferential rates on colonial products in return for concessions on her manufactures, and the British Empire would become self-contained, self-sufficient, bound indissolubly by the ties of common interest; political and military union would follow.

The sudden announcement of this revolutionary change of course, the dramatic campaign in which Mr. Chamberlain appealed to his countrymen, the imperial motive of the policy, and the glittering possibilities of a preference in the world's greatest market, won Mr. Chamberlain instant and warm support in Canada. The Liberal leaders were, however, careful to make it clear that while they would be ready to grant reciprocal concessions, they considered that it was for Britain herself to decide whether or not she wanted to set up a protective tariff, and that in any agreement each country must hold itself free to change or withdraw. From the Conservative leaders and press a warmer support was given and in 1903 Mr. Foster, for the time without a seat in the Commons, vigorously seconded Mr. Chamberlain in a platform campaign in England. Then as discussion made clear the difficulty of reconciling business and sentiment, reconciling protection for the local producer, reciprocity with foreign countries and preference for the colonies; as the free-trade forces rallied and the fight developed on party lines; as Canadian Liberals realized that a preference on Canadian wheat meant a dearer loaf for England's poor and Canadian Conservatives saw that English manufacturers expected a free field in Canada in return, the enthusiasm lessened. Few in Canada were prepared to accept the return to the old colonial system which was in Mr. Chamberlain's mind, a stereotyping of the existing undeveloped industrial organization, with Canada permanently a grower of wheat and hewer of pulpwood to exchange for British manufactures. Canadian manufacturers expressed general sympathy but made it clear, first, that it was only in the goods that Canada could not manufacture that any real reduction in duty could be granted, and later, that they "were not prepared to admit that there was any article that could not at some point in Canada, and in time, be successfully manufactured."

As the Chamberlain tariff campaign was a sequel to the 1902 Conference, the Conference of 1907 was a sequel to the tariff campaign. British supporters of Mr. Chamberlain were anxious to have the collective and formal backing of the colonies as evidence of the imperial necessity of their policy. A second question which it was hoped would be discussed was the creation of an Imperial Council in place of the Conference; supporters of the Conservative government and the Liberal Imperialist Asquith-Haldane group both urged this change and co-operated in a semi-official inquiry made by Sir Frederick Pollock in Canada in 1905 as to its possibility. In April, Mr. Lytton, who had succeeded Mr. Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary, formally proposed the establishment of such a Council, with the same personnel as the Conference, and with a permanent commission for study of referred questions attached: it would not be well to define at first the constitution of the Council; British history showed the wisdom of allowing such institutions to develop in accord with need. The proposal was welcomed by Australia, New Zealand, Natal and the Cape, but decisively rejected by Canada. Any change in the title or status of the Colonial Conference, declared the Canadian ministers, should originate from that body itself. A conference was an informal body, possessing no power of binding action; the term "council" indicated "a formal assembly, possessing an advisory and deliberative character, and in conjunction with the word imperial, suggested a permanent institution which, endowed with a continuous life, might eventually come to be regarded as an encroachment upon the full measure of autonomous legislative and administrative power now enjoyed by all the self-governing colonies." Following this discussion came the British general elections, resulting in the overwhelming victory of the Liberals, and the repudiation of the Chamberlain proposals.



LAURIER'S LAST IMPERIAL CONFERENCE
 THE LAURIER-BOTHA-ASQUITH CONCEPTION OF EMPIRE
 Sir Wilfrid Laurier H. H. Asquith
 Barbara Harcourt Anthony Asquith
 Nuneham Park, June, 1911

General Louis Botha

Doris Harcourt

Sir Joseph Ward
 Olivia Harcourt

When the fifth Colonial Conference assembled in London in April, [1907](#), it was clear in advance that the British government would block any preferential tariff proposals and the Canadian government would block the other path, the Imperial Council. The Conference therefore did not change views, but merely registered them. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the only member who had taken part in 1897 and 1902, was accompanied by Sir Frederick Borden and Mr. Brodeur, who spoke only on questions affecting their departments. Mr. Deakin, Sir Joseph Ward, Dr. Jameson, Mr. Moor and General Botha came from below the line, and Sir Robert Bond from Newfoundland. The United Kingdom was represented by the Earl of Elgin, the new Liberal Secretary for the Colonies, with Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Lloyd George and other ministers appearing on occasion.

The Conference was marked by oratorical fireworks and keen debate, passionate imperial appeals from Mr. Deakin and Dr. Jameson, resolute affirmations of the British government's policy of "banging, barring and bolting the door" on imperial preference, a quiet word from Louis Botha, brief but decided statements from Sir Wilfrid Laurier. As to political organization, Sir Wilfrid maintained his opposition to a council, chartered hopefully for indefinite expansion cabinet- or parliament-wards. Accordingly, the project was dropped. A resolution was adopted providing that the Conference was hereafter to be termed "Imperial"; it was to consider questions as "between His Majesty's Government and His Governments of the self-governing Dominions beyond the Seas"; it was to be composed of the prime ministers of His Majesty's governments. The resolution was notable for the formal recognition of the Dominion as opposed to the colonial status, and of the equality of His Majesty's several governments: "We are all His Majesty's governments," Sir Wilfrid maintained. Instead of setting up a new authority in London, the Conference had therefore set its seal on the independent but co-operating authority of the Dominions.^[45] The Empire was to be not one, but many.

On the tariff question, Sir Wilfrid said little; he agreed in principle with Mr. Deakin's eloquent advocacy of imperial preference, but did not wish to interfere in British politics; as a compromise, he proposed and carried the re-adoption of the 1902 resolutions, the United Kingdom in part dissenting. In naval defence, Australia now stood for an Australian navy instead of a cash contribution; the Admiralty was prepared to accept contributions "not in cash but in kind," but Canada stood where she had stood in 1902.

The Conference was memorable for the presence of Louis Botha, five years previously leader of Britain's enemy in the field, now premier of a British colony and a member of confidential councils. The British Liberal government, which had insisted on granting full responsible government to the Transvaal in face of outcries from all the professional imperialists, felt that his presence justified their faith in freedom as a stronger bond than trade or tariffs. Between General Botha and Sir Wilfrid Laurier a close friendship sprang up which lasted to the end. Some common feeling of aloofness from their Anglo-Saxon colleagues may have brought them together, but it was common principles on imperial policy and personal liking that held them friends. Wilfrid Laurier's friendship, counsel and example played no small part in aiding Louis Botha to choose and to follow the path of racial appeasement and of imperial co-operation.^[46]

On his return to Canada it was plain that the prime minister's course met a wide measure of approval, or, to be more exact, no notable degree of disapproval. The Liberal press supported his stand throughout, and no small number of Conservative journals joined Sir Charles Tupper in commendation. There was some vigorous criticism of what was termed an unworthy and sponging attitude on the naval question, but his critics admitted that as yet there was no general public support for their cause. It was significant that in the general elections which followed, the leader of the official Opposition had not a word to say on imperial issues. There was much discussion and much difference of opinion on imperial affairs, but there was not yet in English-speaking Canada a sufficient popular interest or a sufficient cleavage on any specific imperial issue to warrant either party making it an election cry.

Not so with French-speaking Canada. In Quebec, imperialism was becoming a campaign issue. While ardent apostles of a unified Empire in London or Toronto were accusing Sir Wilfrid of being a "wet blanket" on the Conference, a blocker of all imperial advance, a parochial and tribal leader who could not see beyond Quebec, still more unmeasured critics in Quebec were condemning him for his weak surrender to Protestant fanaticism at home and to English jingoism abroad, his sacrifice of Canadian interests in London and of French-Canadian interests at Ottawa.

For ten years there had been no effective opposition to Laurier in Quebec. In giving up the fight in 1905, a Montreal Conservative organ, "Le Journal," pictured the party's prospects as gloomy and without sign of betterment. The old leaders lingered, but they could make no headway. Yet criticism from some quarter was inevitable; if an Opposition had not existed it would have been necessary to invent it. It arose of itself, with both general and individual factors in its shaping.

The Nationaliste party, or rather the Nationaliste movement, embodied certain convictions and prejudices which were widely diffused in Quebec. It was emphatically anti-imperialist, opposed to any share in Britain's wars and any entanglement in Britain's policy. This hostility to imperialism had both a nationalist and a colonialist side. There were men in the movement who took a passively colonialist attitude, prepared to accept a permanent subordination in return for British protection and exemption from a share in foreign wars. There were others who took a distinctly nationalist stand, prepared to undertake full responsibility for the defence of Canada, but a Canada wholly independent and untrammelled. The movement embodied, again, the sentiment of racial and religious separateness. With some, this involved nothing more than the desire to preserve against the encroachments of an English-speaking continent, the distinctive faith and culture of New France, and was quite compatible with a willingness to co-operate freely and fully with their English-speaking compatriots in building up a common Canadian civilization in which the two elements would be distinct but united. With others, it was a narrower and more exclusive faith, a determination to withdraw within the provincial shell, to build up an exclusive and isolated French and Catholic community. Still a third ingredient was the old ultramontane feeling, the determination not merely to exalt the Church above the State and to make the clergy leaders in all national movements, but to attempt once more to create in the political field an exclusively Catholic party, a new Centrum.

These tendencies were not new. They had received new strength from the sectional controversies of Canada and the imperialist campaigns of London. The endeavour of men in English-speaking Canada, whether moved by national zeal or by racial prejudice, to make Canada a land of one tongue, had hardened the determination of the minority to hold fast, and had played into the hands of local extremists. The emphasis of imperialists upon the call of the blood, the exalting of the Anglo-Saxon, the appeal to traditions to which only half Canada was heir, inevitably led men of other blood and other traditions to draw apart, to emphasize their own distinct and peculiar heritage. The Nationalism of Quebec,^[47] if not the nemesis of Chamberlain Imperialism, was at least the outcome of the ambiguous position of a country of two races of which one and one only was bound by kinship and intercourse to the suzerain power.

But such forces might long have lain latent, failing leaders to evoke and marshal them. The Nationalism of Quebec found

its leaders. Perhaps the pioneer in Nationalism as a conscious and programmed movement was Olivar Asselin, a clever young Montreal journalist of strong convictions as to the need of a distinctively French civilization in America, who in 1903 founded The Canadian Nationalist League, and in 1904 became editor of a new weekly newspaper, "Le Nationaliste."

But the ultimate leader, the man whose personality became identified with the movement, was Henri Bourassa.

Mr. Bourassa was the grandson of Louis Joseph Papineau. "Having known Mr. Papineau," declared Sir Wilfrid one day, "I can in some measure understand Mr. Bourassa; having known Mr. Bourassa, I can in some measure understand Mr. Papineau." He inherited no small share of the great tribune's moving power of oratory, and no small share of his inability to work with other men. Born in Montreal in 1868, the son of the artist, Napoleon Bourassa, and Azelie Papineau, and educated privately, he had spent a few years on his grandfather's seigniory of Montebello, and had then entered parliament as a Liberal in 1896, at the age of twenty-eight. In protest against Canada's participation in the South African War he resigned his seat, but was returned by acclamation. This was the beginning of the cleavage with Sir Wilfrid, who had recognized his young follower's ability and had anticipated for him a leading place in the ranks of the party. In 1905 the Autonomy Bills and in 1906 the Lord's Day measure, further widened the gulf. How far the cleavage was due to irreconcilable differences of opinion, and how far to resentment over the refusal of the deputy speakership, or the post of Canadian Commissioner in Paris, became in after years a matter of acute and personal controversy. In any case the tremendous popular success of his appeals to the crowd against the premier's "weak betrayal of his race and his faith" encouraged further endeavour. In 1906, when Mr. Fitzpatrick's appointment to the Supreme Court brought on a by-election in Quebec County, Mr. Bourassa threw his support to an independent, Lorenzo Robitaille, against the straight Liberal candidate, Mr. Amyot, who had received Sir Wilfrid's endorsement, and had the satisfaction of seeing his candidate win. For a time his energies were diverted. Finding the task of sapping Quebec's confidence in Sir Wilfrid a slow one, Mr. Bourassa turned to the provincial field, and launched an aggressive assault upon the Gouin government's administration of the Crown forests. He succeeded in defeating the premier himself in a Montreal constituency in the provincial election of 1908, and with Mr. Armand Lavergne, son of Sir Wilfrid's old partner in Arthabaska, at his side, quite overshadowed the mild Conservative opposition in the legislature. It did not prove easy to make any permanent impression upon Lomer Gouin's disciplined ranks and prudent administration, and so Mr. Bourassa's interest turned once more to federal affairs. He had taken no part in the federal elections of 1908, but the navy agitation of 1909 created his opportunity.

Whatever the arena, Mr. Bourassa's acute intellect, his wide reading on public and particularly international affairs, his personal charm and distinction, and especially the gift of burning speech, sometimes provocative, sometimes persuasive, always finished, more than once bringing a hostile Ontario audience to its feet in unwonted and hearty cheers after an hour's magic spell, made him a formidable competitor. As the years went on, he sought a further power, by making himself the champion of the clergy; at first, as became a grandson of Papineau, mildly anti-clerical, he had become convinced, as his friends declared, that the only certain means of preserving a distinct French-Canadian nationality was to rally the people around the Church, or, as his enemies put it, that the only certain means of exalting his own power was to rally the younger clergy around Mr. Bourassa.

Sir Wilfrid's judgment upon Mr. Bourassa at the time of his campaign against the Gouin government is well summarized in a letter to a supporter of the Nationalist leader:

(Translation)

Ottawa, November 20, [1907](#)

MY DEAR Z.:

Some time ago my attention was drawn to certain declarations that you made in the course of your campaign against the local government. Enclosed you will find extracts from your speeches at Iberville and Three Rivers which were sent to me with the suggestion that I ought to protest against your language. The silence I have maintained until now indicates well enough what my reply was.

You were right in saying that I have too lofty an idea of the true principles of Liberalism to condemn you. Nevertheless, that does not mean that I approve of you, and still less that I approve of Bourassa, for my firm conviction is that you are both carrying out a deplorable programme. I am authorized to write to you of a recent conversation I had with Jacques Bureau, who is your friend as well as mine. Bureau really touched me when he reminded me that you had told him that you could not forget that I had done you a service. I quote his words literally, for I must confess that the slight service I was able to render you, if it can be called a service, is not worth remembering. Doubtless you allude to the fact that I helped to get you into X.'s office, which was the starting point of your brilliant career at the bar. I repeat, that was too slight a matter to be remembered. Yet I am none the less appreciative; this proves that you have a sense of gratitude. You even added that if I should ask you to break with Bourassa and give up the campaign you have undertaken with him, you would not hesitate to do so. I have never made this request, nor would I make it; that is a

point which I leave absolutely to your conscience. And I flatter myself too—although your attitude seems to indicate the contrary—that on every question on which I have disagreed with Bourassa, your opinion has been with me and not with him.

Bourassa differed with me chiefly on three questions: the sending of contingents to Africa, the Autonomy Bills for the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and finally, the Lord's Day law. Regarding the first two questions my impression that I was absolutely right is stronger than ever; that if I had followed Bourassa's advice, I would have plunged the country into the most disastrous consequences. As regards the Lord's Day Bill, I have no difficulty in recognizing that Bourassa's attitude did not lack justice, and when I understood it completely, I had the bill amended in the very way he had outlined.

No one recognizes Bourassa's talent better than I do. He has one capital defect: he does not know how to keep within bounds. It is impossible that there should not be differences of opinion among friends, but he fights his friends with the same violence as his enemies; he becomes intoxicated with his own words; he works himself up by contradiction; in the end he overshoots his own mark, and allows himself to be drawn along unconsciously from friendly criticism to open war.

Just there is the origin of this bitter struggle he is carrying on with the provincial government, and which, unfortunately, you have entered in his train.

Parties are not perfect organizations, but, after all, constitutional government founded on the existence of parties is still the best system which has been invented by man. It may be that there are abuses in the local administration, but I believe these abuses can be remedied by Gouin. I have confidence in him and I have read in the press a letter from you expressing the same sentiment.

I do not know what was at the back of your mind when you said at Three Rivers that coming from Ottawa you could assure your friends who might have uneasy scruples that it would still be several months before the chief of the Liberal party would strike you with major excommunication. You did not have this assurance from me, for it is long since we have met, which I regret. Your business often brings you to Ottawa; do come and see me the next time. We shall clear up this affair and many others.

In 1908, it has been noted, imperial questions had no place in the platform of either political party in Canada. In 1909, the two parties joined in adopting a common Canadian policy on the most important problem of imperial defence the country had yet faced. In 1910 and 1911 the brief harmony ended, and British imperialists and French nationalists combined in the endeavour to wreck the Canadian solution.

The mad rivalries of European empires and the struggles of oppressed and oppressing nationalities were bringing the world nearer the verge of war. Statesmanship appeared to be bankrupt; save for the feeble farce of the Hague and rare individual missions and mediations, the nations appeared unable to find or unwilling to seek any solution, other than the futile attempt of each to make itself stronger than every other by shifting alliance and mounting armament. Between Britain and Germany the tension grew particularly keen; Germany, no more ambitious and no more heedless of morality than the France of Morocco or the Italy of Tripoli, was more dangerous because more efficient and because aiming at supremacy in Britain's own field. The dependence of Britain upon sea power, her sea traditions and her sea prestige, made her regard the deliberate challenge Germany had flung down in its Navy Law of 1900 and its subsequent naval programmes with deep uneasiness and mounting anger. When in 1909 it was announced that Germany was so speeding up her building of dreadnoughts, the great ships which so far outmatched all previous types as to make only dreadnoughts count, that instead of twenty British as against thirteen German dreadnoughts by March, 1912, there would be, according to Mr. Asquith, twenty to seventeen, or, according to Mr. Balfour, twenty to twenty or twenty to twenty-five, a panic swept over Britain. Germany immediately denied the reports, but her denial was not believed. As it happened, for once her spokesmen had told the truth; the reports of acceleration, based on statements of a British munitions-maker, were found to be baseless; on March 31, 1912, Germany had only nine dreadnought battle-ships and cruisers ready, and it was April, 1914, before her original thirteen battle-ships were completed. It was long before this was known, and when it was known, and when the war had come, Providence was held to have been moving in its mysterious way to prepare Britain the better for victory in an inevitable war.^[48] The British Liberal government, which had been urged by a large section of its followers to cut down the naval estimates, enlarged them in March by an additional four dreadnoughts, and in July, after the "We won't wait, we want eight" campaign of the Opposition, agreed to lay down four more. In the March discussion, Mr. McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Edward Grey, then Foreign Secretary, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Balfour pictured the situation as a serious and pressing crisis; not merely Britain's supremacy, but her very safety, her existence as a nation, was at stake. In an Imperial Press Conference organized by Mr. H. E. Brittain, and held in London in July, no pains were lost by the British statesmen who addressed the editors to send shivers up colonial spines by emphasizing the need of sea supremacy and the imminent danger of its loss.

The March debate in the British Commons echoed throughout the Empire. The fact that, particularly in Canada, little attention had been paid to the premonitory rumblings doubled the force of the shock. British supremacy at sea had long seemed a law of nature. Now that this supremacy was challenged and when at last the heart of the Empire seemed in vital danger, the desire to give the aid that so often had been promised for that emergency found immediate expression. Particularly in Toronto and Winnipeg, in the press of both parties and from private citizens, the demand arose for the gift

of a dreadnought to the British navy, to meet the pressing emergency and to save Canadian self-respect. Elsewhere, the dreadnought gift and the building of a Canadian navy, divided opinion with reluctance to take any step that would commit Canada to a path that had no end. Particular interest attached to an editorial in the Toronto "Globe" of March 23, calling upon Canada "to fling the smug maxims of commercial prudence to the winds and to do more than her share in the game of turning Dreadnaughts from the stocks. . . . Within the next two years the Colonies of Britain should be able to place three Dreadnaughts at the disposal of the Motherland, and they should do it. So far as Canada is concerned, such vessels would be under the control of the Canadian government, but that is only another way of saying that they would always be at the call of the Empire in every worthy cause and in every time of danger." The "Globe" soon cooled off, but its opinion had no little weight with the Ontario members at Ottawa.

For some years a vigorous press and organization campaign in the English-speaking provinces had endeavoured to convince Canadians that in leaving Britain to assume the whole burden of the Empire's naval defence they were acting an ignoble part, inconsistent with either imperialist or nationalist ideals. Feeling in favour of action was growing, and now the crisis precipitated the vague sentiment. There had been little counter-propaganda. Here and there a nationalist critic had questioned the myth of British protection, or repeated Cartwright's epigram that "all that Canada owed England was Christian forgiveness," or insisted that the navy was an agency wholly of British policy. Still more rare had been the more fundamental criticism of the whole policy of armed rivalry; there was little first-hand knowledge in Canada of foreign affairs, or at least of the rivalries of European states which appropriated that title, and little likelihood that the cure would come before the disease. Sir Wilfrid had denounced the vortex of militarism, Sir William Mulock in 1906 had declared that "This Canada of ours is the only country in the world worth living in that is not burdened with great military debts. Keep it on those lines. . . . Remember that this is the last spot of refuge on God's green earth where men can come and not pay tribute for the sins of their ancestors," and Senator Dandurand had taken an active part in the inter-parliamentary peace movement, but there had been no organized or systematic discussion. In the crisis, a few farmers' clubs, labour unions, and university men opposed any action, but they were in a small minority, so far as opinion was voiced at all.

Hitherto parliament had taken no action. In 1902 the Canadian government had offered definitely to take over the control and maintenance of the British naval stations at Halifax and Esquimalt, but the Admiralty, anxious for contributions to a common fleet rather than any form of localized action, had not accepted, until in 1905 the Fisher policy of concentration in British local waters made the Canadian bases of less moment; Canada thereupon took charge. Proposals had been considered in 1905 for the establishment of a Naval Reserve, but nothing had been done. Nothing could be done so long as the British government stood out for a single navy under its own control, and the Canadian government stood for self-government in naval defence as in every other sphere. Of late there had been signs that the Admiralty was changing its policy, if not its opinion. Australia, after years of trial of the contribution policy, was turning to a local fleet. This opened the way for Canadian action. In the session of 1909, before the British revelations, Mr. Foster gave notice of a resolution in favour of action by Canada to protect her coast-line and seaports. Opposition from Mr. Monk and others within his own party prevented him for two months from bringing it up. On March 29, Mr. Foster moved his resolution in a powerful speech which paid a warm tribute to British policy, opposed a fixed annual contribution to the British navy as smacking of tribute, a policy that took no roots, and advocated a Canadian navy, with, if the premier desired, an emergency dreadnought gift. Sir Wilfrid denied that Canada had done less than her duty before, but with changing times duties were changing:

We are British subjects; Canada is one of the daughter nations of the Empire, and we realize to the full the rights and obligations which are involved in that proud title. . . . I hope that day shall never come when we will be drawn into the conflicts of Europe. But I have no hesitation in saying that the supremacy of the British Empire is absolutely essential, not only to the maintenance of the Empire but to the civilization of the world. I have no hesitation in saying also that if the day should come when the supremacy of Britain on the high seas will be challenged, it will be the duty of all the daughter nations to close around the old Motherland and make a rampart about her to ward off any attack. I hope that day will never come, but should it come I would deem it my duty to devote what might be left of my life and energy to stump the country and endeavour to impress upon my fellow-countrymen, particularly my compatriots in the province of Quebec, the conviction that the salvation of England is the salvation of our own country, that therein lies the guaranty of our civil and religious freedom and everything we value in this life.

But no panic policy should be adopted. Parliament must not be stampeded into spectacular action inconsistent with Canada's settled policy of increasing self-government. The government stood and would stand by its refusal in 1902 to contribute to the British army or the British navy. He accordingly moved a resolution in favour of a Canadian naval service. Mr. Borden followed on much the same lines, proposing some minor amendments in the resolution but declaring for "a Canadian naval force of our own." A few voices were raised in question, but the resolutions were adopted without challenge or division.^[49] There were, however, members of the cabinet who were convinced that undue and

unnecessary concessions had been made to imperialist excitement, and that it would have sufficed both to meet the country's needs and to block criticism from the Opposition had Mr. Foster's coast-defence motion been accepted. In view of the discussion in the press, the government had been expecting from Mr. Foster a much more imperialistic speech than he actually delivered.

There followed in July a special Imperial Conference, to deal with defence, with Sir F. W. Borden and Mr. Brodeur as Canada's representatives. In face of the Canadian and Australian attitude, the British government, while still insisting on the strategic superiority of a single British navy aided by colonial contributions, admitted that other considerations must have weight, and submitted detailed proposals for the construction and maintenance of Dominion fleet units.

The unwonted party calm did not long continue. How far the agreement between the leaders of the two parties was due to a patriotic conviction of national danger and how far to a prudent recognition of the danger to the unity of each party if the issue entered politics, is difficult to determine: doubtless, both motives had their part. Whatever the motive, the experiment failed. The unity in parliament did not reflect the real diversity of opinion in the country. Criticism rapidly developed. It was particularly strong from the ultra-imperialist wing of Mr. Borden's followers. Provincial Conservative leaders pronounced for a policy of contribution to the British navy, either as an emergency or as a permanent policy: Premier Whitney declared that parliament had missed its opportunity; Premier Roblin held for one great and undivided imperial fleet and denounced the "tin-pot navy"; Robert Rogers found the resolutions "cheap and wishy-washy"; Premier McBride would combine a Canadian navy and a dreadnought gift; Premier Hazen, Mr. Haultain, Mr. Bennett, stood for direct and permanent contributions. The chief Conservative city newspapers took the same line. On the other hand, in Quebec, Mr. Monk, Mr. Borden's first lieutenant, and every Conservative journal attacked both Canadian navy and dreadnought contributions, and insisted that the people should be consulted before the country was pledged to so momentous a change of policy. Mr. Borden was in a difficult position. There had been incipient revolts against his leadership by groups who demanded more fire and more good old-fashioned adjectives and tub-thumping. The naval resolutions represented his own confirmed opinion, but evidently his party could not be brought to support them. If he was to continue to lead, he must follow his party, and follow it even if its two wings went in opposite directions.

In January, [1910](#), in the absence of Mr. Brodeur through illness, Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced a Naval Service Bill in accordance with the resolutions of the previous session. It provided for the establishment of a naval force consisting of a permanent corps, a reserve, and a volunteer force, on the same lines as the militia, except that the provision of the Militia Act rendering the whole male population from seventeen to sixty years liable to service was not included; service was to be wholly voluntary. A naval college would be established, and a naval board set up to advise the Department of Marine. The force was to be under the control of the Canadian government, but the Governor-general in council might in emergency place any or all of it at the disposal of His Majesty, subject to the immediate summoning of parliament if not in session. For the present, five cruisers and six destroyers would be built, at a cost in England of \$11,000,000, and would be stationed on both coasts; the annual expenditure was estimated at \$3,000,000. If possible, the ships would be built in Canada, at a probable increased cost of one-third.

In introducing the bill, and again on the second reading, Sir Wilfrid defended the government's policy as a timely and moderate measure, a middle ground on which reasonable men could unite, and yet not a neutral and colourless compromise but a logical development of Canada's course since half a century. He rejected the solution of the ultra-imperialists, "who carry abroad upon their foreheads imperial phylacteries, who boldly walk into the temple and there loudly thank the Lord that they are not like other British subjects, that they give tithes of everything they possess, and that in them alone is to be found the true incense of loyalty." For the present, there was no emergency, little danger of a German war. For the future, the government would continue to oppose schemes of centralized imperial defence or of tribute to London. These plans were inconsistent with Canada's interest. England was one of a circle of European states "that are always watching one another"; Canada's present interest was the development of her resources through public works. They were inconsistent with Canadian sentiment: "Daughter am I in my mother's house but mistress in mine own." Equally he rejected the do-nothing policy: "There sit the two extremes, side by side, cheek by jowl, blowing hot and cold. I have dealt with those who blow hot; let me try a word now with those who blow cold. They say we have no mandate, that our policy has never been discussed. Have they not read time and again the memorandum submitted to the Imperial Conference of 1902? And Canada has progressed since 1902. Did these men forget that Canada was a country with two sea-coasts and exposed coast cities, a country with a large ocean trade and with abounding national revenues? You might as well tell the people of Montreal, with their half-million population, that they do not need any police

protection."

The government's policy, he continued, recognized at once the need of taking over a share of imperial burdens, the need of proceeding on national lines, and the need of reserving to themselves the decision as to future policy and the rate and degree of naval development. "I do not pretend to be an imperialist. Neither do I pretend to be an anti-imperialist. I am a Canadian first, last and all the time. I am a British subject by birth, by tradition, by conviction, by the conviction that under British institutions my native land has found a measure of security and freedom it could not have found under any other régime. I want to speak from that double standpoint, for our policy is an expression of that double opinion." It had been declared that this position was ambiguous, that his own utterances on Canada's position in war were ambiguous. He had declared in the previous session that "if England is at war, we are at war," and also that "if we do have a navy, that navy will not go to war unless the parliament of Canada chooses to send it there." The statements were not inconsistent; there was a difference between a formal position in the eyes of international law and an active participation in war: "If England is at war we are at war and liable to attack. I do not say that we shall always be attacked, neither do I say that we would take part in all the wars of England. That is a matter that must be guided by circumstances, upon which the Canadian parliament will have to pronounce, and will have to decide in its own best judgment."

Mr. Lemieux, in reply to Mr. Monk, took the same stand. Canada could not submit to taxation without representation; neither could she forget that the maintenance of British naval supremacy was vital for Canada, and not least for the French-Canadians whom Mr. Monk and Mr. Bourassa were seeking to isolate, forgetful that Britain had guaranteed and protected the rights of the minority.

The Liberal party and the Liberal press, after some temporary stampeding, now stood solidly behind the government's policy. The Conservatives were seemingly less fortunate in being divided into two irreconcilable wings, but there were in this division comforting possibilities of the very flexible and effective strategy of playing both ends against the middle. Mr. Borden defended his own Canadian navy position,—a permanent policy of contribution would make for irresponsibility, friction, eventual separation,—but he made concessions to the imperialist wing by proposing an emergency contribution of two dreadnoughts, and to the Quebec wing by proposing that no permanent policy should be adopted until approved by the people. Unable to foresee that within ten years he would himself insist upon inserting in the Anglo-Franco-American draft treaty of alliance a clause authorizing any Dominion to exempt itself from the alliance, and consequently from any war in which the other parties might be involved, he attacked as preposterous the assumption that under any circumstances Canada could be at peace or withhold her fleet when the rest of the Empire was at war. Mr. Monk denounced the bill as a surrender of Canada's autonomy, a victory of Chamberlainism; the label "Canadian" on the fleet could not conceal the fact that it was a disguised contribution to the imperial navy, a pledge of Canadian participation in all British wars, an assumption of all the consequences of a policy in which Canadians had little interest and over which they had no control. Other Conservatives attacked the government's proposals as a useless waste, a strategic heresy, a declaration of independence, the beginning of the break-up of the Empire, a weak concession to French-Canadian disloyalty: "one flag, one fleet, one throne," was their ideal.

The debate ranged wide. There were many notable utterances. Never before had Canada's relation to the Empire or her place in the world been discussed so thoroughly in parliament. Yet there was an inability to find common ground, or a haziness and uncertainty of view, that prevented a very helpful or definite conclusion. The debate made evident how imperative was the policy Sir Wilfrid advocated, of emphasizing Canadian nationhood and at the same time seeking to reconcile nationhood and Empire. British racialism and French racialism, imperialist and nationaliste, were alike barriers to Canadian unity. Only by emphasizing the common Canadianism of their sons rather than the divergent traditions of their fathers could the lesser loyalties be merged in a concordant faith. At the same time, only in the compromise of "a nation within the Empire," the alliance of independent nations under a common king, could the most vital convictions of the majority of Canadians, for the present at least, be reconciled. But the debate also made evident how difficult this policy was to work out in practice, how ambiguous was Canada's international situation, how uncertain it was where nation ended and Empire began. Given a country divided by two great races, given the attempt to work out a new and unprecedented experiment in political organization, and it was not surprising, or necessary to assume an undue share of personal blindness or ill-will, if there were wide cleavage and constant inconsistency.

Writing to Senator Dandurand in December, [1909](#), Sir Wilfrid made light of the opposition:

We are without doubt in for a little agitation on the part of the Nationalists and Conservatives, who are at last uniting in a solid party. So far I have no serious apprehension. I am quite aware that our policy is not popular; for all that I do not think that they can fool the public about it. The only effect that I foresee is that it is going to consolidate the Opposition in the province of Quebec and probably divide it in the Dominion; I believe that

on the whole all the sane elements will stay with us, and if so, we have nothing to fear.

The clerical journals have already seized on the question to make a breach in our ranks. It seems to me that this is an obvious blunder and at the proper moment we must fall on them and tell them to their faces that this is an abuse of religion.

As for Borden's speech, it is always easy to obtain Tory newspapers. One can get them here in the library.

To an Ontario friend who attacked any naval expenditure, he replied, in November, [1909](#):

I am aware that there is among the farmers no enthusiasm for the organization of naval defence. Your general ground is derived from the fact that you do not believe in armaments, but in this you are ahead of the times. Your policy in that respect may perhaps be appreciated in the twenty-first century, but certainly not at this date. This consideration, therefore, cannot weigh at all with me; but you put the case more accurately, and very accurately, when you say that in your opinion the severance of the political tie which binds us to Britain would do more to assure our safety than the building of warships by the score.

In this I perfectly agree with you. If we were disconnected with Britain, we would have less occasion of conflict with Europe than we have at the present time; but if British connection has some disadvantages, in my judgment it has advantages which far more than outbalance the objections. No one at this moment thinks or would wish for a severance from Britain; I certainly do not. We are happy, free, content and prosperous as we are, and so long as the nation has those blessings, no one will ever think of changing the political conditions. We are all the same a nation, though under the suzerainty of Great Britain, and we have to assume the duties and responsibilities of a nation. Part of these duties is the keeping of some armed force, both on land and at sea.

I ask you to consider this; no nation has yet existed without some such protection, but I want to assure you that I never will be found to go into what is known as militarism. . . .

I would ask you further to consider this point: our existence as a nation is the most anomalous that has yet existed. We are British subjects, but we are an autonomous nation; we are divided into provinces, we are divided into races, and out of these confused elements the man at the head of affairs has to sail the ship onwards, and to do this safely it is not always the ideal policy from the point of view of pure idealism which ought to prevail, but the policy which can appeal on the whole to all sections of the community. This has been my inspiration ever since I assumed the leadership of the party and up to the present time this policy has, if it has done nothing else, given to the people these blessings which I have just mentioned: peace, harmony and prosperity.

If you were in the position in which I am, you would have to think night and day of these different problems. I do not think that you would differ much from the solution which I have endeavoured to find in the present instance. It has been my lot to face such problems again and again, throughout my political career, and on every occasion I have had to disappoint scores of my friends on some point or other. In the Manitoba school question I imposed upon my friends from Quebec what was to them at that time a difficult problem to face. On the Autonomy Bills of Saskatchewan and Alberta I imposed upon my friends from Ontario what was to them undoubtedly a similar problem to face. I do not expect that the task will be as heavy in the present instance as it was on the two last; still it will be of such a character as to give me many troubled hours. It is some consolation to think, however, that it will probably be the last one.

When Senator McMullen protested that the building of a navy was wholly unnecessary,—“For two hundred years we have been under the wing of Great Britain and have never been molested”; better give two dreadnoughts and end the matter,—he replied more jocularly:

With regard to the naval question, I am shocked and scandalized at your attitude. I always knew you to be a Grit and a Reformer belonging to the party which, from the time of William Lyon Mackenzie, insisted that we should have the handling of our own affairs. We claim that at this stage we have reached the status of a nation, at least I do. All nations must have a navy as well as an army, but I tell you frankly that I do not intend the Canadian army or navy to be on a scale to threaten the peace of the world. . . .

I have not missed the passage in your letter in which you attribute the attitude we have taken to representations from Quebec. I have read that in the Tory press, but was not prepared to see it from the pen of an old Grit.^[50] The Tory press is doing its very best to create a prejudice and a cleavage between Quebec and the rest of the Dominion. This is not new; it is as old as the history of Canada under British rule. It has failed before and will fail again.

When the Naval Service Bill was carried, after the defeat of Mr. Borden's compromise amendment and Mr. Monk's proposal of a referendum, the issue was far from settled. In the English-speaking provinces discussion lessened with the apparent easing of the tension in England, where the bills for the dreadnoughts were being presented in Mr. Lloyd George's land-tax budget, and with the diversion afforded by a revival of the tariff and reciprocity issue. But in Quebec the fight had only begun. Quebec's dominant instinct was to abstain from any naval action, and it was its view that had been discarded. Nor was Mr. Bourassa prepared to forego so splendid an opportunity. With Mr. Monk speaking for the old Conservative party, and with many new recruits to Nationalism, Mr. Bourassa began in January a vigorous and effective campaign.

A Nationalist daily "Le Devoir," was established at Montreal, with Mr. Bourassa as director.

A striking feature of the agitation was the success of the appeal to the old ultramontane spirit. The sins of Laurier as to western schools were heaped up on his sins of slavery to Chamberlain. Castorism found a new champion in Mr. Bourassa. The younger clergy and the college students flocked to his standard. "Le Devoir," very ably written, was

blessed by a thousand volunteer clerical workers, and set at least on a level with the catechism. A Catholic party was once again in the making. Writing in October, 1910, a colleague of Sir Wilfrid declared: "How wild that speech of Bourassa's at Notre Dame! May one cease to be tactful at this point and say that their lordships the Quebec bishops do not seem aware that this *furiosus* is leading them to the precipice. They want a Catholic Centre and a Windthorst, in a country where liberty and tolerance are the foundation of all our institutions!" And another colleague, a little earlier: "I pointed out to his Grace that the crusade now in progress in Quebec must either result in the formation of a Catholic party or end in smoke. If the latter were to be the result, then the rest of the community might well be content to wait, but if a Catholic party were formed, then he might be assured that all the rest of Canada would be arrayed against it, and the resulting injury to the Catholic Church in Canada would be irreparable. This prospect was disposed of by a shrug of the shoulders."

On a hundred platforms the naval policy was attacked as the beginning of the end of peace and good fortune in Canada. Sir Wilfrid was denounced as a false leader who had abused the confidence of his compatriots, had led them step by step to betrayal for the glitter of another English decoration, had plunged Canada into the vortex of militarism. Now Canadians would be involved in every British war; if a navy existed, the demand that it be used would be irresistible. It would not be used in Canada's quarrels, but in Britain's, used to uphold policies in whose shaping Canadians would have no slightest part; "slaves," as Mr. Monk declared, "of the English electors." There was no German peril, declared Mr. Bourassa, and if there was, England had brought it on herself. "If we are expected to shoulder all the liabilities of nationhood," asked Mr. Asselin, "why should we continue to drag the fetters of colonialism?" Particularly was it insisted that the inevitable next step would be conscription. It was futile to assert that naval service would be voluntary; if Canada became implicated in a European war, declared Mr. Monk, Mr. Bourassa and a score of their followers, the next step would be to make service compulsory, to drag the habitant to service on shipboard and in bloody fields.

The assault did not go unanswered. "Le Canada" and "Le Soleil," "La Presse" and "La Patrie," Mr. Lemieux and Dr. Béland, Gustave Boyer and J. P. Turcotte, defended the government's action as in the interest of Canada and as a return to England for the protection given the rights of the minority in Quebec. But it became evident that the Nationalist campaign was making deep inroads into the Liberal party. The Eucharist Congress, a great world-wide gathering of ecclesiastical dignitaries, which met in Montreal in September, 1910, was made the occasion of an endeavour to place the Nationalist movement and its leaders on a lofty pinnacle. All of Laurier's power over his compatriots would be required to stem the tide. Accordingly, upon his return from a long tour through the West, where he had been finding the farmers insurgent against the tariff, he arranged to speak at a great gathering in Montreal on October 10. Sir Wilfrid made play with the divisions of the Conservatives, the attacks from Ontario and the West because a Canadian navy meant separation, the attacks from Quebec because it meant jingoism, entanglement in Britain's wars. He hated war, but Canada must defend her far-flung territories. The government's naval policy did not involve a surrender to British centralizing demands, it was the logical continuance of the policy of resisting those demands which he had maintained steadily since 1902:

At that Conference the Secretary for War demanded a contribution of troops. At the same time the Secretary of State demanded that the same Dominions should contribute a sum of money annually for the maintenance of an imperial fleet. There, indeed, was the entrance to militarism. But the Canadian ministers who were at London—and I was one of them—opposed this demand of the imperial government in a categorical refusal, a refusal respectful in form, but absolute in meaning. But we did more than that; we placed before the Conference our own policy, which we intended to follow. We declared our intention to sustain the obligation incumbent upon all nations of defending their own territory; that we had already organized a Militia and that we were equally ready to undertake our naval defence; but that we would at all times follow and maintain the principle of our local autonomy. However, here is the Naval Law and I defy contradiction when I say that this law is in complete accord with the policy of 1902 as defined by us, as approved by Messrs. Monk and Bourassa. Now, I have simply to call your attention to two things provided by this Naval Law. It simply decrees that the government of Canada should organize another naval service, and that this service should remain entirely under the control of the government of Canada. Outside of this there is not a single word which would give to Great Britain that which she demanded in 1902,—the organization of a war service to be put at the disposition of the War Office,—not one word.

In a vigorous passage Sir Wilfrid paid his respects to the new-old Castor:

This violent section—you know it—comprises the Pharisee end of Canadian Catholicism; those who have constituted themselves the defenders of a religion which no one attacked; those who handled the holy-water sprinkler as though it were a club; those who have arrogated to themselves the monopoly of orthodoxy; those who excommunicate right and left all whose stature is a little greater than theirs; those who seem to have only hatred and envy for their motive and instinct; those who insulted Cardinal Taschereau when he was alive and who, now that he is dead, attack his memory; those who made Chapleau's life bitter; those, originally, whom the people with their picturesque language designated under the name of Castors.

Three days after this address, Louis Lavergne, brother of Sir Wilfrid's former law partner, member for Drummond-Arthabaska, was appointed to the Senate. The by-election which followed gave the Nationalists their chance. The odds

appeared against them. The riding had been strongly Liberal since 1887. It was Sir Wilfrid's old constituency and his summer home. Nowhere in Quebec would his personal prestige count for more. As a matter of fact, local circumstances were not favourable to the Liberals, as there had been serious factional disputes for some years. The onslaught was made. A Nationalist farmer, Arthur Gilbert, was nominated against the official Liberal candidate, J. E. Perrault. Nationalist orators swarmed into the field. Mr. Monk foretold bankruptcy as the end. Mr. Bourassa laid stress on conscription, declaring as in Montreal that "a day will come when draft officers will be scouring the country and compelling young men to enlist either in the navy or in the army, to go to foreign lands and fight the battles of Great Britain, to co-operate with Downing Street in the oppression of weak countries, and to maintain at the price of their blood, the supremacy of the British flag in Asia or Africa." Mr. Alfred Sévigny: "What has England done for you? You must protest against helping England in her wars; unless you do, conscription will come next." Mr. Tancred Marsil: "I come from a parish where the church still bears the mark of British bullets." Mr. Lavergne: "It is England which is indebted to us, and not we who are indebted to England." Mr. Blondin: "The only liberties we have won are those we won by force, and to-day England tries to dominate its colonies as Imperial Rome once did." The canvassers on the side roads had still less restraint: fifty thousand fathers of families would be sent to Asia to fight English battles, or let sink at sea; "those who disembowelled your fathers on the Plains of Abraham are asking you to-day to go and get killed for them." Particularly effective was the trick of sending men in uniform to take a census of the country houses: "Have you a husband?" the women were asked. "How many sons? What ages?" "Why? Merely to have the lists ready when the Laurier Naval Act goes into force." The Liberals meanwhile were not idle. Jacques Bureau, Ernest Lapointe, Dr. Béland, C. A. Gauvreau, L. J. Gauthier, Senator Lavergne and a score of other members met their opponents in warm debate. But the issue was evidently "For Laurier, or against the navy?"

On November 3, the polling in this most important by-election in Canada's history gave a Nationalist majority of 207. The impossible had happened. The grip of Laurier on Quebec had been shaken. The Liberals were dumbfounded, the Nationalists hysterical. Conservatives outside Quebec were dubious as patriots, jubilant as partisans; the chief whip telegraphed congratulations to Mr. Monk on his "great fight and success"; Mr. Borden declared that chickens were coming home to roost. In the following session, Sir Wilfrid thus referred to the election:

Well, sir, at this moment I have only to say that history teaches us that there are defeats which are more honourable than victories. The gentlemen on the other side of this House are welcome to all the comfort they can get out of the Drummond-Arthabaska election. . . . That election was won by a combination of what is left, or what was left, of the once-great Conservative party in the province of Quebec and certain young reactionaries who were brought up in Liberal principles but for whom, as it turned out, Liberal principles were too broad and too generous. The election was won by appeals so desperate that when the smoke of battle had cleared away the public conscience was aroused to shame and indignation.

Here and there men came to realize a little more clearly the difficulties Wilfrid Laurier had had to face, and here and there an imperialist halted when he saw his shadow.

Before the general elections in 1911, the holding of an Imperial Conference, the last in which Laurier was to share, gave opportunity for registering the recent developments in imperial opinion and policy. The conference in 1911 met in accordance with the agreement for periodic gatherings effected in 1907. It was chiefly notable for the concerted attempt made by British imperialists of the Round Table group, acting through Sir Joseph Ward of New Zealand, to secure the adoption of some plan of parliamentary federation for the Empire. Sir Joseph had submitted in advance a proposal for an Imperial Council of State advisory to the British government. In the Conference he went the whole road, urging the creation of an imperial parliament, with power chiefly over foreign policy and defence. Sir Joseph was evidently extremely hazy as to what foreign affairs comprised, and as to the limitations on the existing powers of the Dominions which would be involved in his plan. His schemes met short shrift. "The proposal seems to me to be utterly impracticable," declared Laurier for Canada. "It is not a practical scheme; our present system of responsible government has not broken down," declared Fisher for Australia. "The creation of some body with centralized authority over the whole Empire would be a step entirely antagonistic to the policy of Great Britain which has been so successful in the past, and which has undoubtedly made the Empire what it is to-day," declared Botha for South Africa, now federated in the Union. "Any scheme of representation—no matter what you call it, parliament or council—of the overseas Dominions must give them so very small a representation, that it would be practically of no value," declared Morris for Newfoundland. "We cannot, with the traditions and history of the British Empire behind us, either from the point of view of the United Kingdom, or from the point of view of our self-governing Dominions, assent for a moment to proposals which are so fatal to the very fundamental conditions on which our Empire has been built up and carried on," declared Asquith for Britain. Mr. Asquith went on to declare that the authority of the government of the United Kingdom in foreign policy could not be shared; this was afterwards taken to mean, could not be shared with the Dominions, and was much criticized therefor; but clearly Mr. Asquith meant authority could not be divided between the cabinet and the

irresponsible council or super-parliament Sir Joseph proposed. He saw clearly that the policy of the United Kingdom must be determined by a government responsible to the parliament of Britain. Laurier simply adopted the same position, applying it to Canada: the policy of Canada must be determined by a government responsible to the parliament of Canada. Between these responsible governments matters of common concern would have to be determined by conference and negotiation.

The verdict of the prime ministers was decisive. Imperial parliamentary federation had received its quietus.^[51]

The Conference was notable for a less decisive discussion of another phase of the problem of the control of foreign affairs. The British government had shared in drawing up and had signed the new code of maritime international law embodied in the Declaration of London. The Australian representatives objected on general principles because the Dominion had not been consulted in advance and took specific exception to the new proposals listing foodstuffs as conditional contraband and sanctioning the destruction of neutral vessels. Mr. Fisher insisted that hereafter the British government should consult the Dominions before committing them by treaties binding the whole Empire. To many, this stand seemed consistent with the principle of colonial nationalism. Not so to Laurier. He saw at once that giving advice meant a pledge to back that advice; he did not wish to sacrifice Canada's real and growing freedom of action in order to gain a minor and entangling share in determining British policy. "We may give advice if our advice is sought," he replied to Mr. Fisher, "but if your advice is sought, or if you tender it, I do not think the United Kingdom can undertake to carry out that advice unless you are prepared to back that advice with all your strength, and take part in the war, and insist upon having the rules carried out according to the manner in which you think the war should be carried out. We have taken the position in Canada that we do not think we are bound to take part in every war." Mr. Fisher assumed that there was and must continue to be one foreign policy for the Empire, and that to have a voice in their own destinies the Dominions must seek first to advise, and later to co-operate with Britain in shaping this policy. To Sir Wilfrid this centralization of policy was no more acceptable than centralization of parliaments; one would, if accepted, in time involve the other. Canada had already, as he pointed out, secured control of the greater part of the field of foreign policy concerned with commercial affairs. He anticipated that she could steadily extend this independent control over the whole field, effecting agreements with the other nations of the Empire by negotiation and understanding; in the meantime he preferred that Canada's control over her foreign policy should be incomplete rather than that she should accept an illusory share in Britain's foreign policy. He agreed to a compromise amendment, introduced by Mr. Fisher, requesting that future Hague conventions should be submitted to the Dominions before being signed and that so far as possible and when time permitted the same course should be followed in the case of other international agreements affecting the Dominions. Then, to illustrate Canada's steady expansion in control of foreign policy on her own lines, he secured an undertaking that negotiations would be opened to release any Dominion which desired from the operation of any of the old most-favoured-nation treaties between the United Kingdom and foreign powers. Canada had already secured the right to negotiate her own future treaties; in 1897, Laurier had secured the denunciation of the most galling of the old treaties, which barred a preference to Britain or other low-tariff countries; now in 1911 he urged the abolition so far as Canada was concerned, of the remaining old treaties, which impeded tariff negotiations with the United States.

The Conference of 1911 set the seal on the principle of alliance between equals and the method of negotiation, as the principle and method of Empire. The Wilfrid Laurier who in 1897 had dreamed of a parliament of Empire gathering in Westminster, with a son of New France among its members, had by 1911 played a decisive part in turning development into a contrary channel. The British Empire was not to be one, whether empire or commonwealth; it was to be a league of free nations. Much yet remained to be done in working out this conception; it doubtless was not an eternal solution, but it was the path and the goal of his own day. Laurier had carried forward the policy of Macdonald, the policy of Blake, who had declared in 1900:

For many years I for my part have looked to conference, to delegation, to correspondence, to negotiation, to quasi-diplomatic methods, subject always to the action of free parliaments here and elsewhere, as the only feasible way of working the quasi-federal union between the Empire and the sister nations of Canada and Australia. A quarter of a century past I dreamed the dream of imperial parliamentary federation, but many years ago I came to the conclusion that we had passed the turning that could lead to that terminus, if ever, indeed, there was a practicable road. We have too long and too extensively gone on the lines of separate action here and elsewhere to go back now.

Or in his own words in 1908, in a Tercentenary address at Quebec, given in the presence of the then Prince of Wales:

We are reaching the day when our Canadian parliament will claim coequal rights with the British parliament, and when the only ties binding us together will be a common flag and a common Crown.



CHAPTER XVI

RECIPROCITY

Canada and Foreign Powers—The Far East—Imperial Responsibilities—Tariff Bargainings—Closer Relations with the United States—Fisheries and Waterways—The Payne-Aldrich Tariff Negotiations—President Taft Proposes Reciprocity—The Negotiations—Washington Accepts—Opposition in Canada—The Economic Argument—The Political Bogey—The Conservative-Nationalist Alliance—Defeat of the Government.

Canada's steady advance toward nationhood, the transformation of the British Empire into a Britannic Alliance, was apparent not only in the relations between Canada and Britain but in the relations between Canada and foreign powers. In the navy issue, Canada was called upon to decide how far she would take part in what were predominantly Britain's foreign affairs. In trade and immigration and fishery disputes, she had to decide how far and how she would decide her own foreign affairs. As in the case of most countries, her own foreign affairs were chiefly economic and were chiefly with her nearest neighbour. A bargain as to tariff rates, a dispute as to fishery or irrigation rights in boundary waters, a protest against the barring of Chinese or Japanese immigrants, gave repeated occasion for practice in diplomacy.

As need demanded, Canada slowly acquired the machinery for negotiation with foreign powers. In 1909, following the example of Australia, the Laurier government established a Department of External Affairs, under Charles Murphy, as Secretary of State, and with a deputy minister, Mr. Joseph Pope, to give the permanent element desired. "The foreign affairs with which Canada has to deal," Sir Wilfrid declared, "are becoming of such absorbing moment as to necessitate special machinery." No step was taken toward permanent and distinct diplomatic representation abroad. When an old Liberal proposal for the appointment of a Canadian minister or attaché at Washington was revived in 1909, the prime minister declared that so long as James Bryce was British ambassador Canada needed no special minister; later, conditions might change. For special diplomatic tasks, cabinet ministers or private citizens were accredited with varying formality. To negotiate a formal treaty with France, concluded in the King's name, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Brodeur were appointed plenipotentiaries by the British government, along with the British ambassador in Paris, whose nominal part was confined to sharing in signing the completed treaty. To negotiate much more important trade agreements with the United States, direct and informal conference between the Ottawa and Washington cabinets sufficed. Mr. Lemieux undertook a special mission to Japan, and Mr. King to India. In the tariff negotiations with European powers in 1909 and 1910, the consuls-general of the powers concerned exercised quasi-diplomatic powers, and the agreements were embodied in conventions, assumed to be less formal and less the prerogative of sovereignty than treaties, and hence within the power of Canada to conclude without even the formal participation of a British plenipotentiary. In the Italian agreement the parties were declared to be "the Royal Consul of Italy for Canada, representing the Government of the Kingdom of Italy, and the Minister of Finance of Canada, representing His Excellency the Governor-General acting in conjunction with the King's Privy Council for Canada." Abroad, a Canadian consular service took shape with the appointment of trade commissioners in the more important countries.

As a Pacific power, Canada shared with the United States and Australia the difficulties involved in the possession of vast unpeopled lands to which the crowded hosts of Asia looked with longing. Neighbourhood to the United States gave British Columbia, and particularly its workingmen and small traders, the gospel of exclusion. Membership in the British Empire made doubly delicate any policy of barring immigrants from Britain's ally, Japan. Sir Wilfrid, while convinced that Asiatic immigration must be rigorously restricted, was scrupulously careful to avoid compromising imperial interests by an extreme policy or offensive means. In the election of 1908 he sacrificed British Columbia's seats rather than compete with Mr. Borden in concessions to the exclusionists. The federal veto power was used to prevent British Columbia passing measures of exclusion or discrimination on its own account. When in 1900 the head tax on Chinese immigrants was revised, it was urged that a similar tax should be imposed on Japanese. The government rejected the suggestion, preferring to have numbers restricted by voluntary action on the part of the Japanese government. In 1900 and in the half-dozen years following this assurance was repeatedly given through the Japanese consul-general, and the restriction was effectively enforced. When, in 1905, the Dominion determined to adhere to the commercial treaty which Britain had made with Japan in 1894-95, the Colonial Secretary raised the question of imposing restrictions on Japanese immigrants by some such law as Natal had enacted, but the Canadian government declined to make the reservation, preferring to save Japan's pride by trusting to her to continue to enforce the limitation. On this understanding the convention was ratified by the Canadian parliament in January, [1907](#). Advantage was taken of the government's scruple. Japanese employment associations and Canadian corporations stimulated a swiftly rising tide of labourers, coming in

some measure directly from Japan, but mainly through Hawaii. In 1906, three thousand, in 1907, seven thousand came, and the ideal of a White Canada seemed in peril. In September, [1907](#), a Vancouver mob, led by Seattle agitators, invaded the Chinese and Japanese quarters, doing much damage until the Japanese turned on their attackers and held rioters and police alike at bay. The government at once expressed to Japan its deep regret, and took steps to repair the breach in the dike. Rodolphe Lemieux hastened to Tokio. His diplomacy, backed by the efforts of the British ambassador, won a brilliant success. The Japanese government gave a written assurance that it would restrict direct emigration to Canada, adopted satisfactory regulations to that end, prohibited the emigration of contract labourers, and suppressed the emigration company involved. Japanese immigrants fell to a few hundred a year. Japan's pride and Canada's racial integrity alike were saved.

In the case of China there was no complication of alliance and no menace of military power. A head tax of fifty dollars on all Chinese immigrants except officials, merchants, and scholars had been imposed in 1885; in 1901 the tax had been raised to one hundred dollars and in 1904 to four hundred dollars. British Columbia employers of Chinese servants soon were clear as to the incidence of the tax. China made no protest, but the Laurier government itself concluded that it was not consistent with international comity to subject any people to this humiliating levy. When it left office, it had well under way a project for giving to China, as to Japan, the immediate responsibility for keeping the flow of its people within agreed limits.

Britain had made two treaties with Japan. The different position of Canada under the two treaties illustrated the distinction between the commercial and the military phases of foreign policy. Canadian insistence for thirty years had won the recognition of the right of the Dominions to accept or to decline a share in any commercial treaty made by the mother country with a foreign state. Canada accepted Britain's commercial treaty with Japan of her own volition, and faced independently the consequences, but throughout gave as close thought to Britain's interests as to her own. When Lord Lansdowne negotiated a treaty of military alliance with Japan, in 1902, it was held to bind the whole Empire; in political issues the old conception of the Empire as a single and undivided unit gave way to reality more slowly than in trade issues. When in 1911 the renewal of the treaty was discussed at the Imperial Conference, the exemption of any Dominion from its effects was still unthinkable; all that Sir Wilfrid and his Dominion colleagues could effect was the inclusion of a clause designed to make the treaty inapplicable in case of war between Japan and the United States.

The Hindu tide first reached large proportions in 1907. It raised still more difficult questions. What did the British Empire mean if a British subject could not enter other British lands? Had the Empire really been one, it would have broken under the strain; it being many, a flexible alliance, the danger was in a measure averted, the responsibility shifted from the Britain which ruled India to the Dominion which Britain did not rule. Following its consistent policy on Oriental immigration, the Canadian government sought to induce the government of India to adopt the necessary restraints itself. The government of India did not at that time consider it advisable to follow this advice; a later viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, came to realize more fully its value. But the government of India, and the India Office in London, were much gratified at the considerateness of the policy which Canada thereupon adopted, herself, to avert the influx. A general clause was inserted in the Immigration Act, barring immigrants who did not come from the country of origin by continuous voyage; while not naming India, it applied to India, as there was no line of steamships plying directly between Indian and Canadian ports. Further, an order in council was passed requiring all Oriental immigrants, except from countries with which special agreements existed, to prove possession of two hundred dollars before being permitted to land.[\[52\]](#)

The negotiations for the settlement of this delicate issue were entrusted to Mr. Mackenzie King. He was sent to London in 1908 to interview Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, and a year later, when visiting the East as one of the delegates to the Shanghai International Opium Commission, he was commissioned to proceed to Calcutta and discuss the matter at first hand. The success of the mission is sufficiently indicated in letters exchanged between Lord Minto, then Governor-General of India, and Sir Wilfrid. It may be added that a formal expression of appreciation from the government of India, "cordially endorsed" by Lord Morley and Lord Crewe, the Colonial Secretary, followed later.



CAMPAIGNING IN WESTERN ONTARIO (1908)

(Lord Minto to Wilfrid Laurier)

Government House
Calcutta
1st March, [1909](#).

MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

I was very glad to renew my acquaintance with Mr. Mackenzie King and I hope you will think the results of his visit to India in every way satisfactory.

Mr. King conferred with a member of my Council who deals specially with emigration questions and he has no doubt informed you of the result of their discussions. The view we hold here is that measures taken in Canada, prohibiting immigration except by continuous journey on through tickets and requiring the immigrant to produce two hundred dollars, are likely to prove effectual in putting a stop to the immigration of Indian labourers. We have published the conditions imposed by Canada widely in India, with the result that immigration has ceased altogether, and we consider there is practically no chance of its being re-opened.

Mr. King wishes to ascertain our general attitude towards the whole question of this emigration to British Columbia. As you are aware, we have all along said that any restrictions that might be required must be put on by you. We have never in India taken steps to control the movements of British Indians outside the country, except in the case of labourers under indenture. It would be difficult for the government of India to depart from this policy, especially at the present juncture, so that action on our part was out of the question. But we raised no objections to the methods adopted by Canada, and we have not any intention of raising any question regarding them.

We propose telling the Secretary of State for India the result of Mr. King's visit, and we shall take the opportunity of expressing to him our appreciation of the manner in which your government has treated the whole of this difficult business. You have all along kept in view the position that faces us here, and avoided anything that might look like invidious action against British Indians. And a solution has been found, which we

believe will be a lasting one, without involving us in any of the troublesome controversies which have arisen out of Indian emigration to some other places. We are grateful to you for the attitude that you have maintained throughout the discussions, and our formal acknowledgment will, I hope, reach you in due course.

Believe me, My dear Sir Wilfrid,
Yours very truly,
MINTO.

(Wilfrid Laurier to Lord Minto)

Ottawa, April 13, [1909](#).

MY DEAR LORD MINTO:

I received in due time your favour of the 1st of March. I thank you very heartily for it.

Mackenzie King is doing excellent work and I believe that he has quite a political future before him. The Hindu question has been very troublesome in British Columbia for some time, but thanks to the excellent dispositions taken by your administration, things are now easy. You remember the trouble we had with the Chinese immigration when you were in Canada. Strange to say, the Hindu and all people coming from India, are looked upon by our people in British Columbia with still more disfavour than the Chinese. They seem to be less adaptable to our ways and manners than all the other Oriental races that come to us.

Will you allow me to take this opportunity to offer you my very sincere congratulations for the success of your administration in India? You have had your share of troubles, but you seem to have overcome them all most successfully. . . .

The whole episode afforded an illuminating illustration of Laurier's imperial policy. He would not enter into dangerous and entangling new imperial commitments, but he would faithfully and punctiliously perform the obligations of the existing bonds. While noisy imperialists in Australia and elsewhere were taking steps or advocating policies which deeply embarrassed British rule in India, Wilfrid Laurier quietly, and at whatever cost of local losses, sought a course of action which, while fully conserving Canadian interests, would not involve complications for the imperial authorities.

With European powers, Canada had increasing contact. Political and military matters were filtered through British diplomacy. Immigration raised no vital question, as no discrimination was enforced against any European people. Trade and tariff were the questions at issue. The rapid growth in Canada's foreign trade, complications introduced by the preference to Britain, the adoption of a bargaining tariff schedule, and shifts in Canada's general tariff policy, led to important negotiations with France, Germany, Italy, and other Continental states.

The tariff policy established by the Laurier government in its first years of office did not undergo any basic alteration until the closing act. The tariff had been reduced; it had been made more logical and consistent; it had been tempered by the British preference; it had been made more distinctly a tariff for revenue; it had been revised in the light of public hearings, not in the darkness of Red-Parlour caucuses, but it remained a national-policy tariff still. The bounties on iron and steel had been renewed and widely extended. The minimum British preference rates on woollens were increased in 1904 in response to protests from Canadian mills, and in 1906-07 the uniform horizontal reduction of one-third was replaced by a specific preference varying with every item. A stringent Patent Act, the adoption of an arbitrary valuation basis on certain agricultural implements, and the revision in 1907 of the postal agreement of 1875 with the United States, in order to lessen the sale of United States magazines in Canada and incidentally the circulation of their advertisements of United States products, supplemented the more direct measures of protection. In 1904 Mr. Fielding introduced the anti-dumping clause, providing for special penalty duties on goods sold for export to Canada at substantially less than the prices prevailing in the country of origin, which in later years was imitated by many other countries. It was an ingenious device to meet the complaints of Canadian manufacturers against deliberate, crippling but temporary dumping of a foreign surplus in the Canadian market, while avoiding the enactment of permanent duties of the height required to meet emergency conditions.

Up to the year 1906, it may fairly be said that the Liberal party was becoming steadily more protectionist and forgetful of the freer trade ideals of Opposition days. The transformation was not difficult to understand. The United States had remained definitely protectionist; and even the United Kingdom, the one great citadel of free trade, seemed to be capitulating. In Canada itself the only other political party was still more protectionist. The manufacturers were organized and persistent, the consumers scattered and helpless. The cities were growing faster than the country, making the weight of protectionist, city-concentrating sentiment cumulative. The Maritime provinces, with the growth of iron and steel industries, began to share in the largesse and the advocacy of protection. Immigration was bringing the expanding markets which made protection in a small population endurable. The country was prosperous: why change?

After 1905 or 1906, other factors entered. The unexpected vitality and triumph of free trade in the United Kingdom, the

disfavour into which muck-raking was bringing every capitalist and corporation in the United States, had their effect in stimulating Canadian opposition to manufacturers' demands. The farmers of Ontario and the West began to organize; the Grange in Ontario, the Grain-Growers' Associations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, gave the consumer a voice at last. The effect was soon visible. When in June, [1904](#), Mr. Fielding announced the government's intention to revise the tariff, he forecast maximum and minimum schedules, the minimum, corresponding to the existing general tariff, for low-tariff countries, and the maximum, materially higher, for countries with a hostile tariff policy. But during the perambulations of the new tariff commission, Messrs. Fielding, Paterson, and Brodeur, in 1906 and 1907, farmers' organization after farmers' organization gave evidence of prices and profits, dug up old Liberal speeches, and demanded reduction. No more was heard of a maximum tariff, directed against the United States. When the revision came in 1907, a dual-schedule tariff, or, including the British preference and the surtax, a four-tier array, was established. But instead of the existing rates being made the minimum, and higher retaliatory rates set for the maximum, the existing tariff was made the maximum and a new intermediate schedule for bargain purposes established half-way between the British preference and the general rates. The Liberal party was returning to 1896.

The first important test of Canada's more positive and independent control of commercial relations with European countries came in the tariff war with Germany. Angered by Canada's refusal to accord her the same rates as Great Britain, and not without reason unable to understand how Canada was free to make its independent tariff agreements and yet the Empire was to be considered a unit, Germany in 1899 made her general instead of her conventional or minimum rates applicable to Canadian goods. The Dominion, after protesting in vain, in 1903 imposed a surtax of one-third on German imports. Germany suffered most. Her exports, which were highly specialized, were cut in two; Canadian exports to Germany continued to grow, though mainly in commodities on the free list or on which the conventional and the general rates were the same. Then the prospect of Canadian negotiation with other European powers and a further handicap upon her wares made Germany draw in her horns. On the initiative of the German government, and through the consul-general in Canada, negotiations were resumed. In February, [1910](#), an agreement was reached by which Canada granted Germany its general—not its intermediate—rates, while Germany in return conceded its minimum rates on Canada's most important dutiable exports.

With his bargaining schedule ready, Mr. Fielding turned first to France. A new treaty was negotiated in 1907, much more comprehensive than the agreement effected by Sir Charles Tupper in 1894, but the opposition of French protectionists prevented its ratification until 1910. France was given the intermediate rates on her specialties, and in a few cases rates below the existing British preference schedule, which in turn was correspondingly reduced. Canadian live stock, meats, dairy products, fish, pulp and lumber, furniture, boots and shoes, and agricultural implements were among the more important Canadian products given the French minimum rates. In 1910 a somewhat similar but less extensive agreement was made with Italy by convention, and the benefits of the intermediate tariff were extended to Belgium and the Netherlands in recognition of the lowness of their general customs rates.

Canada, for all the growing intercourse with Asia and with Europe, remained an American power. The isolation of the United States and Canada from other lands, their common border for three thousand miles, the wide measure of identity in pioneer traditions, in social customs, in business methods, in tongue and creed, made Canada's relations with the republic incomparably more close and more important than with all other powers. The responsibility that came of the United States' greater share in world affairs, the recognition of the wide measure of identity of ideals and of interest between the English-speaking peoples, the ethnic consciousness which was being created in the predominant Anglo-Saxon element by the stubborn refusal of other racial strains in the republic to be "assimilated," and not least the new respect for Canada that followed on her rapid growth and her luring a million settlers over the border in a dozen years, was making the attitude of the people of the United States much friendlier than of old. Canada's prosperity and her independence went far to cure the sensitive and querulous note in her earlier dealings. The presence of James Bryce at Washington aided not a little in smoothing any difficulties that arose.

It is easy to exaggerate the part that statesmen played in determining the relations of two countries so bound together. Premier and President had their parts, and played them in full footlight glare, but perhaps the final shaping came from hundreds of thousands of humbler and more unconscious diplomats. The young Prince Edward Island fisher lad seeking fame and fortune in Boston, the habitant's daughter finding a place in a Lowell mill, the Iowa farmer selling his two-hundred-dollar-an-acre land and buying Saskatchewan prairie at twenty, the Pittsburgher rejoicing in the trout of a New Ontario stream and the Toronto matron joining in the Easter parade on Fifth Avenue or the Boardwalk, the Massachusetts manufacturer opening a branch in Hamilton, the Canadian railway seeking a terminus in Boston or Chicago, the baseball

hero or the movie actress worshipped by the youngsters of a united continent, the journal circulating on both sides of the border, the international trade union,—these and countless other unprofessional representatives built up the relationships, prejudices, friendships, which were the stuff that foreign affairs were made of. Still, the statesmen had their part. At the least they expressed, in some measure they guided, public opinion.

In this more favouring atmosphere many of the long-standing issues of Anglo-American diplomacy found ready settlement. Draft agreements of the Joint High Commission were signed and sealed. The last bit of undetermined boundary, in Passamaquoddy Bay, was referred to a commission. In the North Pacific, Canada agreed to abandon pelagic sealing in return for a fair proportion of the catch on the United States, Russian, and Japanese rookeries. Immensely more significant was the settlement of the North Atlantic Fisheries difficulty. Since the adoption of the *modus vivendi* in 1888, the question had slumbered until the attempt of Newfoundland in 1905 to prevent foreign fishing-vessels from securing bait or supplies from the island had once more threatened conflict. In 1909 Mr. Bryce and Mr. Root signed a treaty for the reference of the whole century-old dispute to the newly constituted Hague Tribunal. The question was really much more complicated, much more dangerous and much more important than the Alaska boundary dispute, but fortunately there had been some advance in Anglo-American relations and in international good sense since 1903, and the conduct and outcome of the arbitration were wholly creditable to every party concerned. The Tribunal was constituted at The Hague in June, [1910](#), consisting of Dr. Lammasch of Austria, Dr. Lohman of Holland, Dr. Drago of Argentina, Justice Gray of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, and Sir Charles Fitzpatrick of the Canadian Supreme Court. Sir Allen Aylesworth was agent for Great Britain, Newfoundland, and Canada, with Sir W. S. Robson, Sir Robert Finlay, Sir Edward Morris, Donald Morrison, Sir James Winter, John S. Ewart, George F. Shepley, Sir Erle Richards, A. F. Peterson, W. N. Tilley, Raymond Asquith, Geoffrey Laurence, and Hamar Greenwood as council, while Chandler P. Anderson was agent for the United States, with Elihu Root, George Turner, Samuel Elder, C. B. Warren, James Brown Scott, Robert Lansing and Otis Cartwright as counsel. Dr. Lammasch rightly declared at the first session: "Perhaps no question of such gravity and involving such complications has ever been submitted to arbitration." But the terms of reference had been carefully and fairly framed; the tribunal consisted of impartial jurists; the case was thoroughly prepared and exhaustively argued, and there was no justice of the United States Supreme Court journeying to London with a Rooseveltian Big Stick in his baggage. The result was a masterly, exhaustive and practical decision, absolutely unanimous save for a dissent on one point by the Argentine member. It was gratifying that on every important phase the Canadian contention was sustained, but still more welcome were the evidences of friendliness and of an honourable desire on both sides to ensure a strictly fair and legal decision.

More important than any of these settlements of old and weary issues was the constructive provision for new boundary difficulties. The creation of a permanent Joint High Commission, with three Canadian and three United States members, to deal primarily with disputes as to boundary waters, whether as to navigation, power, irrigation, or fisheries was due to three men, Wilfrid Laurier, Elihu Root, and George C. Gibbons. Mr. Bryce and Sir Allen Aylesworth took an active part in the drafting, and every clause and every line was gone over again and again by the whole cabinet. In its explicit recognition of Canada's international status, in the optional provision for reference to the commission of any subject whatever in dispute between the two countries, in the permanent character of the joint body, and, not least, in the adoption for the first time in international practice of the far-reaching provision that individual citizens of either country might present their cases direct, without the State acting as intermediary, the experiment was a distinctive North American contribution toward a sane international polity. "We are setting up a Hague Tribunal for North America," Mr. Root rightly commented.

None of these questions became a political issue. That rôle, as usual, was reserved for trade and tariff. The tariff still held a dominant place in the politics of both countries. No other question could affect so many pockets, prejudices, traditions. Its importance may have been absurdly exaggerated, but that did not alter the fact that tariffs still made and unmade governments. In four successive elections, [1896](#), 1900, [1904](#), 1908, the higher-tariff party had been returned to power in the United States. In four successive elections, 1896, [1900](#), 1904, [1908](#), the lower-tariff party had been returned to power in Canada. In 1897 the Republicans had produced the Dingley tariff, and then had rested content. In 1897 the Liberals had enacted the Fielding tariff, and had since made little change. Now after a dozen years the tariffs were again in the melting-pot.

In the 1908 election, the Republicans had promised a thoroughgoing revision of the tariff. As to whether the revision should be upward or downward, there had been some judicious haziness, but the Old Guard in charge of the party's fortunes had no uncertainty. The Payne-Aldrich tariff, enacted in 1909, was distinctly and aggressively protectionist. In

the United States, the tariff speedily proved unexpectedly and decidedly unpopular. City consumers wanting lower living costs, manufacturers wanting foreign markets, newspapers wanting cheaper pulp, the raw material of literature, insurgents wanting to insurge, denounced this Bourbon product. Abroad, it threatened complications. For the first time Congress had adopted a two-schedule tariff with minimum rates intended as normal, and prohibitive maximum rates of an additional twenty-five per cent. ad valorem for bargaining, or rather for bludgeoning. The President was directed to apply the maximum rates, after March 31, [1910](#), to imports from any country which in any way unduly discriminated in its own tariff against the United States. It was an abandonment of the traditional United States principle of concession for concession in favour of the European principle of penalties for discrimination. Formerly the United States had insisted that if Brazil, for example, wanted the special tariff rates accorded Argentina, there must be equality between the concessions which Brazil and Argentina gave on United States goods; now, it insisted that Brazil must give the same rates it gave on Argentina's goods: it had adopted the European interpretation of the most-favoured-nation clause, plus a club.

Thus armed, Washington sought and secured concessions from France, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Brazil. Soon only Canada remained obdurate. The United States tacitly admitted that the special rates Canada granted on British imports did not constitute an undue discrimination, but it contended that the concessions recently made to France and other European countries would make inevitable the application of the penalty clause, unless equivalent concessions were accorded. To Canada, this position appeared preposterous. The United States was demanding for nothing concessions for which France had given value. Canada was prepared, in accordance with the traditional policy of the United States itself, to grant the United States special concessions when it matched the concessions France had made. Early in 1910 President Taft sent Professor Emery and Mr. C. M. Pepper to Ottawa to confer with Sir Wilfrid and Mr. Fielding. In March he arranged a conference with Mr. Fielding in Albany, and later Mr. Fielding and Mr. Graham went to Washington. The President assured the Canadian representatives that nothing was further from his desire or the desire of his people than a tariff war with Canada, but that the Payne-Aldrich Act left him no option in insisting upon concessions. Fortunately, it did give him power to decide what concessions would be considered adequate. A compromise was worked out at the last moment by which each country saved its face. Canada granted to the United States its intermediate tariff rates on thirteen minor articles from photographs to prunes, which the President accepted as equivalent to the special rates given France. Then the Canadian parliament immediately made these lower rates part of its general tariff; the United States ended where it had begun, its goods subject in every item to the general, not to any special, tariff rates. A phantom concession had been made to remove an invented grievance, and peace reigned again on the Ottawa and the Potomac.

Peace, but not quiescence. From the verge of an unpremeditated tariff war Washington turned to a deliberate search for fiscal friendliness. Public opinion had pronounced strongly against the bludgeoning tactics of Congress and a strong Republican seat in Massachusetts had gone Democratic on a platform of Reciprocity a week before the March negotiations were completed. President Taft awoke to the fact that he had antagonized the progressive movement within his own party by sanctioning a profiteer's tariff. An amateur diplomat, Dr. J. A. Macdonald, editor of the Toronto "Globe," impressed upon him the opportunity of snatching credit out of embarrassment and of establishing, once for all, close and friendly relations between the two democracies of North America. In a message to the Canadian people, President Taft declared: "I am profoundly convinced that these two countries, touching each other for more than three thousand miles, have common interests in trade and require special arrangements in legislation and administration which are not involved in the relations of the United States with countries beyond the seas."

On the initiative of Mr. Taft, negotiations for a wider agreement were begun in Ottawa in October, [1910](#), and concluded in Washington in January, [1911](#). Diplomatic forms were discarded, the discussion was brief and businesslike, the atmosphere friendly. The Canadian representatives, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Paterson, to their surprise found the United States prepared to go much farther than they had expected or were themselves ready to agree. A proposal of complete free trade was made, but could not be considered. The Canadian representatives were no longer willing to offer free fishing for free fish and they insisted that any agreement should take effect by simultaneous legislative action, which either country would be free to modify at any time, rather than by a binding and inflexible treaty. It was also made clear that any reduction given to imports from the United States would, if need be, be extended automatically to British imports. With these points settled, rapid progress was made in drafting a broad measure of reciprocity. The chief products of the farm, the forest, the mine, the fishery, were put on the free list or the duties substantially reduced. The duties were also lowered on a limited list of manufactured articles, in most cases to the level of the intermediate tariff. A reduction in the duty on wood-pulp and paper was made contingent upon the removal of the export restrictions imposed

by individual provinces, the Canadian government declining to bring any pressure to bear upon them. In essence, the agreement provided for the admission to the United States of all Canadian staple natural products free, or at low duty, while in turn Canada conceded little beyond the reductions already made to other countries under the intermediate or conventional tariff.

The governments had agreed; what of the legislatures? The United States Senate had proved the graveyard of many a promising trade agreement. Mr. Taft faced strong opposition from his own party, and from the interests threatened with new competition.



CAMPAIGNING IN QUEBEC, (1911)

The New England fisherman, the Montana sheep-raiser, the Dakota grain-grower, and the Washington lumberman joined the dyed-in-the-wool protectionists in blocking the bill. It was necessary to call a special session of Congress in April. Mr. Taft's influence, Democratic support, and a Washington July sun melted the Senate's obduracy and by the end of July the measure had passed both houses of Congress and received the signature of the President. Washington had done its part. What of Ottawa? Neither Sir Wilfrid nor any member of his cabinet had had any fear or doubt of the outcome. The government had achieved what every previous administration had tried in vain to win. It had reached the goal which had been the professed aim of both political parties in Canada for half a century. It had secured an agreement which opened a market in the United States for Canadian natural products without giving the Canadian manufacturer any legitimate and substantial ground for complaint. It had provided that in no case would there be discrimination against Britain. That Canada would not welcome this triumph of diplomacy seemed incredible.

When, on January 26, Mr. Fielding laid the agreement before parliament, if the government benches were jubilant, the Opposition was stunned. The bargain was better than they had imagined possible. It was strictly in harmony with their own traditions. Western Conservative members could not be restrained from applauding. Outside the House, Conservative newspapers like the Toronto "News" and the Ottawa "Journal" expressed approval. But suddenly the mood changed. Mild assent changed to question, question to criticism, and criticism to a storm of denunciation and fierce attack. Party spirit and party hopes had rallied, lines of attack had opened, a chance of victory had gleamed. What was more to the point, the industrial and financial and railway interests had taken alarm and determined to fight the agreement with every resource in their power. Manufacturers, though for the most part untouched, feared the thin edge of the wedge. Railway magnates dreaded breaks in their long east and west hauls. Bankers, intimately linked by their directorates and their loans with both manufacturer and railway, threw their weight into the same scale. The word went forth, in Sir William Van Horne's frank phrase, "to bust the damned thing." The Opposition attacked it in parliament, blocked estimates, and compelled the government to adjourn until after the Imperial Conference. Ten days after the House reassembled, on July 29, the government accepted the Opposition's challenge, dissolved the parliament, and appealed to

million-headed Cæsar.

In the seven-weeks campaign that followed, the Conservatives were emphatically on the aggressive. Down to fighting weight after fifteen years of hungry opposition, inspired by a genuine alarm for the national or imperial interests they considered were involved, or by a lively confidence in the powers of the great interests which were giving them support, they fought with vigour and without restraint. The Liberals had lost their fighting edge, principles had been dulled by compromise, party organization worn out and never repaired. They had come to trust too much to campaign funds, and now they faced an issue where their opponents could cover their million with three. In the press, in spite of the vigorous campaign of the Toronto "Globe" and "Star," the "Manitoba Free Press," and the Halifax "Chronicle," they could not match the audacity and confidence of their opponents, particularly the "Montreal Star" and the Toronto "News."

While Mr. Borden, in spite of a mutiny in March, remained the leader of the party, the real campaign manager was Clifford Sifton.^[53] After his resignation from the cabinet, Mr. Sifton had remained a member of the House and of the Liberal party. He had been in charge of the Western campaign in 1908, with not very striking results, barely saving his own seat in Brandon. In this campaign it was his administration of the Interior that was chiefly under fire, and he was considered by many Liberals as more of a liability than an asset.^[54] Now he decided to break with the party.

Sir Wilfrid sent for him when he heard he was going to oppose reciprocity. "Why?" "Because I do not believe in it." "You did once." "Yes, but conditions have changed." "No, it is you who have changed. Your opposition is personal; what is it?" Whatever the reason, patriotic alarm, or a desire for an amenable government, Mr. Sifton threw himself whole-heartedly into the anti-reciprocity campaign. It was Clifford Sifton, aided by Zebulon Lash, the confidential lawyer of Mackenzie and Mann, who organized the Revolt of the Eighteen, a carefully staged and very effective repudiation of reciprocity by eighteen residents of Toronto, all eminent in the world of finance, and all attached or semi-detached Liberals, and it was Clifford Sifton who organized the no-popery cry on the back concessions of Ontario.

To attack the agreement on its economic side was difficult, but the attack was made. The strongest appeal was the cry of "Let well enough alone," the pithy advice from the tombstone, "I was well, I would be better, here I am." Canada, after years of looking to Washington, had determined to work out her own salvation, and had succeeded beyond her dreams. Why risk this prosperity, why disturb the whole national basis of the business that had been built up? Laurier prosperity thus proved its own undoing. Much play was made of the precarious basis of the bargain; after Canadian industry had been adjusted to the new market, Congress could, at a moment's notice, abrogate the agreement, and leave the Canadian producers stranded. The manufacturer was not hit now, but his turn would come. The farmer, the miner, the lumberman, might think they would gain, but that hope was illusory: the United States itself was a great exporter of farm and mine and forest products; the Canadian truck-farmer and fruit-grower would lose their early market; the dozen countries with the most-favoured-nation treaties could pour in their products; preference in the British market would be barred.

The advocates of the agreement contended that the government that had given Canada unparalleled prosperity could be trusted to maintain and develop it. The prosperity of the manufacturer was a preposterous and callous ground for denying the farmer and the miner, who had been much less fortunate, their chance of permanent prosperity: let the farmer have his turn. To the manufacturer, who would reject a certain gain to the farmer out of fear of a hypothetical future risk to himself, Mr. Fielding gave prophetic answer: "If, perchance, the manufacturers in their great power should unite in opposing and possibly condemning or even defeating this great measure, then there will rise up in the Western country a storm-cloud no bigger than a man's hand, and the end will be a change in the fiscal policy of the country which the manufacturers will find much greater than anything they conceived of." The United States market for natural products, while not as indispensable as a generation earlier, was potentially the richest in the world, and was offered on fair and generous terms. The United States was rapidly becoming an industrial country; if it exported Durum wheat, it needed No. 1 Hard; if Pennsylvania had coal to spare for Ontario, Massachusetts needed Nova Scotia's and Oregon British Columbia's coal. At the least, the United States offered an enormous extension of the "home" market the protectionist glorified. The most-favoured-nation treaties, if need be, could be revised. As for a preference in Britain, that was still possible; British tariff-reformers intended to use the tariff as a basis for retaliation or for reciprocity with foreign countries, as well as for concessions to the colonies; was Canada to be denied a like freedom?

It was, however, not to economic, but to political motives that the opponents of reciprocity made their chief appeal. As in 1891, national existence and imperial connection were held to be jeopardized by "the treason that barterers our birthright for the gold of the Kings of the South." National unity was at stake. Only by rail and tariff had Canada been welded into one; with the tariff wall broken and the railway traffic running north and south, the Dominion would break

into its original fragments, each attached to the adjoining section of the republic. New York and Boston, Chicago and Minneapolis would become centres for Canadian interest. Where the treasure was, there would be the heart also. Imperial connection could not stand the strain. Inevitably, Canada would be drawn into political as well as commercial union with her dominating neighbour. "It is her own soul that Canada risks to-day," Rudyard Kipling cabled. These arguments were illustrated and driven home by rash prophecies of annexation by advocates of reciprocity in the United States. "We are preparing to annex Canada," the Speaker of the House, Champ Clark, had declared, and, more seriously, "I am for the bill because I hope to see the day when the American flag will float on every square foot of the British North American possessions clear to the North Pole." Lesser politicians and obscure journals were quoted to the same deadly effect. It was in vain that President Taft and Secretary Knox at once denied with vigour any thought of political union. A reference by Mr. Taft himself, to Canada's being at "the parting of the ways," was twisted out of its obvious meaning. When, after the elections, he made public an extraordinary letter he had written to Mr. Roosevelt while the pact was pending, pointing out that its effect would be to make Canada a mere "adjunct" of the United States, the sinister interpretation seemed to many to be posthumously confirmed, but Sir Wilfrid Laurier discounted it as "a borrowing of shallow rhetoric from Canadian jingoes."

This campaign did not go unanswered. It was not commercial union but limited reciprocity that was in question. National sentiment was now too strong to be in danger. True, there were annexationists in the United States, but few as compared with earlier days, and in any case it was the people of Canada, not cross-roads politicians to the south, who would settle that matter. Reciprocity in 1854 had killed annexation sentiment. If mounting imports from the United States in the past decade had not brought annexation, how could mounting exports bring it? How could the Canadian banker with reserves in Wall Street, the director seeking terminals in Chicago, the manufacturer joining in an international merger, ordain for their fellow-citizens "no truck nor trade with the Yankees"? If Mr. Kipling could sell his poetry for hundreds of thousands of American dollars without injuring the perfect bloom of his patented patriotism, could not a Saskatchewan homesteader sell a beef or a load of wheat without selling his country and his soul with it? But the answers were made in vain. For all the close business and social intermingling of recent years, there was still in Canada a deep-rooted political distrust of the great republic. There were men still fighting the battle of Lundy's Lane; there were more who had not forgotten the arrogance of the Olney doctrine and the Venezuela message. For fifty years, with rare intervals, the United States had shown itself unneighbourly in its public acts, and particularly in its tariff policy. It was not possible to wipe out these memories by a single generous gesture. Canadian human nature found it difficult to resist retaliating on the United States in kind for many a rejection of its trade advances. It might hurt the Dominion more than it hurt the Republic, but the country was prosperous and could afford the luxury,—particularly as it was the farmers who would pay. Ontario Jeshurun, having waxed fat, kicked.

To divert the farmer from the opening doors of trade, it was not enough to wave the flag: the red herring of sectarian suspicion must be drawn across his path. Up and down the concession roads and the side-lines of Ontario the whispering campaign against a French and Roman Catholic premier was pushed with vigour. The appearance of the Speaker of the House and a Supreme Court Justice, both in their robes of office, in the Eucharistic Congress of the previous year, (though wholly of their own motion), and the allegation that the newly issued Ne-Temere decree meant that in Quebec the Roman Catholic Church had assumed the right to annul mixed marriages, were utilized to the full.

Nor was Quebec neglected. Here reciprocity was a minor issue; the navy and the Nationalists held the field. To defeat the government, ultras and antis joined hands. Mr. Bourassa, who was not himself a candidate, at first supported reciprocity as a boon to Canada and a blow to Chamberlainism, then declared it a very minor issue, and ended with direct attack. The Conservative campaign manager circulated "Le Devoir" throughout the province. Some twenty-eight candidates were nominated as Nationalist or as Conservatives with Nationalist support. In New Ontario, where the French-Canadian vote was a factor, two Conservative candidates sent for Mr. Bourassa and promised to support his naval policy. From end to end of Quebec the cry was raised that the Laurier navy meant conscription,—"and neither Laurier nor Borden," added Mr. Bourassa, "has a son of his own." The Conservative leaders carefully played into the hands of Mr. Bourassa and of Mr. Monk, who was in charge of a distinct Autonomist organization. Mr. Borden issued his first manifesto to the country on the day parliament was dissolved,—and Conservative and Nationalist newspapers in Quebec pointed out that there was in it not one word about the navy. He issued his second manifesto in August; this time he did speak of the naval question, but it was not to propose contribution to the British navy but to attack the Laurier naval plans as costly, inefficient and likely to "result in time of war in the useless sacrifice of many lives,"—and again Quebec Conservatives and Nationalists dotted the i's and crossed the t's of this timely and restrained utterance.

Into the campaign, for all his seventy years, Sir Wilfrid threw himself with energy. In four weeks he addressed over fifty meetings in the five Eastern provinces, and particularly in Ontario and Quebec. He had no illusions as to the uphill fight which faced him. Borden and Bourassa had enthusiasm and prejudice on their side, which his policy could no longer arouse. In Quebec it was often apparent that Laurier had the people's respect, but Bourassa had stirred their emotions. In Ontario the cheers were subdued and many old friends were absent. But his courage never faltered. At Simcoe he declared Sir John Macdonald was the Moses of Reciprocity who failed to reach the Promised Land; "I am the Joshua who will lead the people to their goal." He warned the manufacturers: "On Thursday I will beat them and on Friday I will protect their just interests," but, again: "The manufacturers must understand that there are men who are not as magnanimous as we are, and forces will be aroused which it will be impossible for me to control. . . . They are preparing for themselves a rod which will some day fall across their own shoulders." He made light of annexation talk: "If it be true that President Taft said that Canada is at the parting of the ways, I would say to President Taft that he does not know what he is talking about. I would say, we are prepared to meet you in business, but if you want to talk politics keep to your own side of the line and we will keep to ours."

As for the Bourassa-Borden-Monk-Sifton alliance, "what a salad!" Mr. Monk was the oil, Mr. Bourassa the vinegar, and Mr. Borden had to eat the dose. "A vote for Bourassa is a vote for Borden."^[55] "The day when England's supremacy on the sea is destroyed," he told a Three Rivers audience, "your national and religious privileges will be endangered. And where is the French-Canadian who will say, 'No, I will not participate in that war?'" Yet it would be wholly for each man to decide for himself: the charge that conscription would follow was a monstrous and baseless lie. In St. John he ended a strong address with the appeal:

I am branded in Quebec as a traitor to the French, and in Ontario as a traitor to the English. In Quebec I am branded as a Jingo, and in Ontario as a Separatist. In Quebec I am attacked as an Imperialist, and in Ontario as an anti-Imperialist. I am neither. I am a Canadian. Canada has been the inspiration of my life. I have had before me as a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day a policy of true Canadianism, of moderation, of conciliation. I have followed it consistently since 1896, and I now appeal with confidence to the whole Canadian people to uphold me in this policy of sound Canadianism which makes for the greatness of our country and of the Empire.

The appeal was in vain. The night of September 21 brought an astounding Conservative victory. The Liberal popular majority of 25,000 in 1908 had been converted into a minority of 47,000. The majority in the House had been precisely reversed, 133 Liberals to 85 Conservatives, and 3 Independents, in 1908; 133 Conservatives and Nationalists to 88 Liberals in 1911. Minister after minister had fallen, Mr. Fielding and Sir Frederick Borden in the Maritimes, Sydney Fisher in Quebec, George Graham, Mackenzie King, and William Paterson in Ontario, William Templeman in British Columbia. In Ontario the Conservative victory had been beyond precedent,—72 seats to 14. In Quebec the Liberal majority had fallen from 43 to 11: there were 27 Conservatives and Nationalists to 38 Liberals. The central prairie provinces had gone strongly Liberal, but Manitoba and British Columbia nearly balanced them. Outside of Ontario, the Liberals had a majority both in seats and in the popular vote, and had Quebec stood where it had in 1908, Ontario's adverse vote would have been balanced. But things were as they were, and the Laurier régime was ended.

The Liberal party had been in power for fifteen years. They had been years of unparalleled achievement. Canada held a new place in the world's regard. Canadian nationhood had advanced a long stage. The West had come into its own. The flow of immigration had been immensely stimulated; the ebbing of Canadians southward had been halted. The stagnation and decay of the nineties had vanished. A highly developed and integrated industry was being built up. A new confidence marked individual and community life. But even from the standpoint of the Liberal party and its veteran leader, it was not wholly a misfortune that a change had come. Half a generation of power had slackened energy and attracted parasites. It was immensely better that the Liberals should fall in the endeavour to carry through a fundamental Liberal policy than that they should die ingloriously of dry-rot like the federal Conservatives in the nineties and the Ontario Liberals ten years afterward. It was well, too, that many an elector had deliberately set aside the possibilities of private gain in order to safeguard the national interests which he felt were imperilled. There were other aspects not so defensible. It was not well that an honourable sentiment could be so easily manipulated and traded upon; it was not well that powerful financial and railway interests—doubtless with much mixed motive, for honest and warm convictions here as elsewhere varied cold-blooded seeking of personal gain—should be able by lavish expenditure or raging, tearing propaganda to stampede unthinking thousands. It was not well that the endeavour to work out a moderate and middle policy in imperial and international affairs, a policy which would prevent a cleavage on racial lines, should be halted by extremist assaults. Nor was it well, even from the standpoint of the victors in this fray, that the city and the city-centred powers should have so flagrantly and blindly subordinated the country's interest. The farmer had had his first lesson.

On one aspect of the contest, Sir Wilfrid touched in a letter to a stalwart and independent Prince Edward Islander:

Ottawa, October 5, [1911](#).

It is the province of Ontario which has defeated us. Our losses elsewhere were not very serious and would simply have reduced our majority, but Ontario went solid against us. It is becoming more and more manifest to me that it was not reciprocity that was turned down, but a Catholic premier. All the information which comes to me from that province makes this quite evident.

Accept my very best thanks for your kind letter.

To the 1891 unrestricted-reciprocity election there had been a disturbing postscript in the message of Edward Blake. Now to the 1911 restricted-reciprocity election there was another postscript, another message from the old leader, which comforted instead of disturbing his successor. Mr. Blake had returned to Canada a short time before, broken down in health. A member of his family wrote Sir Wilfrid on Sept. 22:

Mr. Blake expressed entire approval of your reciprocity campaign. This morning the nurse told him of the election and he said slowly: "I am sorry for Laurier. He is a fine fellow and I always liked him." That is a voice almost from the grave, as I fear we must consider it, the voice of one along with whom you fought many hard battles. Mrs. Blake wishes me to send you her love (that was the word she used) and to say how real are her regrets but, at the same time, how glad she is that you will have a period of comparative rest.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE SHADES OF OPPOSITION

Resignation of the Laurier Government—The New Ministry—Laurier as Opposition Leader—The Navy Issue Again—Laurier Opposes Contribution—The Closure—Defeat of the Naval Bill—Business Depression—The Railway Crisis—The Government and the Canadian Northern.

The verdict of September 21 may have been wise or it may have been unwise, but there was no room to doubt its emphasis. It was not easy to hand over the reins of power. Fifteen years of office with a prosperous country and a reasonably united party, had made authority a habit. The sting of defeat, apprehensions roused by the tactics and the propaganda of the campaign, the certainty that possesses every government that its successors cannot rise to its level, regret for uncompleted tasks, were far from offset by the weariness long years of strain had brought. Yet there was nothing to do but to accept the fortunes of war. After winding up routine business, and without attempting to make any eleventh-hour appointments, the Laurier administration resigned on the sixth of October.

His Majesty's Government had become His Majesty's Opposition. The Liberal party had been seriously weakened, particularly in Ontario and the Maritime provinces. Sir Allen Aylesworth had been compelled, by a growing and limiting deafness, to retire. Messrs. Fielding, Graham, Paterson, King, Templeman, had been overwhelmed by the electoral landslide, though a seat was soon found for Mr. Graham through the resignation of an Ontario Liberal member. Charles Murphy was the only minister who succeeded in holding an Ontario riding, but in F. F. Pardee, A. H. Clarke, A. B. McCoig, D. C. Ross, there was the nucleus of a strong Ontario group. Quebec had been least affected. Rodolphe Lemieux, Henri Béland, Jacques Bureau, Ernest Lapointe, had all returned, and in J. A. Robb, and young men who embodied the promise of old names—Papineaus, Pacauds—the House had received a vigorous reinforcement. William Pugsley and Frank Carvell upheld New Brunswick's traditions, and A. K. Maclean, D. D. Mackenzie, J. H. Sinclair, and G. W. Kyte answered for Nova Scotia's Liberalism. The West was particularly rich in promise, with W. M. Martin, W. E. Knowles, Frank Oliver, W. A. Buchanan, and Michael Clark standing for the prairie progressivism which was soon to become a distinct factor in public life.

The defeat of his government faced Sir Wilfrid Laurier sharply with the question of his continued leadership. It had been his intention, if returned to power, to retire in favour of a younger man within a year or two. He was now in his seventieth year. He had spent forty years in legislative halls, thirty-eight of them in the House of Commons. Not a man of the two hundred who sat in the Commons when he entered was beside him now. He was the last of his generation in active public life. The assiduous care of Lady Laurier, and his own temperance and control of wasting emotions had guarded him from serious illness, but he had little of the robust energy and the reserves of force needed for the unremitting campaigning and organizing and the vigilant criticism of an Opposition leader's lot. He had other dreams for his last years, the quiet of his study, the friendship of old comrades and happy youngsters, the writing of a life of Antoine Aimé Dorion or a history of Canada since Confederation. Yet he did not wish to give up the fight in the instant of defeat. There were able and vigorous lieutenants to aid in the party's work. He was frankly fond of power and fond of the game of politics. He agreed, in his objective, dispassionate way, that there was in fact no other man in the party who could take his place in holding the different wings together and holding the country's interest. He proposed resignation at the opening of the session, but, not wholly loth, acceded to the loyal and unanimous desire of his followers to remain his followers still.

On October 10, the new ministry had been announced and duly sworn. At fifty-seven, after fifteen years in parliament and ten as leader of his party, Robert Laird Borden was now Prime Minister of Canada. He brought many admirable qualities to his high task. Personally upright, clean, and fair in political tactics, a serious and diligent student of the country's problems, a recognized constitutional authority, endowed with no little patience and persistence, he had the respect of all his countrymen. His party followers had more than once looked back with longing to the magnetism of Macdonald and the aggressiveness of Tupper, and had dallied with thoughts of the picturesque personality of Richard McBride, the robust, downright partisanship of Rodmond Roblin, the genial astuteness of Robert Rogers, but they had always come back to the solid worth of Robert Borden. A certain susceptibility to pressure was not unwelcome to his party lieutenants, but it was to prove the side of his endowment most questioned in other quarters in years that were to come.

In his cabinet-making, Mr. Borden, like other premiers, was limited by his materials, his past commitments and his own character. There was some thought of following the Laurier precedent by including the leading Conservative provincial

premiers. John D. Hazen of New Brunswick accepted a portfolio, but Sir James Whitney, Richard McBride and Rodmond Roblin declined. The public considered that men of standing in the party and in the country such as Herbert Ames, T. Chase Casgrain, Charles Magrath, Andrew Broder, and R. B. Bennett would be included, and Henri Bourassa, Sir Hugh Graham, and Sir William Van Horne had a place in many slates. The actual selection brought many surprises. There were few names of outstanding distinction. Mr. Foster gave to the government his splendid power of aggressive debate and to the country a lonely insistence, born of the hard times of the nineties, upon economy. The appointment of W. T. White, a former Liberal, one of Toronto's Eighteen, a man of wide culture and proved financial training, as Minister of Finance, was greeted with some growls from party stalwarts, but with distinct and increasing approval in the country. Mr. Monk, leader of the Quebec wing, had long experience and clear-cut convictions. For the rest, some were highly respectable, some were undoubtedly able, some were personal friends, and some had camped for days on the door-step of the prime minister elect.^[56] One most significant feature was that every one of the French-Canadian ministers was drawn from the Nationalist or Autonomist camp. The naming of the Quebec members had been delegated to Mr. Monk. Later, Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Lavergne revealed the fact that Mr. Monk had offered them portfolios. They declined, but gave their approval to the men who were chosen, Louis Pelletier, and Bruno Nantel, with Mr. Blondin as Deputy Speaker. Equally significant, in view of the later railway developments, was the obvious good fortune of the Canadian Northern in finding so many of its close friends in high places.

In the year that followed, Sir Wilfrid gave himself vigorously between sessions to the education of public opinion. In over a score of public meetings in Quebec and Ontario and at half a dozen political banquets and demonstrations, he defended his own policy and attacked Mr. Borden's. He called up all his reserves of strength and threw his old-time force into his addresses. "I am young yet in everything but the arithmetic of years," he told a Woodstock audience. "I don't feel ripe for heaven, and at all events I want another tussle with the Tories." "My orders are to fight," he told a great gathering at the Reform Club in Montreal. He attacked "the frail and puny faith" of those who had feared to risk their loyalty in friendly intercourse with their neighbours. "I accept the verdict, but the problem is still there. To the prairie provinces larger markets are an indispensable necessity. . . . We have lost our friends, power, popularity, but I regret nothing. We have sown the seed: we shall yet see it germinate." Mr. Foster's efforts to find markets in the West Indies while banging and bolting and barring the open door into the United States, he declared, was well as far as it went, but it did not go far: "The West asked for water and Mr. Foster handed them a thimbleful; they wanted a full meal and he gave them a peanut." He made much of the delay of his opponents in presenting their naval policy, after their perfervid insistence on the imminence of danger and the need of haste. "There are those who say to us," he declared at Sherbrooke, "Give up this naval policy,' but no, sir, I will not give it up. So long as I lead the Liberal party, so long will it do its duty by the nation and by the Empire."

There were not wanting friends who urged the abandonment of reciprocity and the movement for lower tariffs. A Toronto manufacturer, who had supported him vigorously in the contest, wrote now:

It seems to me that it is our policy to let the people know that this issue is now dead, and in future whatever fiscal changes may be necessary will be made independently of whatever the United States may do, and that any future Liberal government will, as your government has done, foster the growth and prosperity of manufacturing industries, by continuing a steady fiscal policy which shall at all times, afford them reasonable protection. If the Liberal party does not come out in the way I suggest and announce positively that neither reciprocity nor the tariff will be an issue in the future, I am afraid that every Liberal to-day who is directly or indirectly interested in manufacturing will be driven to the other side.

Sir Wilfrid replied:

Ottawa, October 24, [1911](#).

I hasten to offer you my thanks for yours of the 21st. instant, just received. I am really grateful that you should have exposed your views to me in so open and frank a manner.

I do not entirely agree with you in your summing up of the present situation, though there is one point upon which I altogether agree with you, and it is that "our manufactures have been organized under a system of protection which is to be maintained." I have made this declaration more than once during the last election. Unfortunately, the forces at work against us were stronger than any words of mine or of my colleagues and the manufacturers were convinced that this agreement with the United States, which in no way affects them, would be followed by another which would. In this their attitude was wrong and unfair to us. Whether in office or in opposition, my position upon this point remains the same. There might be some temptation to pay back in their own coin those who went against us, but this consideration must give way to the greater consideration of the needs of the country at large; our present system of levying the revenue by customs duties must be maintained.

I do not mean, however, to say by this that the policy of reciprocity in natural products is dead, as you seem to say it is. Your summarizing of the situation, that all the provinces except Alberta and Saskatchewan were against reciprocity, is not exactly accurate, for, in point of fact, we carried Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The anti-reciprocity men carried British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario, the latter by a sweeping majority, and Manitoba by a bare majority of the actual electoral vote, though a large majority of seats.

In my judgment, the manufacturers made a great mistake in refusing to give way to the very legitimate demand of the farmers, especially the Western farmers who, being balked in their effort to get the American market for their products, will now work for the free entrance into Canada of American manufactured products and especially agricultural implements.

At present there is nothing to do but to await events. If the Democrats carry out their policy and open their markets to our Canadian natural products, we shall never hear any more of reciprocity, but if the present American tariff is continued as it is now, we must be prepared for a serious agitation from the Western farmers. The danger of the situation is the possibility of a feeling of distrust between the West and the East, as outlined in the "Weyburn Herald." This fact has been completely overlooked by the Ontario electors, but it is one which must cause a good deal of concern to any one who has at heart the future of the country.

Let me, before I close, thank you most sincerely for the great support which you have given us in the last election. Had all our friends done likewise, the result would have been different from what it is. I believe that it was not only the question of reciprocity which operated against us, but that the *Ne Temere* decree and the Eucharistic Congress had a good deal to do with our downfall.

Believe me ever,
Yours very sincerely,
WILFRID LAURIER.

Three sessions of the new parliament were held before the outbreak of the Great War, from November, 1911, to April, 1912, from November, 1912, to June, 1913, and from January, 1914, to the following June. They were busy sessions and, after the first, contentious sessions. The government succeeded in enacting a very fair amount of progressive legislation, particularly the decennial revision of the Bank Act, provision for aiding the provinces in agricultural instruction, and a trade agreement with the British West Indies. The boundaries of Manitoba, and incidentally of Ontario and Quebec, were extended far northward to Hudson Bay, with some difficulty from Nationalist members who demanded, but without avail, that the separate school rights of the minority in a section of Keewatin now to be incorporated in Manitoba should be safeguarded by a special clause.

In some of its most important measures the government ran foul of the Senate. An unbroken series of party appointments had made the upper house overwhelmingly Liberal, and in spite of academic debates in the House on methods of Senate reform, and of a movement within the cabinet in 1910 which would have led in time to a moderate measure of reform in appointment and tenure of senators, nothing had been done to change the situation. Now the Borden government was forced to sit by while the Senate, in the first session, rejected or imposed unacceptable amendments upon its bills. The Senate rejected a measure granting a federal subsidy to Ontario's government-owned railway, the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario. It declined to sanction a permanent tariff commission unless provision was made, in the case of all applications for higher duties, for publicity as to numbers employed, production, hours of labour and rates of wages, shareholders, and dividends. It supported the Opposition's contention that a measure for granting aid to the provinces in building highways involved dangerous possibilities of political pressure and federal machines unless the division among the provinces was made automatic, in proportion to population. In the following session, it again rejected the highways proposal, insisted that a sweeping grant of power to purchase branch lines for the Intercolonial should be made contingent upon ratification by parliament, and filled the cup by its attitude toward the Naval Bill. For the moment, there was much muttering of mending or ending the Senate, with the Conservatives championing the rights of the people against this autocratic and unrepresentative chamber and the Liberals defending this bulwark of the nation's interests against hasty and partisan legislation, but soon time solved the problem in the usual way, with the death of Liberal senators and the unvarying appointment of Conservatives to take their place.

None of these measures was of dominating interest. It was the new government's naval policy, its fiscal policy in face of business depression, and its railway policy that held the centre of the political stage. Mr. Borden's most pressing task was the shaping of a naval policy. He had insisted in January, 1910, that the Empire faced an emergency which might rend it asunder, that the war, the war of construction, had already begun; "all beyond is chaos and darkness"; "immediate, vigorous, earnest action is necessary." Yet in the election of 1911 he had been discreetly silent. In power, he was still more cautious. "It is infinitely better to be right than to be in a hurry," he told parliament in its first session. Month after month went by and no policy was determined. The Naval Service Act of 1910 was not repealed, but no contracts were let for construction, and recruiting for the cadet ships was halted. Mr. Borden stated early in 1912 that the policy of the Laurier government would not be continued, but that no alternative policy would be determined until after consultation with the British Admiralty and after full consideration of the problem of securing a share in the councils of the Empire. In the summer of 1912, accompanied by Messrs. Hazen, Doherty, and Pelletier, he visited England and consulted the Asquith government. In December, 1912, fifteen months after his accession to power, the prime minister announced his policy to the Canadian parliament.

Well before the government acted, it was plain in what direction it was tending. Factors in Canada and Great Britain

were making strongly for the abandonment of the policy of a Canadian navy and Canadian autonomy in foreign policy, and the adoption of a policy of contributions to the British navy, with the assumption by Canada of a more or less real share in Britain's foreign policy. Mr. Borden's personal opinions had been marked by the current combination of national and imperial sentiment. Until 1910, the national tendency was distinctly stronger. Since that time, pressure from his ultra-imperialist lieutenants, the influence of English missionaries, the anti-American incidents of the reciprocity campaign, the imminence of military peril, and the necessity of uniting the two wings of his party had given the imperial tendency the upper hand. When the premier reached England in July, he had already decided on the main lines of his policy. "The sea defences of the Empire can best be secured by one navy"; "we are determined to take our share in the world-wide mission of the Empire"; "Canada does not propose to be an adjunct even of the British Empire," were the keynotes of his first public addresses. Before he left England he declared that "the supremacy of the seas must be maintained by one navy . . . under one central control and direction." The month in England, the review of the mighty fleet, with its impressive five miles of towering battle-ships, darting destroyers, snaky submarines, and hovering aëroplanes, the visits to the British steel works, the discussions in the Imperial Defence Committee, the ducal banquets and royal garden parties had all tended to confirm his decision. Finding Mr. Borden thus amenable, the Admiralty under Mr. Winston Churchill's impetuous direction had repented of its half-hearted conversion to the policy of Dominion navies, and had leaped at the chance to re-establish its ideal of a single navy under its own control. As recently as May, Mr. Churchill had declared that

if the main development of the last ten years has been the concentration of the British fleet in decisive theatres, it seems to me not unlikely that the main naval development of the next ten years will be the growth of effective naval forces in the great Dominions over seas.... The fact that our fleet has not only concentrated in the decisive theatre of European waters, but must be kept concentrated and in a certain sense tied to that theatre has been for some years creating a new situation, a new need, a new opportunity for the great self-governing Dominions of the Crown.

Yet this had apparently been an outcome of expediency rather than conviction, as two months earlier he had stated in the House that in the Admiralty view additions to the imperial navy were more effectual than local navies. Now, with the senior Dominion apparently ready to recant, Mr. Churchill seized the opportunity and for two years strained every nerve in the endeavour to surround the Admiralty with a humble circle of tribute-bearers from the seven seas.

In presenting his policy to parliament, Mr. Borden quoted a memorandum prepared at his request by the Admiralty, which concluded a review of the naval situation by the statement:

The Prime Minister of the Dominion having inquired in what form any immediate aid that Canada might give would be most effective, we have no hesitation in answering, after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances, that it is desirable that such aid should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply.

Mr. Borden went on to declare that Canadians were joint trustees for the security of a vast heritage; this heritage was now threatened. To meet the emergency, the government asked parliament to vote \$35,000,000 to build the three most powerful battle-ships in the world, to be incorporated in the imperial navy. A system of regular and periodical contributions would not be a satisfactory solution of the permanent question, and it was arranged that if in future it should be decided to establish "a Canadian unit of the British Navy," the three ships could be recalled. As to the form of the permanent naval policy, he did not commit himself, but his own drift was clear from his statement that Canada could not build up any efficient naval organization in a quarter or half a century, and even then it would be a poor, weak substitute for the splendid organization of the British Admiralty. Pending the working out of a permanent policy of defence and the provision for a voice in the foreign policy of the Empire which must go with any definite share in Empire burdens, it had been arranged that all meetings of the Imperial Defence Committee would be open to a Canadian minister stationed in London, and that "no important step in foreign policy would be undertaken without consultation with such a representative of Canada."

Sir Wilfrid commented briefly, expressing his pleasure at learning that there was no real emergency in Europe, but simply the usual tendency towards excessive armament. On the following day a Liberal caucus decided, without a dissenting voice, to oppose the contribution policy and to reiterate the demand for a Canadian navy on a somewhat larger scale than contemplated in 1910. When debate was resumed on December 12, Sir Wilfrid led the attack. He referred lightly to the failure of Mr. Borden to adhere to the agreement of 1909, and to the divergencies in the two wings of his party, but he did not dwell on these points: he would confine himself to the merits of the present proposal, and not add a word which would fan the flames that had been kindled. Canada had a duty to face: "We have to take our share in the defence, not only of our native shores, but of the Empire as a whole." He could not agree with the Nationalists, who had opposed action because of the sacrifice of Canadian interests by British diplomacy in the past; those mistakes only proved the necessity of local control of local interests. Nor could he agree with them in proposing to rely on the Monroe

doctrine; Cuba with its foreign policy controlled by the United States was the answer to that suggestion. But on what lines should action be taken? Deftly, Sir Wilfrid proceeded to make clear how, on the evidence presented by the Admiralty itself, there was no naval emergency in the North Sea and that its policy of North Sea concentration made it imperative for the Dominions also to guard their local waters:

There was an apprehension far and wide-spread that, somehow, somewhere, some mysterious danger was threatening England. And, indeed, some went so far as to say that England was on her knees, begging for support,—an assertion which surely was more calculated to wound the pride of those to whom it was addressed than to create respect for those who uttered it. All these apprehensions, however, have been removed by the document which has been placed on the table of the House by my right honourable friend. England is always England; she bows the knee to no one; she asks no favour from anybody; she does not come here as a suppliant, still less as a mendicant; but, to the enquiry of our ministers, she answered: Here are the facts set forth in this paper; judge for yourselves and act as you please. This is the language, and it is no other than we might expect from English statesmen and English people.

Sir, in other respects there is cause for rejoicing. This document shows that there is no emergency, that England is in no danger, whether imminent or prospective. But the document discloses a condition of things of which we knew, but upon which has now been placed the sanction of official correspondence. It shows that there has been going on in Europe for some years past a certain movement to which we cannot be indifferent. The armament of the great powers has compelled England to alter the strategic lines which hitherto have been essential to her security. The document discloses the fact that, on account of this increased naval armament, England, in order to maintain her security in her own waters, has been obliged to withdraw some of her naval forces from the distant seas. . . .

Such is the condition; and I ask once more what is the remedy? In our humble judgment, the remedy is this, that wherever, in the distant seas or in the distant countries,—in Australia, Canada, or elsewhere,—a British ship has been removed to allow of concentration in European waters, that ship should be replaced by a ship built, maintained, equipped and manned by the young nation immediately concerned. If the young nations of the Empire take hold of the equipment and manning of ships to look after the distant seas, concentration can easily take place in the waters of Europe, and the British Admiralty knows what zones it has to defend. This is the Australian policy; this ought to be the Canadian policy. I insist once more upon what is stated in the memorandum: There is no emergency, there is no immediate danger, there is no prospective danger. If there were an emergency, if England were in danger—no, I will not use that expression; I will not say if England were in danger, but simply if England were on trial with one or two or more of the great powers of Europe, my right honourable friend might come and ask, not \$35,000,000, but twice, three times, four times \$35,000,000. We would put at the disposal of England all the resources of Canada; there would not be a single dissentient voice.

But this is not the condition with which we have to deal. The condition that we have to deal with to-day is simply what I described a moment ago. This is not new. The memorandum which my right honourable friend submitted the other day disclosed nothing which we did not know before. Every word that is there we knew; every figure we knew. I may say more: every word, every figure in that memorandum we discussed four years ago. We discussed it in the month of March, [1909](#); and then we came to the conclusion, the unanimous conclusion, that the best method of helping England, of discharging our duty, was not by contribution, but by the creation of a Canadian navy. . . .

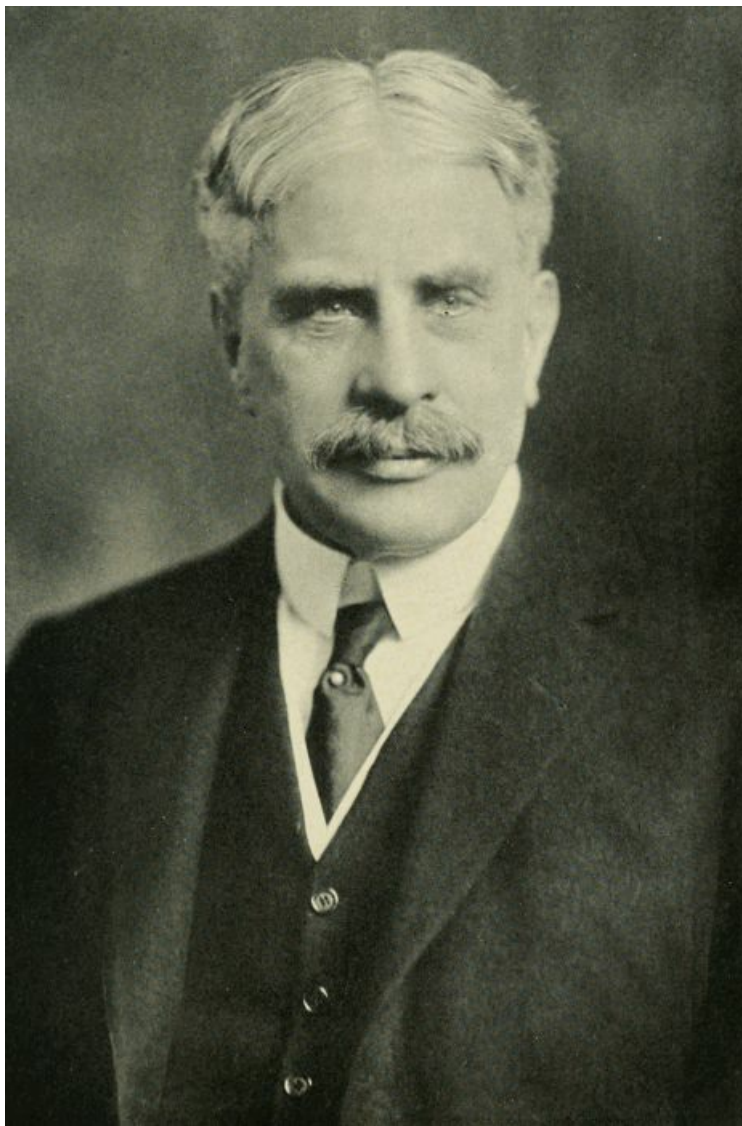
Four years ago, my right honourable friend said we must and will. To-day he no longer says we must and will; but we on this side of the House continue to say we must and will. Now, sir, I ask, why is it that my right honourable friend and his first lieutenant, the leaders of the Opposition then, who to-day have the responsibility of office, will not go on with the policy so forcibly put forward by them, instead of a policy under which, in the language of my right honourable friend, there will be no preparation of the soil or beginning or growth of the product of defence? The reason, sir, is not far to seek. The reason is well known: there is one and only one and it is because this subject of imperial defence has been made the subject of contentious politics. It is the result of the alliance, the unholy alliance, which has been formed by the honourable gentlemen opposite. . . .

What is this contribution that we have to-day before us, and upon which we are asked to vote? It is big in money; it is big in figures. Is it as big otherwise as it ought to be? I ask every honourable member of this House; I ask every honourable gentleman sitting there: You give England two or three dreadnoughts, to be paid for by Canada, but to be equipped, maintained and manned by England. Did I say manned by England? I must qualify that statement. In justice to my right honourable friend, I must qualify that statement; because he told us that he had secured from the imperial authorities the privilege of having Canadian officers serve on those ships. Oh, ye Tory jingoes, is that the amount of the sacrifice you are prepared to make? You are ready to furnish admirals, rear-admirals, commodores, captains, officers of all grades, plumes, feathers, and gold lace; but you leave it to England to supply the bone and sinews on board those ships. You say that these ships shall bear Canadian names. That will be the only thing Canadian about them. You hire somebody to do your work; in other words, you are ready to do anything except the fighting. Is that, sir, the true policy?

[Some honourable members: No. No!]

Is that the true policy? It is a hybrid policy, it is a cross between jingoism and nationalism. Unless I mistake the spirit of the Canadian people, if they are true to their ideals, if they are true to their own blood, no matter to what province they belong, they will not be satisfied with this hybrid policy, but they will insist that their contribution shall be a contribution of money and of men as well, as was provided in our resolution of 1909. . . .

But I may be told that is not the policy recommended by the Admiralty to the prime minister. Sir, I deny that altogether. My right honourable friend did not go to England to consult the Admiralty about a policy. It is evident that when my right honourable friend went to England, he had abandoned the policy of a Canadian navy. He went to England—it is very clear from the last paragraph of the memorandum—to ask what they would accept for immediate aid. In other words, he went to England to ask what England would accept in the case of an emergency, although there was no emergency.



SIR ROBERT BORDEN

Prime Minister of Canada, [1911-1920](#)

It had been said that a Canadian navy was a separatist navy. As to that, he would not discuss every opinion he had held at twenty or even at forty; he had learned something from observation and experience: "Any thought of separation from Great Britain, if any such thought exists anywhere, and I do not believe it does, would be a folly and a crime." Canada would be at war when England was at war, but would herself decide as to whether her forces would take part in the conflict. The government's proposals settled nothing:

The problem which you have to deal with is one which demands a permanent policy, a policy for to-day, for to-morrow, and for every day, so long as the armaments grow in Europe; and the duty which you owe to yourselves, to Canada, and to the Empire, is the enactment of a permanent policy. As regards the creation of a Canadian navy, you have apparently decided against that. In respect to contribution, does any one imagine that you will have only one contribution? Contributions must be recurring and again recurring, and, in the words of my honourable friend from North Toronto, they leave no trace behind them. As I understand from the speech of my honourable friend, he does not want to have a permanent policy on this subject, because he says, "Before we have a permanent policy we must have a voice in all questions of peace or war." . . .

Whether we shall or shall not have a voice in all questions affecting peace and war is a very large proposition, and I would not, at the present time, pronounce finally upon it; but there are certain objections that present themselves at once to my mind. The diplomatic service of England is carried on by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and it is to-day in as good hands as it ever was. These transactions are very minute, very serious, and sometimes must be carried on with great secrecy. I understand that my right honourable friend proposes to the English Admiralty that there should be a representative of the Canadian government all the time in England to confer with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on all questions on which war may probably arise. If this is done for Canada, it must be done for Australia, for New Zealand, for South Africa, and for Newfoundland, and I doubt very much if the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would receive much assistance from such a multitude of advisers. Supposing they do not agree, or supposing they do agree, how can we pretend to dictate in these matters, or even to take part? The

Foreign Office, only last year, had to deal with the question of the division of Persia. Are we to understand that Canada and all the other Dominions would be invited to discuss such a question with the Foreign Office?

A few years ago, the Afghan boundary question was a burning question with the Foreign Office. Of late years, it has been put in the background by the fact that Russia has not been in a position to be aggressive. But that question may be revived. Within the last year, when the German Emperor sent warships to Agadir, the Foreign Office had to take immediate action upon the question whether Germany should be allowed a footing in North Africa. Would the Dominion of Canada also be interested in and be consulted upon this question? If so, it seems to me that this is opening a door to consequences which must be carefully considered before any action is taken. I do not wish to condemn the view taken by the right honourable gentleman; I do not now approve or condemn it; the subject is too new. But the point upon which I appeal to him, and to which I ask the attention of the House, is this, that we cannot postpone our preparation for defence until this question is settled. It may take a long time to settle it. Therefore, let it be settled by itself; but, in the meantime, let our preparations go on.

My right honourable friend concluded the argumentative part of his speech with the statement that, in claiming for the overseas Dominions the power to have a voice in all questions of peace and war, he was inviting the attention of the statesmen of Great Britain "to the real problem of imperial existence." I think it would be difficult for my right honourable friend, or any body else, to convince us that the existence of the British Empire rests upon so slender a thread. We have been accustomed to believe, and we will continue to believe, that it rests upon a firmer basis. Sir, I am not indifferent—far from it—to anything that concerns the unity of the British Empire. This agglomeration of continents under the British Crown has something in it which strikes the imagination, something which has always had, at all events for me, a great attraction. But I have always believed, and will continue to believe, that the firm basis of the British Empire is, next to the British Crown, the local autonomy of the different dependencies; that is to say, their working out of their own destinies to the central end of the Empire. The Crown is the great bond, the cement, which binds together the scattered continents over the whole world. The Crown is a purely sentimental bond; but that bond, though purely sentimental, has proven itself stronger than armies and navies; has shown itself to be equal to all occasions. I do not believe the Empire is in danger; I do not believe it can be cemented by the means suggested by my right honourable friend. I believe the relations of the different parts of the Empire to the mother country are not perfect, but that essentially they are perfectible. You can discuss problems of improvement; there is no occasion to discuss problems of existence.

Sir Wilfrid concluded by moving in amendment the construction of two fleet units, to be stationed on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, under the terms of the Naval Service Act of 1910.

With these beginnings, the debate ran long and ranged far. Government speakers attacked the two-fleet-units policy as expensive, useless, separatist. Why, if there was no emergency, expand a programme of \$11,000,000 in 1910 to a programme of, say, \$50,000,000 in 1912? "We pay for the policing of our towns, why not pay the greatest policeman in the world, the British navy?" The danger from Germany was imminent and serious. Canada owed Britain hundreds of millions for past expenditures on her defence. Liberal speakers made light of the emergency. Britain did not know it existed; the panic of 1909 had passed; two general elections had been fought, not on the navy, but on land taxes and the veto of the Lords; in the past summer Mr. Churchill had declared that there was no cause for alarm, the government was absolutely confident in the adequacy of its programme; Lord Crewe, said, "We consider the security of the country is achieved" and that "any premature building, any splash of a programme before the ships are needed, would defeat our own ends"; Mr. Asquith, that there was not the least occasion for panic: "There never has been a moment and there is not now when we have not been overwhelmingly superior against any combination which can reasonably be anticipated"; Mr. Balfour, that "the fleets of the triple entente are not inadequate now and are not going to be inadequate to any strain that is going to be placed upon them"; and Mr. Bonar Law: "Do any of us really believe that there is danger, any vital danger? I confess that I have the greatest difficulty in believing it myself." Mr. Borden had denied that he stood for permanent contributions, and yet all his arguments ran that way. With no emergency, and with Mr. Borden deprecating Canada's ever starting a navy of her own, the excuse for separating immediate from permanent policy became a shallow pretence to meet the real emergency—the exigencies of the Conservative-Nationalist alliance. Canada could build ships, could sail them, could fight them; one thing she could not do, pay tribute.

The debate differed from that of two years earlier in the greater consideration given to the control of foreign policy. Roughly speaking, there were three attitudes. The Nationalists, who had first raised the question, declared that Canada should do nothing in the way of imperial defence since she did not have any voice in imperial policy. The Conservatives made important variations: Canada should do nothing in the way of a permanent policy of imperial defence until she had a voice in imperial policy. "We say," declared Mr. Borden on February 27, "that if we are to remain an Empire we cannot have five foreign policies and five separate navies. We say, a just voice of all the Dominions in foreign policy and the concerns of the Empire and a united Empire to face every peril." The Liberal position, taking shape slowly and without complete and systematic exposition, was that Canada should decide her own policy in imperial and foreign matters and make and control her defence accordingly. There was no one foreign policy; each Dominion was coming, like Great Britain, to have separate interests, distinct relations, foreign policies of its own. To abandon the control over its own interests in order to become involved in the policies designed primarily to advance the interests of other parts of the Empire was dubious wisdom. "Five foreign policies and five separate navies," policies co-ordinated by conference of friendly allies, was in fact the direction in which Liberal opinion was tending. "The only voice we can have," Sir

Wilfrid replied to Mr. Borden, "must be under the control of the Canadian parliament, the Canadian government, the Canadian people." Or, in the more explicit words of Mr. Béland: "I do not believe that the people of this country want to share in the foreign policy of Great Britain. . . . At this hour of our history, when we possess the undisputed privilege of making our own treaties, when this parliament is in the possession of the undisputed direction of its military forces; when we have the assurance from the British government that no question affecting our Dominions shall be settled without the consent of the Canadian parliament; when the time has come that our coasts are uncovered by the withdrawal of the British squadrons and we are confronted with the manifest duty of supplying the protection the mother country can no longer extend to us; at this time we are told we must ascend to a place in the temple where the destinies of Europe are decided. Canada is to embark upon the whirlpool of European politics. This movement, I claim, is a retrograde movement. The status of Canada is that of a sister nation and not that of a daughter nation."

All that could be said was soon said, but the debate went on. Fresh fire was given it by two extraordinary communications from Winston Churchill written in January in response to requests from Mr. Borden for ammunition. Mr. Churchill demonstrated that Canadians could not build battle-ships, that they could not and Britain would not man their cruisers, and that they could not maintain a navy in efficiency. His naïvely frank argument for the perpetual use of British rather than Canadian shipyards and for permanent Admiralty control—"the most irritating document from authority in Britain since the days of Lord North," Mr. Emmerson termed it—was followed in March by an attempt to influence Canadian opinion and predetermine Dominion policy by announcing an Admiralty plan for an imperial squadron of five Dominion dreadnought cruisers, based on Gibraltar. His action intensified national feeling in Canada and stiffened Liberal resistance to the Borden measure. Amendment after amendment was made, only to be voted down. Every naval commander from Noah to Nelson was quoted and quoted again. Conservatives ceased to speak and Liberals spoke double time. Tempers rose, interruption was frequent, the Speaker "named" members, and still little progress was made with the bill. Finally, the government decided to force the bill through under closure.

On April 9, Mr. Borden moved the adoption of rules of closure. By sharp strategy, debate on this proposal itself was limited. Sir Wilfrid, stirred for once into indignation and hot cries of "shame!" was prevented from moving an amendment, and the new rules of procedure were jammed through. There was much to be said for reform in procedure and for the right of the responsible majority to carry its measures through, as of late years parliament in many countries had concluded, but particularly in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's eyes the case for freedom of debate was still stronger:

We have heard it stated that these rules are antiquated. I do not admit that at all. These rules are not antiquated. They were not made for a day or for a period; they were made for the ages. It can be said of them, as has been said of the maxims of civil law which have come to us from the Roman jurists, and which are the basis of the civil law of most of the nations of Europe, that they are reason crystallized into writing. The maxims of the civil law have been applied to the relations of the people in civil life, and the maxims of our parliamentary procedure have been accepted as the basis of the transaction of business in all deliberative assemblies.

Sir, these rules are to be swept away, they are to be ridden over roughshod; they are to be put aside, and we are to have the gag substituted for them. And what is the pretence? The pretence is that there has been obstruction in the House. . . . My right honourable friend has quoted the opinions of some friends of myself in favour of closure. But, sir, I also have the honour to belong to the great Liberal party of Canada. I have occupied a position of some importance in it; nay, I may say that for twenty years and more I have been entrusted with its chief command. During the fifteen years I was in office it sometimes happened that friends came to me and told me that I was not doing justice to myself and to the party, but that I should impose closure, as had been done in many other parliaments. Sir, I am a Liberal of the old school; I have been brought up in the school of Fox and of the old leaders of the Liberal party; and I could not bring myself to the point of depriving a minority in parliament of such a valuable weapon as it would be deprived of by the introduction of closure. Perhaps I was wrong; perhaps I was too generous. Nay, I was not; I would rather stand here to-day, having refused, during the fifteen years of my administration, to impose closure, and having decided to abide by the old rules. . . . As I have said, there are some occasions on which there is a cleavage between the majority and the minority, and then there is an easy remedy, an easy solution. The remedy is not closure; it is not the application of brute force. The remedy is an appeal to the people. The people, after all, are the judge and the jury. The people, after all, are the parties to pass judgment as between the government and the Opposition, as between the majority and the minority; and, Sir, the least I would have expected on such an occasion as this was that the government of the day would have adopted that remedy, and not have resorted to closure. . . .

My right honourable friend stated, not to-day but the last time when he spoke upon that question, that the remedy which I suggested was absurd, because, he said, if upon every occasion upon which there was obstruction the government were obliged to go to the country we might every year have a general election. Let me tell my right honourable friend that there is no sense in such an objection, because obstruction cannot be of any avail unless it is backed up by a strong expression of public opinion, and unless it be on some most important question. If there were at any time in this House a political party so oblivious to the respect it owes to itself and to the country as to obstruct upon a trivial question, that party would lose all the confidence it might have in the country and any chance of ever again creating an impression upon the people. But, sir, there is a better reason than that. When we come to discuss these constitutional questions, these questions of public policy, the best authority after all is the authority of history. Confederation will have been in existence forty-six years next July, and how many times has there been obstruction during these last forty-five years? Just four times before this year. Let me recall them. There was obstruction in 1885, in 1896, in 1908, and in 1911, and after I have mentioned the causes for the obstruction on these several occasions, I shall have furnished the most complete justification for the attitude we have taken upon the present occasion. . . . The other occasion on which there was obstruction was in 1911. . . . We introduced the reciprocity measure on the twenty-sixth of January, and on the twenty-ninth of July we had not yet been able to obtain even a preliminary vote

upon it. We had been met at every step by obstruction from the Conservatives, then in opposition; dilatory motions of every kind were made, speech after speech was delivered day in and day out, even in the dog days of summer. I did not complain; I did not whine. Two courses were open to me. I could have done as is done to-day by the prime minister; I could have introduced the closure and said that we must carry on the business of the government and that consistently with our dignity, we could not allow obstruction. But there was another course open to me and that was an appeal to the people; and I advised my colleagues to give the honourable gentlemen of the Opposition the opportunity of appealing to the people. We appealed to the people and we were defeated. Heaven is my witness that I would rather stand here to-day, defeated and in opposition by that appeal to the people, than stand over there in office by the power of the gag. . . .

Let me repeat to my right honourable friend: As you sow, so shall you reap; as you are fair, so shall you meet with fairness; as you are unjust, so shall you meet with injustice. . . . The poison that he offers to us to-day will come to his own lips at some future day. We are in the minority; we can be gagged; we can be prevented from expressing our opinions; they can trample upon our rights; Sir, the day of reckoning will come, and it will come as soon as we have a dissolution of the present parliament.

With the closure in force, the Naval Bill received its third reading, on a vote of 101 to 68, all the Nationalists but four and one Liberal, Colonel Maclean, voting with the government. Even yet it had not reached port; it had still to navigate the Senate. Government supporters could not believe that the Senate majority would be so unpatriotic, so reckless, so bent on suicide, as to reject the measure. And was not Sir George Ross, leader of the Senate since Sir Richard Cartwright's death the previous year, an Imperialist of Imperialists? Had he not opposed reciprocity and waved the British flag unceasingly? It was true that Sir George Ross in the eyes of many Liberals was more responsible than any other for the weakening of the old Ontario Liberal fibre, through his own practice and his persistent advocacy of the policy of catering to the prejudices of imperialist Toronto instead of fighting and educating it, but he now made amends. The government's bill, he declared, was "empty as an exploded cartridge, soulless as its plated sides." It sent empty ships, not men, to fight; it made no appeal to national sentiment; it made for cleavage, not for unity. Threats had been made that the will of the people must prevail: very well, let the people decide. Weakened by the illness which was to bring the end a year later, Sir George concluded an address of strained but stirring eloquence by moving in the precise words Mr. Borden had used in 1910, "that this House is not justified in giving its assent to this bill until it is submitted to the judgment of the country." Three days later the amendment was adopted by a vote of 51 to 27, one Liberal siding with the government.

The Naval Bill was killed. There was much gnashing of teeth and threat of vengeance, but nothing followed. For all the lightning flashes and the booming thunder, Mr. Borden took no step towards averting the "emergency." Sir George Ross had offered to vote the full \$35,000,000 if spent on building vessels under the Act of 1910, but his offer was not heeded. Mr. Borden himself had threatened to go to the country if the bill was blocked, but faith in the reality of the emergency or in the country's attitude did not prove strong enough when the test came. In the two years that followed before war broke out, the Naval Service Act remained on the statute-book, the training-ships were maintained in half-hearted fashion, but no single step was taken in Canada to provide defence at sea. Mr. Churchill, who had previously declared that the British programme was ample and that the Canadian ships were supplementary, now stated that the "gap would have to be filled," and three British ships accelerated: whereupon Mr. Borden added that the Canadian government would at some later date take these ships over. Meanwhile Australia, realizing that there was a Pacific as well as a North Sea and protesting against Canada's "tearing up the 1909 agreement," pressed steadily on with its own fleet, and even New Zealand, the model colony, pronounced in favour of an Australasian-Canadian fleet unit in the Pacific. Canadian Liberalism and Australian Nationalism had stood firm, and the policy of contribution had met enduring defeat.

One reason why the government was unable to arouse any substantial agitation against the Senate's action lay in the financial depression which had now fallen upon the country. In 1909 a Liberal member had reported that the West was too eager about box-cars to care about battle-ships; now West and East were too much preoccupied with mortgages and margins to care greatly about Borden-Pelletier dreadnoughts, or, for that matter, about Laurier fleet units. The long swing of prosperity which had begun in 1896 and had halted only for a moment in 1907, had now come to its end. Construction halted, credits tightened, British funds dried up, factories slowed down, stock prices sagged, land values collapsed, unemployment mounted. The world over, the strain on credit imposed by Balkan wars and wars of armament, and the reaction from the speculative activity of the past dozen years, had forced a slowing up of trade and industry. In Canada, the crisis was the more severe because of the heights to which speculation had soared. There had been a very great measure of genuine and permanent advance in the country's productive capacity, but there had also been much premature, much misdirected, much parasitic activity. Too great a proportion of money and energy had gone into long-time capital expenditures, railways, municipal enterprises, and not enough into immediate production. Subdivision prices had soared, but farm production had fallen. Now the accounting had come.

The sudden shift in the business outlook did not become a direct parliamentary issue, but it influenced the whole trend of

public affairs. Naturally the Liberals did not hesitate to contrast Laurier prosperity with Borden depression. More legitimately, they criticized the government for increasing ordinary expenditure ten to fifteen million a year in the face of signs of falling revenue. But it was the halt in railway-construction that chiefly entered into party debate.

An extraordinary era of railway building was approaching the end. By 1914 there were more than thirty thousand miles of road in operation, with some eight to ten thousand more in various stages of completion: Canada ranked fifth among the world's countries in total mileage and easily first in mileage in proportion to population. While mileage had grown by two-thirds since 1901, train miles had doubled, freight carried trebled, and gross earnings more than trebled. East and West had been bound by triple links of steel. The vast Northern hinterlands of central Canada had been opened up. The prairies had been covered by a network of main and branch lines. The roads had been built when capital was abundant and cheap. So far as direct outlays were concerned, the federal government had financed the payments out of surplus revenue, without adding to the debt. But there was another side now revealed. Much of the building had been without foresight, without study, without plan. Local pressure and promoters' lobbying had determined policy. There was much premature building, much duplication, much unsound financing, much political corruption. No one political party was responsible for the mistakes that were made. Politicians were no more responsible than the public at large. Municipalities were as sanguine in their street-railway and sidewalk building as the Dominion in its transcontinental programmes. Bankers, manufacturers, merchants, Western farmers, investors and speculators, from end to end of the country, all shared the same fever, all were trying to discount at once a generation's visioned advance.

The railway policy of both the Laurier and Borden régimes centred about the attempt of two railways, the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Northern, to expand to transcontinental dimensions. Both railways sought to achieve their aims mainly through state aid, and both failed to provide an independent and substantial shareholder interest. The result in both cases was a lack of responsibility in boom days, a lack of reserve support in days of depression. Both roads were hampered by the sharp rise in prices and construction costs, and the growing tightness of money as their plans approached, but could not quite reach, completion.

The Grand Trunk project was crippled, as it had been crippled for sixty years, by absentee control: before leaving office, Sir Wilfrid Laurier had arranged to bring in legislation requiring the Grand Trunk and the Grand Trunk Pacific to transfer their headquarters to Canada. It was still further hit by the death of the dominating force, Charles M. Hays, in the *Titanic* disaster, and by quarrels and extravagance among his Napoleonic understudies. The cost of the construction of both the Grand Trunk Pacific and the National Transcontinental soared a hundred million above the estimates. No evidence was produced that the cost of the government section was swollen by corruption; charges of collusion with contractors made against the commissioners in charge, in 1908, by a district engineer, Major Hodgins, were not proved and were withdrawn, and a raking investigation by a strong Conservative partisan and a Canadian Pacific engineer in 1912 found no evidence of graft, though waste in unduly high standards of construction was asserted. It could be urged that the policy of Mr. Hays in insisting upon the lowest grades, the fewest curves, the finest road-bed on the continent, in the expectation that lower operating costs would more than offset higher capital charges, did not take sufficient account of the long time required to build up full traffic, and it was also clear that the division of responsibility between the government and the company did not make for economy and efficiency.

The Canadian Northern project was marked by the simplicity of all works of genius. It was merely to have the public build a transcontinental railway with all the usual steamship, express, hotel, and land-company attachments, and yet to vest ownership wholly in two promoters who put into it little but their ambition. Two Ontario boys who had gone from school-teaching and lumbering into railway contracting had discovered in the West their own capacities and the country's opportunities. William Mackenzie, master planner and financial wizard, Donald Mann, as forceful in rounding up a lobbyful of politicians as in driving a section gang, joined by Zebulon Lash, the subtlest framer of strictly legal clauses and financial expedients in Canada's annals, planned and worked for a score of years and saw a little hundred-mile Manitoba road, running from nowhere to nowhere, all but reach by 1914 to both oceans and ten thousand miles. Throughout, absolute ownership and control was kept in their own hands by the most intricate and bewildering corporate financing Canada had yet seen, the chartering of a score of separate but related companies, the purchase or lease of a score of old companies, the organization of trust companies, construction companies, express companies, equipment companies, the issue of perpetual consolidated debenture stock, income-charge convertible debenture stock, land-mortgage debentures, first-mortgage bonds and income bonds, division bonds and terminal bonds, secured notes and collateral notes. It was a project with more than the usual interweaving of good and evil in conception and execution. The planning was constructive, the strategy in the selection of routes in the early years admirable, the service rendered

the prairie country of immense value. The financing was radically unsound in its lack of share capital to tide over a waiting time. The reliance upon the public treasury for guaranties, subsidies, loans, brought into Canadian politics the most corrupting single factor in Confederation times, apparent in campaign contributions, advance information as to location and land deals, or free passes for members and their families, the buying of newspapers,—the whole "long trail," in Mr. Bennett's phrase, "of parliamentary corruption, of lobbying, of degradation of parliamentary institutions, of the lowering of the morals of public life." No little of the decline of the Liberal party from its original ideals, no little of its overthrow of 1911, no little of the demoralization of the Borden cabinet, no little of the Union movement in 1917, can be traced directly to the manœuvres and exigencies of Mackenzie and Mann or of those who saw gain in their profit or in their emergencies.

Aside from the initial failure to compel the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Northern to unite if they wished state aid in their transcontinental schemes,—and even in this Laurier had evidenced rare foresight—the Liberal government's policy down to 1911 stood the test of time. Aid through bond guaranties was given freely, but restricted to the Western country, where new roads were needed and were immediately revenue-producing. Then on the eve of the 1911 election came a guaranty to the central link in the transcontinental plan, the road from Port Arthur to Montreal, voted casually by the government forces, questioned perfunctorily by the Opposition, passed without a division and with an eye on campaign chests. The Laurier government, however, did decline to have any share in the still more unnecessary and more extravagant extension through British Columbia to the coast. On coming to power the Borden government proved still more generous than its predecessor. It granted a cash subsidy to the British Columbia extension, to which the McBride government had already voted lavish and reckless millions. In 1913 it voted a cash subsidy of \$15,640,000 on the distinct understanding that this would make it possible to complete the road, and in return for the transfer of \$7,000,000 of the company's stock. The stock was simply run off the engraver's plates, and next session a demand came for a loan of \$45,000,000 as a positively final appeal.

The crisis in the fortunes of the Canadian Northern led to a crisis in the fortunes of the Borden government. The government hesitated to grant further aid in the face of falling revenues, broken promises, and public suspicion. Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Mann—for the last seal of success had now been set upon them—camped at Ottawa; the bankers with millions tied up in loans against unsold securities, the supply companies with notes unpaid, the sub-contractors with unmet claims, the lesser federal politicians with favours in their pockets, the provincial premiers anxious to avert their own guaranties coming home to roost, strongly backed their demands. There was some question of the Canadian Pacific coming to the rescue, but its price was too high. Finally the government yielded. Mr. Arthur Meighen, a young Western lawyer, whose high gift of keen analysis and untiring industry, backed by a judicious mingling of party usefulness and open independence, had brought him into the ministry as solicitor-general a year before, drew up and defended, with hard and sure power, in caucus and in parliament, a measure of relief. In return for a guarantee of \$45,000,000, the government was to take a mortgage on company assets and receive an additional \$33,000,000 of the common stock of the parent company, set therewith at \$100,000,000.

On May 13, [1914](#), the prime minister moved the adoption of the resolutions. The road could not be left half-finished; it could not be allowed to go into liquidation; the promoters had not received any profit or compensation for their years of service other than the common stock; if the assistance given failed to complete the road, provision was made for summary seizure. Sir Wilfrid followed. He declared that he had long believed that Canada required three transcontinental railways, and believed so still. He had favoured aid to Mackenzie and Mann projects down to the ill-conceived British Columbia section. He agreed that the enterprise could not be allowed to fail, yet he could not agree to the proposed resolutions. They gave no assurance that past liabilities or future needs would be met. The subsidiary companies were not amalgamated. The security was illusory: "Does any one on the other side of the House believe that a mortgage on top of that mortgage for three hundred and twelve million dollars is worth a great deal to Canada? Why, if we undertook to execute our rights under that mortgage we ourselves would simply have to provide for the payment of this three hundred and twelve million dollars. That is the consequence of the mortgage we are taking now and it is the clearest part of it." Why take forty per cent. of the stock? "My right honourable friend says that we are to go into partnership with Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann and the Canadian Northern Railway. . . . That being so, is it unreasonable to ask that in that partnership we should be the leading and not the junior partner?" He concluded:

I said a moment ago, and I repeat, that this enterprise must go on. It has been conceived for the benefit of the Canadian people. We require this railway. My right honourable friend said we would not let it go into liquidation. It must not go into liquidation, but we should have the control of it. Since we must go into partnership with the Canadian Northern Railway, let us see that we are the master, not the servant. Let the agreement be modified; let the resolution be modified. But, sir, as they stand at the present time, they are not conceived for the benefit of the Canadian people; they are conceived altogether for the benefit of the firm of Mackenzie and Mann and of the Canadian Northern Railway Company. Sir, we have

no objection to helping them. We have helped them in the past. I for my part have been an admirer of their energy and enterprise. I have not much in common with them; I cannot claim them as friends; but I admire energy, enterprise, and pluck wherever it is found. At the same time, there is this consideration to be borne in mind by the prime minister, that there are interests which are transcendent, and the primary of those transcendent interests is that of the country. I have to repeat that the interest of the country is not served by the present resolutions, and as they stand it will become the duty of the Opposition to oppose them from first to last.

More uncompromising opposition came from within the ranks of the Conservatives themselves. The crisis had stirred an independence as unusual as it was promising for the future and futile for the present. Mr. Herbert Ames found the Canadian Northern guilty of past offences, but saw no alternative to the present proposals. Two other government supporters went much farther. Mr. W. F. Nickle of Kingston gave an incisive and clear-cut analysis of the development of the company and the colossal aid received from federal and provincial governments, exposed the inadequacy and inconsistency of the data upon which parliament was asked to act, referred to Sir William Mackenzie's attempts to browbeat him, and called for immediate government assumption of the Canadian Northern as well as the National Transcontinental. "I am opposed," he declared, "to going into partnership with Mackenzie and Mann, just the same as I am opposed to going into partnership commercially with people I do not trust. I think they will do the government in the long run." Mr. R. B. Bennett of Calgary drew upon his intimate knowledge of Canadian railways, gained from a C. P. R. angle, and upon all the resources of a rich vocabulary and a two-hundred-word-a-minute delivery to carry his hearers up and down the Canadian Northern line, to probe the organization of subsidiary companies, particularly the "notorious and nefarious equipment trust," to trace the relations of the Canadian Northern Railway, Mackenzie and Mann Company, Limited, and William Mackenzie and Donald Mann, to attack the physical condition of the road ("certain parts of it between Kamloops and the Fraser River that do not slip into the river this spring will get there in the fall"), to investigate the bogus surpluses and false accounts, to pay his respects to the "boundless ambition" and "shameless mendicancy" of the two promoters, the colossal but misdirected intellect of their legal adviser, the "impertinent interruptions of this young man" who had framed the resolutions, "the gramophone of Mackenzie and Mann," and, in short, to play the bull in the china shop of party expediency and individual caution. The vigour of these two Conservative members stiffened Liberal opposition. Demands followed for a thorough, not a sham, analysis of the past financing and present situation of the road; for the pledge of the great private fortunes of the promoters; and for further squeezing or bailing out of the water in the stock. But all opposition was in vain, the government was committed, and the resolutions were voted early in June. The Senate, which now had been reformed, at once approved, nearly half the Liberals voting with the majority.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GREAT WAR

A Summer in Arthabaska—War in Europe—The Strain of the War—A United Country—Election Preparations—Laurier and Recruiting—Rising Discontent—The Decline of the Government—Quebec in the War—Botha and Bourassa—The Bilingual Question in Ontario—The Issue in Parliament—Liberal Divisions—Laurier's Proffered Resignation.

With the close of the third session of parliament in mid-June, Sir Wilfrid and Lady Laurier turned to their old Arthabaska home. It had not been possible for some years to spend a summer there, and after a tiring session they looked forward with keen anticipation to its friendly quiet. They spent July in the pleasant Eastern Township village. Cradled among green hills, with white roads winding through the valleys, the little river running shallow in the heat of an inland summer, the great church and the substantial court buildings dominating all the neighbourhood, Arthabaska brought back the simple joys and the healing peace of days long gone. Sir Wilfrid enjoyed it to the full. Walking in the deep, unstudied garden; reading some of the new books for which time had not been found during the year, and going back to the old ones; answering, usually in his own bold, angular and now slightly shaking hand, the letters which came from Canadians of all degrees; giving to a few visitors the delights of a perfect and spontaneous hospitality; sharing in the lively game of bridge and the livelier flow of words when old friends came with the evening; drawing the youngsters about him in unrelenting raillery, he was himself again.

Suddenly, over this idyllic village scene and over hundreds of equally unrecking Canadian communities, the clouds of European war lowered black and threatening. With the end of July it had become clear that not merely another Balkan war but a catastrophe involving all European civilization was imminent. When it became apparent that Britain was likely to be involved, and that the struggle would be of life and death, there was no difference of opinion and no hesitation in any quarter in Canada. The war was none of Canada's making. Canada had had no share in the rivalries and the diplomacy which had brought Europe to this pass. Canada was no more directly concerned in the outcome than any other New World state. Yet for Canada there was in all men's thoughts only one course and one measure of effort. With Britain at war, Canada was technically at war. With Britain in danger, Canada would be emphatically at war. The government on August 1 cabled a firm assurance of Canada's resolve "to put forth every effort and to make every sacrifice necessary to ensure the integrity and maintain the honour of our Empire," and asking for suggestions as to the form of an expeditionary force. On the morning of the fourth, the Governor-general and the leader of the Opposition returned to Ottawa. Sir Wilfrid at once issued the following statement:

We all hope and pray that the effort of Sir Edward Grey may yet be successful in persuading the nations of the Continent to the restoration of peace. I confess that the prospects are very doubtful. It is probable and almost certain that England will have to take her share in the conflict not only for the protection of her own interests, but for the protection of France and the higher civilization of which these two nations are to-day the noblest expression. The policy of the Liberal party under such painful circumstances is well known. I have often declared that if the mother country were ever in danger, or if danger ever threatened, Canada would render assistance to the fullest extent of her power. In view of the critical nature of the situation I have cancelled all my meetings. Pending such great questions, there should be a truce to party strife.

At half-past eight o'clock on the evening of that fateful day, the Governor-general received a cable message from London announcing that Britain had declared war. The four-years struggle had begun. To Europe it was to bring the victory of the Allies, who, with all qualifications made, fought for democracy and freedom; the victory, if not of white over black, at least of grey. It was to bring the fall of ancient empires, the bankruptcy of great peoples, the uprooting of the foundations of society, and the death of tens of millions of men and women and children from war and plague and famine. To the world in general it was to bring the shattering of old ties of trade and friendship, epochal shiftings of wealth and poverty, the contagion of social unrest, the hardening of class and racial consciousness, the surging of submerged peoples toward a dubious liberty, and the dream of a world organization that would avert another and final lapse into chaos and barbarism. To Canada it was to bring imperishable memories of Saint-Julien and Vimy and the breaking of the Hindenburg line, fifty thousand graves in France and Flanders, the heaping up of incredible debts and obligations, the discovery of undreamed-of powers of individual sacrifice, of community effort, of industrial expansion, of financial endurance. To Canada it was to bring also the breaking of political parties and the rise in their stead of class and sectional groups, a cleavage of race and bitterness inconceivable, the seeming crashing of the work of national harmony to which Wilfrid Laurier had given his life.

The burden of the war and the stirring of passions good and ill that it involved proved too great a strain for the unfinished structure of Canadian unity. Even in time of peace the task of securing unity in home and in external affairs

had been hard and never-ending. Given a country settled by one people, conquered by another, and still divided between the descendants of these two great peoples; given a colony half emerged from subordination to the conquering power across the sea, and struggling toward full nationhood; given one and one only of the two racial groups linked by blood and sentiment to this power overseas which still dominated foreign policy, and in so difficult a position, friction and sometimes fire were hardly to be avoided. Wilfrid Laurier had striven to lessen and avert the friction; his consistent home policy of racial equality, friendly tolerance and a fusing pride in the new and common Canadianism, and his imperial policy of a compromise between nationalism and imperialism, the development of a nation within the Empire, had been directed to this end. He and those of all parties and all sections who strove with him had been hampered by the imperialists with their racial sympathies and ideals and their doctrinaire and ready-made plans for making the British Empire a real empire. He had been hampered by the Nationalists who, in reaction from these imperialist schemes, had sought in their turn to emphasize racial ties and to draw Quebec back within a provincial shell. Yet he had time and tide with him, had persevered, and seemingly with no small reward.

Now came the strain of war. A war begun on Canada's own initiative, in the direct defence or pursuit of her own interests or supposed interests, might have unified the country; but in this war Canada was involved in the first place by her formal connection with Britain and in large part urged on by the racial sympathies of half her people with Britain. It was true that many a man who had no racial ties or personal sympathy with Britain cherished the memory of Britain's gifts of political liberty and of individual freedom to the world, but this could not take the place of the warm and unrecking sympathy of race. It was true that Canada had vital interests of her own at stake, in that Germany's arrogant militarism was a danger to the liberty of every free country in the world, and true that once Canada was in the war, no matter whose fight it was at the start, the war became her war, defeat her defeat, victory her victory. As the months and years went on, this understanding widened and deepened, and many who had no sympathy with the imperial relationship worked and fought for humanity, for Canada, or for the fight's sake. Yet it was equally true that Norway, or Chile or the United States had interests as great as Canada's at stake, and that they did not enter the war or entered it only when a united people had been convinced by the logic of the submarine that their direct interests were involved. It was true, again, that France was Britain's ally, and that it was in France and in the defence of France that Canadians were fighting, but it was also true that this was an incident, a happy accident; it was not sympathy with France but the tie with Britain that took Canada into the war. It was true that the war, unlike the war against the Boers, was a war whose justice in the eyes of at least nine out of ten, not only in Britain and in the Dominions but in the neutral countries, was beyond question, but it was true also that the magnitude and duration of the war brought a strain, brought the war into every corner, and every relation of life, as the lesser if less righteous struggle had not done. The path of the war was a path in which all could walk, a path along which the call of the blood, imperialist sympathy with outraged Belgium and bleeding France, hatred of German militarism, pride in Canadian achievement,—all would urge the sons of Canada. But naturally some were impelled by one motive only and some by all, and the distance they would walk together, if the path proved long, was matter for question.

In the first flush of excitement and enthusiasm, these difficulties were not in view. Canada entered the war united and whole-hearted. There was no party strife, no racial cleavage, and Wilfrid Laurier and Robert Borden vied with each other in their appeals to all Canadians to stand together and to stand fast beside Britain and Belgium and France.

There was no party strife. The government's action was prompt and effective, and the Opposition concurred in every policy. Offers of service and of financial aid poured in upon the government from every corner of the Dominion. Steps were taken to organize an army division of 22,500 men; to guard the frontier and military posts against possible attacks of German agents; to man the *Rainbow* and the *Niobe* and two dubious submarines purchased in hot haste in Seattle by Sir R. McBride, and to place them at the Admiralty's disposal; to avert, in conjunction with the banks, a financial panic, and to issue, in accordance with the prearranged war-book, orders in council to regulate trade and movements of aliens. On August 18, parliament met in special war session.



MR. LAURIER'S HOME IN ARTHABASKA



MR. LAURIER'S LAW OFFICE IN ARTHABASKA

The Speech from the Throne called for the sanction of measures already taken and the passing of further legislation to "repel the common danger." After the Reply to the Address had been briefly moved and seconded, Sir Wilfrid followed:

Speaking for those who sit around me, speaking for the wide constituency which we represent in this House, I hasten to say that to all these measures we are prepared to give immediate assent. If in what has been done or in what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done, we raise no question, we take no exception, we offer no criticism, and we shall offer no criticism so long as there is danger at the front. It is our duty, more pressing upon us than all other duties, at once, on this first day of this extraordinary session of the Canadian parliament, to let Great Britain know, and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart, and that all Canadians stand behind the mother country, conscious and proud that she has engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandizement, but to maintain untarnished the honour of her name, to fulfil her obligations to her allies, to maintain her treaty obligations, and to save civilization from the unbridled lust of conquest and power.

We are British subjects, and to-day we are face to face with the consequences which are involved in that proud fact. Long we have enjoyed the benefit of our British citizenship; to-day it is our duty to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices. We have long said that when Great Britain is at war we are at war; to-day we realize that Great Britain is at war and that Canada is at war also.

England to-day is not engaged in an ordinary contest. The war in which she is engaged will in all probability—nay, in absolute certainty—stagger the world with its magnitude and its horror. But that war is for as noble a cause as ever impelled a nation to risk her all upon the arbitrament of the sword. That question is no longer at issue; the judgment of the world has already pronounced upon it. I speak not only of those nations which are engaged in this war, but of the neutral nations. The testimony of the ablest men of these nations, without dissenting voice, is that to-day the allied nations are fighting for freedom against oppression, for democracy against autocracy, for civilization against reversion to that state of barbarism in which the supreme law is the law of might.

It is an additional source of pride to us that England did not seek this war. It is a matter of history—one of the noblest pages of the history of England—that she never drew the sword until every means had been exhausted to secure and to keep an honourable peace.

If my words can be heard beyond the walls of this House in the province from which I come, among the men whose blood flows in my own veins, I should like them to remember that in taking their place to-day in the ranks of the Canadian army to fight for the cause of the allied nations, a double honour rests upon them. The very cause for which they are called upon to fight is to them doubly sacred.

Sir, there is in this the inspiration and the hope that from this painful war the British Empire will emerge with a new bond of union, the pride of all its citizens, and a living light to all other nations.

Sir Robert Borden—the prime minister, with Mr. Foster, had accepted knighthood in July—after a testimony to the full and instant co-operation of the leader of the Opposition, gave an eloquent survey of the origin of the war and a concise summary of the steps the government considered Canada should take. In a brief four-days session every proposal was ratified, new taxes accepted, a war appropriation of \$50,000,000 made, the suspension of gold payments and other emergency financial measures given a statutory basis, a Canadian Patriotic Fund incorporated, and sweeping powers of censorship, deportation, control over trade and transport granted to the government. There was not a word of party recrimination, not a questioning voice. "The last four days of this session," declared Sir George Foster, as the hour of prorogation came, "have vindicated Canadian public life and parliamentary life for all time to come. They have shown that it is possible for us to forget all mean and petty things when our country and its higher liberties are at stake."

There was no racial cleavage. The crowds in Montreal on the eve of the war were more demonstrative than the crowds in Toronto. In the House, French-Canadian and English-Canadian stood together in backing France and England. Even Mr. Bourassa declared in "Le Devoir" in September, that it was "Canada's national duty to contribute according to her resources and by fitting means of action, to the triumph and especially to the endurance of the combined efforts of France and England. . . . I have not written and will not write one line, one word, to condemn the sending of Canadian troops to Europe." It is true he added a significant qualification: "But to render this contribution effective, Canada must begin by facing her real position resolutely, by taking an exact account of what can and what cannot be done, and ensure her own domestic security, before beginning or following up an effort which she will perhaps not be able to sustain to the end."

From the outset, Sir Wilfrid's aim was to support the war, to support the government in all policies essential for carrying on the war, to urge upon his compatriots in Quebec a full share in the conflict, and to seek to avert or to lessen any factors making for misunderstanding and disunity. Every utterance in public was confined to the urgencies of the war. The readiness of the Dominions to come to the aid of Britain, he declared at the Toronto Exhibition in September, was not accidental; it was due to Britain's faith in freedom; no nation but Britain could have adopted the audacious policy which was now winning justification in South Africa, where Louis Botha was leading her soldiers in the field. "There can be no peace," he declared before the Quadrennial Methodist Conference in Ottawa on September 23, "until this imperial bully has learnt his lesson." A few days later he joined with Rodolphe Lemieux, L. T. Maréchal, Senator Belcourt, J. M. Tellier and Dr. Arthur Mignault in urging upon the government the organization of distinct French-Canadian regiments; "There is every probability," he wrote Sir Robert, "that the war will be of long duration. . . . May I suggest that as our population is composed of various ethnic elements, it might be well to recognize the fact and to allow the formation of units out of these several elements. The War Office at all times has taken advantage of the force of race sentiment in the formation of the army. . . ." Two weeks later, he spoke with the others mentioned and Sir Lomer Gouin and Senator Dandurand, at a meeting in Sohmer Park in Montreal to call for recruits for this French-Canadian regiment:

This call addressed to our race involves a sacrifice. We are calling the young men in particular, and to you, young men, I have only one thing to say: I envy you.

We are asking you for a great sacrifice, and it may be expected that some few of the regiment will remain over there, victims to their courage, but they shall sleep in the land of their ancestors. But we shall not let ourselves be influenced by such a consideration. When Dollard and his sixteen companions left to save the young colony, they knew that they would not come back and their courage grew with the hope of a triumphant death. If there are still a few drops of the blood of Dollard and his companions in the veins of the Canadians who are present at this meeting, you will enlist in a body, for this cause is just as sacred as the one for which Dollard and his companions gave their lives.

This is a voluntary sacrifice. Great Britain asks nothing of us. She accepts with gratitude what we do for her, but she does not set any obligation upon us. Once more I repeat, Canada is a free country. If some Canadians were frightened by the monster of conscription in the past, they must now recognize that this monster was a myth.

And again, before the Montreal Reform Club:

Do not forget that the fact that Britain was at war constituted for Canada a new condition of things, which imposed new duties upon the government, upon the Opposition and upon the whole Canadian people. The moment that Great Britain was at war, Canada was at war. This is a truth which while we were in office we had not only to proclaim, but for which we had to provide in a manner consonant with the new condition, a new situation created by the development of Canada, not as a colony, but as a nation within the British Empire.

These truths were not accepted by all. It was the occasion of a great deal of misrepresentation; it contributed very much towards the defeat which we suffered in 1911, but for my part let me say here that I have no regrets.

We are a free people, absolutely free. The charter under which we live has put it in our power to say whether we should take part in such a war or not. It is for the Canadian people, the Canadian parliament and the Canadian government alone to decide. This freedom is at once the glory and honour of Britain, which granted it, and of Canada which uses it to assist Britain. Freedom is the keynote of all British institutions. You find it from

the lowest to the highest rung in the ladder. There is no conscription in Britain. There never was, there never shall be. We have heard it discussed by eminent authorities that Great Britain will be forced to follow suit and have recourse to conscription like France, Germany and Italy. Conscription is repugnant to the British character. The British are never inclined to go to war, slow always to go to war, never preparing until they are in it, but generally they manage to get on top at the end of it. There is no compulsion upon those dependencies of Great Britain which have reached the stature of dominions, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and such Crown dependencies as India. They are all free to take part or not as they think best.

I was asked by some one why should I support the government in their policy of sending men to the front. Why should not the Liberal party have remained quiet and passive and let all the worries be left to the government? My answer was: "I have no particular love for the government, but I love my country, I love the land of my ancestors, France. I love the land of liberty above all, England, and rather than that I, in my position of leader of the Liberal party, should remain passive and quiescent, I would go out of public life, and life together."

Party strife began to show its head in the autumn of 1914. Neither political party could dwell for long on the heights of August. The dissension was not serious, for there was as yet little divergence of policy. There was some difference of opinion as to why and how Canada had gone into the war. The Conservative view was that Canada went and should go automatically into this as into every British war, with perhaps in future some share in controlling British policy. The Liberal view was that it was for Canada to determine when and how far she would take part in Britain's wars and that in this case Canada had freely and deliberately decided to support Britain because in this case Britain's cause was just and her peril great. The Nationalists, beginning to revive, agreed with the Conservatives that Canada had been involved in the war automatically, qua British subjects, but insisted that Canada should not in future enter such wars, or should engage in them only so far as Canadian interests dictated. But these differences were of more importance for the morrow than for the day. So with the inevitable retrospective references to the naval controversy. The Conservatives, or rather some Conservatives, insisted that their prophecies of emergency had been fulfilled and that every Canadian must hang his head in vain regret and shame because no Canadian dreadnought shared the perilous patrol of the grey North Sea. The Liberals, or some Liberals, contended that the only emergency was that which faced the Kaiser's navy, and that the exploits of Australia's cruiser, the *Sydney*, sister ship of Canada's unbuilt *Bristols*, in sinking the dangerous Pacific raider the *Emden*, revealed the need and the potentialities of Dominion navies in other seas. But these passing controversies were mere ripples on the surface of public preoccupation with the war, and certainly gave no ground for party appeals to the electorate.

Yet there was an element which strove hard to plunge Canada into an election with or without an issue or an excuse. The section of the government forces led by Robert Rogers was eager to capitalize the country's patriotism for party purposes, to bring on an election on the platform of "Stand behind the Government," and thus snatch another five-year lease of power. For a time Mr. Rogers carried the cabinet with him. Party literature of the usual vigorous type was prepared and circulated, and nomination and organization meetings called. In a letter to an absent lieutenant, in October, Sir Wilfrid noted the currents:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Frank Oliver)

Ottawa, October 20, [1914](#)

MY DEAR OLIVER:

I think I ought to write to you and give you what information I have with regard to the probability of an early election.

There is no doubt whatever that last week the government had come to the conclusion that they would dissolve. This elicited very strong protests from the best elements of the community, so strong indeed that the government hastily cancelled their determination; but since last Saturday the madmen of the party are making another effort and again beseeching the Prime Minister who, I understand, is again wavering. From my latest information the cabinet is again discussing, and after all there is a possibility of dissolution, though, I believe, the chances are to the contrary.

It is sufficient, however, that there should be a possibility to make us awake and lively, so as to be ready should the fray come. . . .

Independent opinion and the anti-machine element within the government ranks opposed a general election, when only three of five years of parliament's life had expired, as utterly unwarranted—"treachery," in the words of the Montreal "Star,"—and for the time their weight prevailed. When in November Mr. Pelletier retired to the bench and Mr. Nantel to the Railway Board, no opposition was offered to their successors, Mr. T. Chase Casgrain and Mr. P. E. Blondin, and six other vacancies were filled without a contest.

The year 1915 was one of widening range and deepening intensity in the struggle overseas, the year that Italy and Bulgaria came into the war, Poland and Serbia were overrun, the Dardanelles vainly assaulted, the German push to the sea halted in France and Flanders, the submarine campaign begun and checked, and gas and high explosives employed in tremendous quantities. It was the year of the formation of a coalition cabinet in Britain after the munitions crisis, and of the beginnings of compulsory service in national registration and the Derby scheme. For Canada, it stood out as the year

of Saint-Julien, where the men of the first contingent, enormously outnumbered, with the Turcos to their left in flight, and with clouds of choking and poisonous gases launched against them for the first time in the war, filled the breach and blocked the road to Calais; the year of Festubert and Givenchy and of other incidents that thrilled the country with pride. At home, recruiting had been vigorous and successful, the enlistment rising to over 210,000 within the year. The community was finding outlet in the work of the Patriotic Fund, of the Red Cross, of recruiting, of machine-gun campaigns and in endless individual devotion. The demands of the war were pulling business out of the slough, and Canadian manufacturers were discovering unexpected ranges of initiative and enterprise in their development of the munitions industry.

Political controversy became sharper, but it was not yet acute. The renewed endeavour of the fighting wing of the government to bring on an election forced a keener controversy and constant preparation for the threatened contest. The government's policy gave more openings for difference and attack. It had scored no small measure of success in leading or transmitting the popular will. The ranks had been well filled; a beginning had been made in munitions; the financing of the war, first by British loans, later by loans in New York, applied to civil purposes, and by an unprecedented domestic loan of \$100,000,000 late in the year, had been well performed on the technical side. Many mistakes had been made, but many were inevitable in the press and improvising of the gigantic task. Some were not inevitable, and these the Opposition dragged to light in committee probings. The patronage lists had been revived. Bad boots had been supplied the troops; the sister of one member of parliament had made extravagant profits in drug supplies, another member had exacted a rake-off on bandages and field dressings, and a third, undertaking to buy horses in the Maritime provinces, had purchased, usually without vouchers, every spavined, knee-sprung nag that could be stood up long enough for the cheques to be written, including one horse lately exchanged for a duck and two drakes and one rejected during the South African war. Mr. Borden chided these two erring members, and made provision for a war-purchasing commission for the future. It was bad business, and though not serious in comparison with the government's real achievements, it provided ammunition as controversy grew.

When the House met for its fifth session, in February, 1915, Sir Wilfrid repeated the assurance that the Opposition would give the government full support in their great task. That did not mean that expenditures would be sanctioned without accounting; the success and honour of the country were at stake. The war promised to be a long one, a process of attrition. It was proving that "there is a greater force than force, and that the British Empire, resting upon the basis of freedom, is more durable than the German Empire, resting upon the basis of blood and iron." It was not well to enter now, as the prime minister and his colleagues had been doing in the recess, upon discussions of altering that empire "to give the Dominions a voice in all questions of peace and war"; those questions must be faced after the war. "In the meantime," he continued, "for my part, I hardly believe that any system that can be devised or that can be reduced by legislation to any complete form applicable to the daughter nations of the Empire, can ever have the same inspiring grandeur or the same patriotic efficiency, as the action of the Dominions all over the world, the voluntary spontaneous action of all those Dominions, in lining themselves up behind England in the hour of her trial."

A month later, Sir Wilfrid opposed the new budget brought down by Mr. White. The Opposition had been and would continue faithful to their engagement to support the government in every step which really advanced the common cause. That did not mean abdicating judgment, acquiescing in what appeared errors of policy, in Canada any more than in England, where the Unionists had lately asserted that the right of criticism and inquiry must hold in war as in peace. The government was carrying on this war as if it were wholly their affair, a Conservative war:

... I commend these words to the attention of the House. You will see that in Great Britain the Opposition were consulted by the government as to their financial proposals. This is a matter of record and history. I might go further than this newspaper goes and say that at all stages of the war, from the first to the present day, the Opposition have been kept in constant consultation by the powers that be; they were consulted as to military operations, and at every step were asked to give their advice. It was not so in this country. We were not consulted. If we had been honoured in the same way—not that I claim anything in that respect, but representing here a great party comprising almost half of the population, having views of their own on many of the financial problems which now confront us, claiming to be as patriotic as the other side, and claiming to have done their duty as amply as was in their power—I say that if we had been consulted, we should have been happy to give our views as to the policy to be pursued. I do not say that our views would have been accepted; but certainly there would have been an effort on my part at all events to give way on some of my own views, and I might have felt it right to ask the other side to give way on some of their views also, so that we might have been unanimous in policy as we have been unanimous in the objects which policy is to serve. But we were not consulted. I do not complain of this; I have no right to complain. But my honourable friend the Finance Minister has no right to complain either if to-day we have to take issue with him, and take issue sharply, upon the resolutions which he has laid before the House.

He proceeded to criticize the failure to take in sail, the excessive expenditure on secondary public works, the failure of the new taxes to make the rich man pay his due share, the increase of protection rather than of revenue and the decrease

of the British preference by the horizontal increase in the tariff, and ended by moving an amendment which Dr. Pugsley seconded and A. K. Maclean strongly supported. Mr. White replied in an unusually aggressive speech: high civil expenditures were due to inherited obligations, due to the mismanagement and recklessness of the late government: "If obligations were children, my Right Honourable friend is truly like George Washington, the father of his country."

After much criticism of the inadequacy and unfairness of the new taxes, debates on boots and profiteering contracts, and the passing of a measure providing for the taking of soldiers' votes overseas in case of an election, parliament prorogued on April 15. A fortnight later, in a carefully prepared speech in Montreal, Mr. Rogers demanded a dissolution to give the government the complete control essential for doing full service to Canada, rather than remain "handicapped and crippled and interfered with at every turn, tarrying and disputing with an Opposition that . . . has declared a want of confidence in our proposals for the carrying on of our part in this great conflict." "Is it then any wonder," this spokesman of "a form of democracy" had demanded earlier, "that the cry comes from every individual that one meets and who understands the conditions, in tones louder than thunder, demanding that this parliament be dissolved, that the rights and liberties of the people of this Dominion be granted to them under our form of democracy and that that form of democracy be restored to them?" The revelations which followed from Winnipeg, where under the form of a democracy Mr. Rogers's old associates had for years been looting the province, explained, but did not commend his hurry. Once again public opinion vetoed a contest. Sir Wilfrid's views were clearly expressed in the course of an address to the Liberal Club Federation in Toronto on May 15:

I do not disguise that in time of peace I am a party man. I have been entrusted with the confidence of a great portion of the Liberal party for a long time past. We have our differences with the government of the day. I am anxious for the return of the party to which I belong because I believe we have the true policy for this country and not the men who are now in office. I speak honestly that which I believe in the interests of the country when I say there should be, there ought to be, a change of government or a different policy pursued, but I do not care, for my part, so long as the war lasts, to open the portals of office with that bloody key. . . .

But I have this to say to the Prime Minister and his colleagues: I do not care for an election. Let the Prime Minister and his colleagues say that there shall be no election as long as the war shall go on, and I will pledge myself and the party that we shall stop all preparations and think of nothing but the war.

During the summer Sir Wilfrid was far from well. His seventy-four years were beginning to tell. He suffered much pain and could only with difficulty drag himself through his tasks. He insisted on keeping an engagement, early in August, to attend a great meeting at his birthplace; eight thousand of his compatriots gathered at St. Lin to do him honour. "Whatever be the vicissitudes and the hazards to which men of politics are exposed," he declared, "there is nothing dearer to them than the corner of the earth where they were born." Going on to deal with the war, he declared:

I would not have my compatriots of French speech take an attitude different from the attitude of my fellow-countrymen of English speech on this question. England is at war because she wishes to defend the independence of Belgium and the integrity of the soil of France. Never has a nation drawn sword for a cause so sacred. We of French origin have a double duty to perform. It is true that it is not our land that is being ravaged, and it is not our farms that are being fired by the Germans, but it is the lands and the farms of France. It is not our cathedrals, it is not our churches, that the German shells demolish, but it is the monuments and treasures of France, and they are French women who are outraged and massacred. French-Canadians who listen to me, is there among you one who can remain unmoved before these acts? In Montreal there are to be found men who would prevent recruiting. I claim for my country the supreme honour of bearing arms in this holy cause, and if I support the government, it is because I have the heart to do my duty. . . . The fear of conscription in Canada is as groundless now as it was in 1911, when some of the people of Quebec were told that the Laurier naval policy involved conscription and the dragging away of peaceful citizens to be disembowelled in European conflicts.

Early in September he kept an engagement to speak at a recruiting rally in Napanee, but the intolerable heat on the platform was too much for him in his weakened condition, and he collapsed half-way through his appeal. A fortnight in an Ottawa hospital and an operation for the removal of an abscess relieved him, and by the autumn he was once again taking up his work. He had been greatly heartened by the countless messages that poured in to his bedside from all ends of the country, and from political opponents as well as political friends. The Montreal "Star," early in October, voiced the feeling of a large element in the Conservative party:

The recovery of Sir Wilfrid Laurier from his tedious experience in the hospital will be a matter for genuine rejoicing throughout the Dominion. Sir Wilfrid is a great, a potent and a striking figure in our public life. Even the temporary incapacity of so important a factor in our national affairs creates a feeling of uneasiness, a sense of something lacking. . . . Sir Wilfrid's attitude during the war has been a subject of especial pride to his friends and of comfort and satisfaction to the whole country. Whatever lesser men have said or done, Sir Wilfrid has laid aside all party feeling or manoeuvring during this supreme crisis in our history. He has stood squarely and publicly behind the government. . . . And he has raised his eloquent and persuasive voice, again and again, to assist recruiting, even at times of keen physical suffering on his own part. He may be said to have gone straight from the firing-line of the recruiting platform to his hospital bed.

Late in December, with much of his old-time vigour restored, Sir Wilfrid took part, along with Sir Lomer Gouin,

Rodolphe Lemieux, Senator Dandurand, George P. Graham, Charles Marcil and Joseph Demers, in a great meeting in the Monument National in Montreal. Liberals, Sir Wilfrid declared, still stood for the ideals of Bright and Gladstone and O'Connell, of Baldwin and Blake, Lafontaine and Dorion, stood for the cause of the weak and the oppressed, for justice and liberty and the hatred of absolutism. These ideals had guided Canadian Liberals in peace; they guided them now in a war for justice and liberty. In Canada, "the Imperialist wanted parliament to close its eyes and to fight in any war; the Nationalist wanted parliament to close its eyes and to fight in no war; we Liberals asked for nothing more than the liberty to decide for ourselves." People in Montreal had said that Canada should only defend her own soil; there was no merit in that: "For a noble cause, we must do more than our duty." It was said Canada's aid would not count in a vast struggle: well, "at Langemarck Canadians proved that they knew not only how to fight but how to conquer." Canada's own interests were involved: "I am not of opinion that if Germany were to triumph in this war we should pass under Germanic domination at once . . . , but it would mean a prolongation, a recrudescence of the militarism that now is devastating Europe." Germany and the United States would be left the only two great powers and the United States would be compelled to become as militarist as her rival. The entente cordiale had come in Europe. It was not complete in Canada; there were many misunderstandings and collisions: "They who have real patriotism are they who are working for reconciliation, who are helping to sweep away the old divisions, who are working to restore harmony among the people on a basis acceptable to all."

With 1916, the third year of the war, the year of Verdun and the Somme, of Brusiloff's offensive and the overrunning of Rumania, of renewed submarine activity and the Battle of Jutland, of the adoption of conscription in Britain and its rejection in Australia, of the Easter rebellion in Ireland^[57] and the Lloyd George-Bonar Law revolt against Mr. Asquith, the going became harder, the strain greater, tempers sharper. The war was lasting longer than any but a rare prophet had foreseen. The casualties were mounting steadily. Debt was soaring. The rising cost of living was pressing hard on the average household, while the easy gains and the flaunted luxuries of the profiteer made sacrifices harder to bear. The drain of two years' enlistment and the growth of a great munitions industry were making it hard to find recruits.

These difficulties, these sources of friction, did not prevent a tremendous effort, did not abate the determination to see the war through to complete victory. They did make the public temper more critical, the path alike of government and of Opposition more thorny, the heat of controversy more intense.

Much of the discontent was directed against the government. For a great part it was not fairly responsible. For much it was rightly blamed. The conduct of the militia department did not inspire confidence. General Sir Sam Hughes was a man of Napoleonic energy, of an audacity that overleaped obstacles, a sturdy insistence on Canadian rights and potentialities, a confidence that swept all before him, and much of Canada's achievement, particularly in the mobilization of the first contingent at Valcartier, was fairly to be set to his credit. But his lack of judgment, his colossal egotism, his dictatorial manners, his friendship with shady munitions speculators, aroused a storm of criticism. Then came controversies over the value of his prized Ross Rifle, over the questionable selection of Camp Borden as a training site, and particularly over the Liberal revelations, uncovering only a corner at that, of the wholesale waste and wholesale grafting of favoured shell or fuse contractors. Conservative journals, from the Montreal "News" with its attack upon his "spectacular stupidity," and the Toronto "Telegram" with its jibes at his "extravagant pomp and splendour" to the Winnipeg "Post" with its verdict of "stark, staring mad" and the Regina "Province" with its insistence that "he is temperamentally unfit for any position of responsibility, and his further retention of his post is a menace to the country and his party," were among the strongest of his critics; at the same time he had strong friends, particularly among the rank and file.

It was not the federal administration only that was incurring condemnation. In provincial Conservative governments wrong-doing was being exposed which reacted strongly against the federal party. In New Brunswick, the premier, J. K. Flemming, had been forced to resign on proof of corruption, but had later been accepted as the government candidate for the federal house. In British Columbia, the McBride and Bowser governments were assailed for reckless extravagance and wide corruption and defeated in September after an extraordinary overturn; "I ask Conservatives," Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper had declared, "to drive from power this government which has disgraced the province and which has been the servile tool of adventurers." In Manitoba, the most colossal stealing in Canadian political history had been revealed in an investigation of the parliament buildings' construction; the Roblin government had fallen, and its late member and mentor, Robert Rogers, had been involved, despite the attempt of Canadian Northern officials to destroy confidential telegrams. Charges against Saskatchewan and Alberta Liberals, and particularly the endeavour to make J. A. Calder out a twin brother of Robert Rogers, while partially proved, did not offset the impression thus produced. But

more fundamental than criticism of Sam Hughes or of Robert Rogers was the feeling that the cabinet as a whole lacked unity and driving-power, that policy was spasmodic, based on no co-ordinating survey of the country's needs and capacity, and that the premier, with all his good-will, had not been able to enforce discipline in his cabinet or ensure confidence in the people.

When parliament met in January, 1916, it was fitting that the first step should be the election as Speaker of Alfred Sévigny, of Nationalist fame. Characteristic, too, was the mingling of personal banter and of a sense of the dignity and importance of parliamentary traditions in Sir Wilfrid's greeting:

As extremes always meet, it is fitting that Mr. Sévigny should follow Mr. Speaker Sproule. What an evolution since 1911! . . . My honourable friend assailed without measure the navy . . . opposed every form of participation by Canada in the affairs of Great Britain. He entered this House still breathing heavily, threatening still. But when once in this House he took his seat behind the Treasury benches. . . . He became a repentant sinner, and I never saw a sinner—and I have met some sinners in my time—who derived as much comfort out of repentance. My honourable friend never did penance in sackcloth and ashes. He was within the rays of the ministerial sun; he luxuriated in the tall and fat grasses of the ministerial pasture. He was the recipient of some marked ministerial favours. I do not say this by way of complaining of his conversion; far be it from me to do so. If I have any fault to find with him it is that his conversion did not go far enough, because I am not aware that he ever, in the county of Dorchester, confessed his sins to his electors and begged pardon for having led them so far astray in 1911.

To-day my honourable friend is to be elected by this House to the chief office which is in its power. However we may have differed from him in the past, the moment he assumes this chair he becomes Speaker of the House of Commons and entitled to all honour and all respect; and so far as this side of the House is concerned, it will be our duty, nay, it will be our pleasure, to do what His Majesty's Opposition always have done so long as I have been in this House,—we shall deem it our duty to give him every assistance to maintain the dignity and traditions of his office, and as well to maintain the dignities and privileges and rights of the House of Commons.

The temper of parliament did not long remain at this pitch. The government had decided to heed the advice of those who deprecated an election in war time. Yet the term of parliament would expire in the autumn of 1916; an extension would involve an amendment to the British North America Act, passed, as usual in the case of amendments, by the British parliament upon the substantially unanimous petition of the Canadian parliament. The prime minister therefore moved a year's extension. Sir Wilfrid stated that after a party caucus in which different opinions had been expressed, the decision had been left in his hands. He had decided not to oppose the resolution. It was a grave step to lay hands on the Ark of the Covenant, to amend the constitution. He could not agree to an indefinite extension. But a year's extension was reasonable, particularly as it would involve an understanding that parliament was not to be dissolved prematurely, that the constant threat of an election would cease to disturb the country. He was prepared to support the government still in all measures making for the successful prosecution of the war, but would oppose it in all measures of a contrary kind: "To all wrongs, to all frauds, we shall offer determined opposition." The war was supreme: "I speak my whole soul and heart when I say that if Germany were to win I would be thankful that Providence should close my eyes before I saw the sun rising on such a day. . . . I speak again as I have spoken always, my supreme thought will be to give all the assistance in our power to Britain in the struggle which she has undertaken against the common enemy of mankind."

"To all wrongs, to all frauds, we shall offer determined opposition." The parliamentary session of 1916 was a session of exposure and denunciation of wrong and fraud. In the purchase of shells for the British government through a committee appointed by the Department of Militia, there had been, along with much energy and adaptiveness, much loose and devious management. Charges made by William Pugsley, Frank Carvell and G. W. Kyte, of favouritism in granting contracts, of inexcusably high profits to favoured mushroom contractors, of millions diverted to needless middlemen, were proved in every case where full investigation was permitted. The action of the government in seeking to block inquiry and in acceding finally to only a limited inquiry, did not strengthen it in the country. Four government members supported a resolution of Sir Wilfrid demanding a full investigation.^[58] The revelations of the rake-offs of the Minister of Militia's "adviser, counsellor and guide," J. Wesley Allison, left a bad taste in the mouth and contributed materially to weaken the government's position. This distrust was intensified when in the closing hours of the session a bill was forced through, for which the whole cabinet shared responsibility, for purchasing at an exorbitant price the Quebec and Saguenay Railway, controlled by a party lieutenant, Sir Rodolphe Forget. The amount involved was not large, a mere four millions, but the whole transaction, from the chartering of the company to the unloading upon the government, was beyond defence and bore witness to the growing demoralization.

By the end of 1916, the stock of the Borden government had fallen very low. That did not mean that the Liberal party gained in prestige all that its opponents lost. It did gain in some measure. The charges against the government brought a strong negative reaction in its favour. A conference of a National Liberal Advisory Committee of some fifty leaders of Canadian life, in Ottawa in July, gave evidence of a reviving power to deal constructively with the new war and after-war problems. Men looked back with regret to the firmness and sureness of administration in Sir Wilfrid's day. Yet

against him one strong count lay.

He was a French-Canadian, and French-Canadians, it was declared, were not doing their duty in the war. The resentment felt in other provinces, some of it spontaneous, some of it judiciously fostered as a means of diverting attention from the government's failures, was turned against Wilfrid Laurier. With the increasing strain of the war, from this time onward, the racial cleavage grew deeper, and thanks to the ceaseless slandering of opponents and the weak-kneedness of friends, the indiscriminate passion aroused in English-speaking Canada, flamed to the political hurt of the man whose whole life-work it had been to avert the situation that now arose.

There was no question that French-speaking Canadians had enlisted in much smaller proportions than English-speaking Canadians. That this should have been so in some measure was inevitable. Quebec was relatively isolated from Old World interests. There was among French-Canadians a real if usually passive loyalty to the British Crown; there could not be anything of the personal interest of the new-comer from the British Isles, nor of the racial sympathy of the men of British descent and British traditions. Nor could any one who knew the history and the sentiment of Quebec expect them to feel as intense an interest in the fortunes of France as English-speaking Canadians felt in the fortunes of England. Two hundred years before, immigration from France had ceased; the Roman Catholic Church had endeavoured to lessen contact with a land of revolution and infidelity; the British government in early days had striven to the same end and even as late as Fashoda sympathy with France would have been regarded as treason. Deep sentiments could not be improvised in a day to meet the shifts of European diplomacy and the changing interests of countries overseas. The French-Canadian was a Canadian, and a Canadian only, perhaps not always an all-Canada man, but certainly none-but-Canada. Senator Dandurand put the situation precisely when he showed that the excess in the proportion of British-born enlistments over native English-speaking Canadians was greater than the excess of native English-speaking over native French-speaking enlistments; in brief, interest and enlistment varied inversely with the length of residence and the depth of rooting in Canada. The fundamental fact in the situation, yet a fact that was persistently ignored, was that the war was not initially and decisively Canada's war, but a war in which she had been involved by her connection with Britain and in large measure impelled to greater and greater effort by racial sympathy with Britain. That the war became in real if secondary fashion Canada's war did not remove that initial barrier to full and equal interest and participation. And as the war went on, and the enlisting of the men from one's own neighbourhood or one's own family brought in its train anxiously awaited and precious letters from the front and busy canvassing for patriotic funds or knitting socks or packing comforts for the trenches, the difference in interest became cumulative.

It was unreasonable to expect the same proportion of every province or of any other grouping to enlist. Enlistment varied not merely with interest in the war but with many other conditions. It was as necessary and as easy to explain the statements that the Maritime provinces sent only half as great a proportion as the Western provinces, or why the Anglicans enlisted a larger proportion than Presbyterians, Presbyterians than Roman Catholics, Roman Catholics than Methodists. The distribution of British-born immigrants, largely men of military age, town-dwellers, manual labourers, having personal ties to the old land, was the chief factor in these variations. Age and sex counted: Quebec, for example, with her early marriage and large families, had 28 per cent. of the population of the Dominion, but only 23 per cent. of the men of military age; and the Maritimes, with 57 per cent. as large a population as the Western provinces, had only 30 per cent. as many men of military age. The cities again, with, at the outset, unemployment, and unescapable recruiting appeals, enlisted more freely than the country, drained by years of city-ward drifting down to the barest working force. These were obvious facts, but prejudice blinded many eyes.

To a Toronto friend, M. K. Cowan, K. C., Sir Wilfrid wrote in March, [1916](#):

I come now to what you say about recruiting and the slackness of Quebec in that respect. On this point, the last word has not been said and the last bit of information has not been received. There are some factors to be taken into account in the comparison of recruiting between Quebec and Ontario.

Recruiting has been chiefly confined all over Canada to urban population, very little in rural population. When we deduct from the figures in Ontario the British-born, the urban population, and compare only the figures in rural districts, the difference will not be very great, though I admit that the preponderance is in favour of Ontario.

Before I go further let me remind you that Ontario is dotted with towns and cities from 5,000 to 500,000. In Quebec we have only one large city, Montreal, then a secondary city, Quebec, with not even 100,000 and the next three cities, St. Hyacinthe, Sherbrooke and Three Rivers, do not count each a population of 20,000. Apart from this, we have nothing but villages and a purely rural population.

This is a condition of things which must be taken into consideration.

Next, the great factor against recruiting has been the Nationalist movement, which was coddled by the Conservatives when we were in office, and which is still strong and powerful.

There were special reasons why recruiting was not particularly successful in Quebec. The outstanding one was that the Quebec members in the government—the Pelletiers, Blondins, Patenaudes, Nantels, Sévignys, with the exception of T. Chase Casgrain, appointed after the war began,—had all been eager Nationalists, all hand in glove with Bourassa in the fight against Laurier and any share in England's wars. Now conviction or the exigencies of office brought conversion and they did what they could to encourage enlistment. But the turn was too sharp, the motives too open to attack. No government could have been devised in Canada better fitted to discourage recruiting in Quebec. Mistakes in detail which under the circumstances were more than mistakes added to the difficulties. With the general in charge of the Quebec districts unable to speak French, with a Methodist clergyman appointed by the Minister of Militia as recruiting agent in Montreal, there was colour for the suspicions of those who urged that the government was more anxious for a campaign cry than for recruits.

There was still another factor,—Henri Bourassa. The contagion of interest would have spread had there been no active campaign of discouragement. Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Lavergne, through "Le Devoir" and on the platform, from 1915 onward, resolutely opposed any participation in Britain's wars. Few public men now stood by their side, but their influence with the masses was undoubted. Day after day the flood of criticism kept up. All the belligerents were equally guilty; Allied diplomacy was hypocritical, Britain and France, Italy and Russia, had been as high-handed in grabbing territory and as ruthless in governing it as Germany, and even now under cover of fine phrases about freedom and democracy they were planning in secret treaties to divide the spoils. British statesmen frankly and rightly put Britain's interests first; when would Canadian statesmen learn to do the same for Canada? British connection had involved Canada in war and would always do so. France was Britain's ally to-day: what of yesterday when they had been foes and to-morrow when they might be so again? There was much that was valid in Mr. Bourassa's criticism, as the Peace of Versailles and its sequels were to prove, unpleasant truths that had been dodged and that must some time be faced, but for this discussion the time had not come. The constant exaggeration, the refusal to admit the immensely greater guilt and greater danger of Germany's policy, the unwillingness to see that whether rightly or wrongly, whether of her own will or at Britain's chariot wheels, Canada was at war and must first see it through, the suspicion of all things British that marked every comment, made the little Nationalist group more provocative than persuasive, a red rag to ninety-nine out of a hundred Canadians of English speech. Toward Sir Wilfrid Mr. Bourassa was particularly vindictive, charging him time and again with having involved Canada in this imperialist web, with betraying the confidence of his people, with dragging the country on inevitably toward conscription. "Sir Wilfrid Laurier is the most nefarious man in the province of Quebec, in the whole of Canada," he shouted at a political meeting in Ste. Eustache in September, 1916.

Of interest in this and other connections are letters exchanged late in 1916 between Laurier and Botha: friends who differed much in circumstance and character, but shared a common straightforwardness and a common simple dignity; shared a common sympathy with British ideals and a common lack of British blood, and shared as well a common fate of violent attack and misrepresentation from extreme Nationalists and extreme jingoos:

(Louis Botha to Wilfrid Laurier)

Prime Minister's Office,
Pretoria.
20th October, [1916](#).

DEAR SIR WILFRID:

It is many months since I have heard from you, and since our last meeting many events of great importance have occurred. I am writing you to-day chiefly because it is quite possible that we shall meet at the next Imperial Conference, and to express the hope that we shall both be delegates to that Conference. I am particularly anxious that you should make sure of attending, as the subject of closer Imperial Union is certain to be raised once more and on this occasion with far better chances of success. I do not know whether you have changed your views on this important subject since the last conference in 1912, but I certainly have not. I still think that the scheme suggested by Sir Joseph Ward on that occasion is impracticable and would interfere with the self-government rights of the Dominions. In fact, I have rather the idea of increasing those rights and making the self-governing colonies even more independent, while at the same time strengthening the Imperial connection by economic and treaty obligations, putting in fact the Dominions on an equal footing with the mother country and converting them into sister states rather than daughter colonies.

It is difficult to follow the political issues in Canada, as the information we obtain here is so meagre. Still, there is one matter which has been receiving attention here and that is in connection with one Bourassa. I am unable to follow his attitude altogether, because I know too little about it, but some of my political opponents are quoting him as shewing that their political views are identical with views held by a large section in other Dominions. Has he really a large following, and is he the mouthpiece of a large section of the Canadian people?

There are some other very important points I would like to exchange views upon, but I have not the time to go into them all. There are, however, the resolutions taken at the Paris Economic Conference, resolutions which I certainly cannot concur in. They seem to me not only premature—for my view is that all energies must be concentrated on winning this terrible war—but also mischievous and impracticable. They take no count of the

rights of neutrals and lose out of sight altogether the kaleidoscopic nature of European politics and the grouping and regrouping of European states from time to time.

I trust to hear from you soon, and am looking forward to meeting you once more at some future date. My own personal view is that this war will continue for another eighteen months at least.

(Wilfrid Laurier to Lotus Botha)

Ottawa, December 1, [1916](#).

MY DEAR BOTHA:

It was a greater pleasure than you can imagine to have your letter of the 20th of October.

I have followed your career from afar as closely as I could, realizing that you had your large share of troubles, and happy and grateful that you came out of them with such flying colours.

I may or may not be a member of the next Imperial Conference. The general elections in Canada ought normally to come off in the year 1917, but the result of an appeal to the people is always uncertain in this country, whatever it may be in South Africa. The present government are losing ground steadily, but the war adds very much to the uncertainties of the contest.

Should I be a member of the Conference, my attitude will certainly be the same as it was when you and I met there in 1907 and 1911. The same attempt which was made by Sir Joseph Ward will be repeated at the next Conference. This is evident from the book of Lionel Curtis, "The Project of a Commonwealth." Such a project, if attempted, instead of leading to union would tend to separation. The only basis of union is that which you so well indicate in your letter, "making the self-governing colonies even more independent, while at the same time strengthening the Imperial connection by economic and treaty obligations." The basis on which the British Empire has grown to its present position has been autonomy, and any departure from autonomy would end in disaster.

Such is your view and my view, but unfortunately Imperialists in England, in their eagerness, close their eyes to this patent fact. The last step taken by them in their blindness is the Paris Economic Conference. They do not seem to have perceived that by resolving that this war, when it is ended and peace restored, must be followed by a commercial war against Germany, they were putting a powerful weapon against what peace party there may be amongst the German people. It was putting in the hands of the German Chancellor the obvious retort which he was not slow to avail himself of, that Germany must go on fighting since even after the war the German people must have hostility everywhere, in economics and commerce. I still believe, however, that England with her abundant common sense will see through this fallacy.

The relations, economic, commercial and of every nature, which must follow the war, will depend very much on the extent of the victory of the Allies. I am fully confident that Germany cannot win. The only doubt is as to the extent of our victory. The only problem to-day is to win the war, all thoughts should be to that end and to nothing else.

You ask me about Henri Bourassa, his attitude and his influence. Bourassa is a man of great ability, but his ability is negative and destructive. He will never accomplish anything constructive or of benefit to any cause which he may espouse. He was at one time a close friend of mine, but we separated. His aim was to isolate the French population from the rest of the community and make them a separate body, to move exclusively together either against one or the other of the political parties. My attitude was that the French should move on political questions either as Liberal or Conservatives, and to act upon political lines alone upon all questions, as they might arise. For several years before the elections of 1911, he carried an active campaign against me amongst my French fellow-countrymen, on the ground that I was too British; whereas the Tories in the English-speaking provinces accused me of not being British enough. In 1911, these two extreme parties, the extreme French and the extreme British, joined together and their coalition defeated the government. Bourassa has lost a great deal of prestige, ever since, for every argument which he used amongst the French people has been falsified by everything that has since taken place. In the present war he has violently and continuously attacked me for my attitude, and in his campaign he seems to be animated by an absurd and growing hatred of England. To me, my course has been clear from the beginning: the triumph of Germany would be a menace to freedom in every land. England has nobly taken her part in standing at once by Belgium and France, and I have constantly and cheerfully exercised what influence I have in this country in support of her cause.

When next you go to Europe, I hope you will pass through Canada. You would be sure of the warmest welcome everywhere, and perhaps a stay of some weeks with us might be of some use to you, as the condition of things in your country and in this country is very similar.

To score a debating point, Mr. Bourassa, in the earlier stages of the war, was wont not merely to denounce "taxation and war obligation without representation," but to imply that taxation and war obligations might be acceptable if representation were accorded. Sir Wilfrid warned him through a letter to Senator Dandurand that he was playing with fire, in these verbal concessions to imperialists who might take him at his word, just as he was later to remind him, more publicly, of the danger of playing with fire in his unsparing denunciation of Allied policy:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Raoul Dandurand.—Translation)

335 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa.
January 17, [1915](#).

MY DEAR DANDURAND:

I wrote to you lately to tell you the importance I would attach to a heart-to-heart talk between yourself and Bourassa. You have remained on friendly terms with him and you can discuss thoroughly the political situation.

In my last letter I told you that Bourassa is playing with fire. If he thinks that he will be able to extinguish it he may have a rude awakening. Does he believe that he can run away from the consequences which he will have himself called forth whenever he thinks that these consequences have

gone far enough? He must have reflected upon all this.

In his speech of Thursday last he again laboured this question, upon which he constantly harps. Here are his words ("Le Devoir" of Friday, 15th Jan.): "And by effective participation we mean that Canada must share with the mother country, the sovereign authority which controls the imperial army and navy as well as treaties of peace and of alliance, the foreign relations, the government of India and of the Crown possessions."

Must we understand that Bourassa is willing to bind Canada to all the wars of the Empire in exchange for the privilege, or rather the burden, of a share in the government of India etc., etc.?

That privilege he will not obtain from the Asquith government, but from the Unionist government which will succeed Asquith's he will. Is this the ideal which he pursues? The balance of his speech seems to run counter to it. Then where is he leading to?

As ever,
Yours very truly,
WILFRID LAURIER.

Sir Wilfrid lost no opportunity to combat the Nationalist campaign. At the Monument National in Montreal, on June 3, 1916, he was insistent:

This, my compatriots, is what I ask—this is the entente cordiale I would have us achieve by service together. I have followed the ideal of conscience as prompted by my heart. Do not let us waver from the right line of conduct. I am older than most of you, and I am more than ever convinced that there is no real success but that which is based and has its foundations on right and justice and the generous instincts of the human heart. Let us unite to allay and, please God, to extinguish the prejudices that pull us apart, and do our utmost like real men and women to bring together the two elements in our country. . . .

Come, my young compatriots, with these brave young men who offer their services—their lives—that France may live, that Britain may continue her noble and generous rule and that heroic Belgium may be restored to her standing as a nation.

Again in Maisonneuve in September, to an outdoor meeting of fifteen thousand people he repeated his urging:

There are people who say we will not fight for England; will you then fight for France? I speak to you of French origin; if I were young like you and had the same health that I enjoy to-day, I would join those brave Canadians fighting to-day for the liberation of French territory. I would not have it said that the French-Canadians do less for the liberation of France than the citizens of British origin. For my part I want to fight for England and also for France. To those who do not want to fight either for England or for France I say: Will you fight for yourselves?

There was one weapon in the Nationalist armoury of particular effectiveness,—the resentment in Quebec against Ontario's limitation of the teaching of French in the elementary schools. There were some two hundred thousand French-speaking inhabitants in the province which their ancestors, first of white men, had trod, and with the overflow from Quebec their numbers were steadily growing. In the early days of local autonomy they had been free to teach much as they pleased, but in the eighties, with the growth of French settlers in the counties bordering on Quebec, the echo of McCarthy and Mercier controversies, and the growing centralization of provincial control of education, the demand for regulation had grown strong. Mowat and Ross had met it by a compromise designed to ensure adequate instruction in English together with freedom to teach French in addition. On the whole the policy had succeeded, but the difficulties were great, scarcity of bilingual teachers, poverty of frontier sections, cessation of attendance half-way through the elementary schools, and in some cases a deliberate policy of neglect of English. Friction between English- and French-speaking Roman Catholics, particularly in Ottawa and in the diocese of the militant Bishop of London, Dr. Fallon, complicated the issue. An inquiry was made by Dr. Merchant in 1910, showing for the most part honest endeavour and real progress in the teaching of English, but inadequacy still. The Conservative government of Ontario was pressed especially by its Orange followers to bar any language but English from the schools. This extremity they avoided, but the famous Regulation No. 17, of 1912, as amended in 1913, did limit the teaching of French; as the language of instruction it could be used only where children did not understand English and then not beyond Form 1—the first two years of school—except by special permission of the chief inspector; as a subject of study, it could be studied for not more than an hour a day, "in schools where French has hitherto been a subject of study." These limitations, though enforced with sympathy and caution by the department, roused a storm of protest from French-Canadians within the province and without. School boards refused to obey; inspectors were barred out; children went on strike; injunctions and lawsuits followed fast, and Canada was torn by faction at the hour of greatest need of unity.

Such a situation was the Nationalist opportunity. What was the meaning of the alliance between England and France if the language of France was to be proscribed? What hypocrisy to prate of fighting for small peoples when in Canada the majority was trying to ride roughshod over the minority! The Boches of Ontario were worse than the Boches of Prussia; the real firing line for the defence of French civilization was in Ontario, not in France. With this ranting Sir Wilfrid had no sympathy. No grievance in the schools of Ontario could justify failure in the urgent duty. Yet, like most moderate men of French blood, he did resent the arrogance of many English-speaking Canadians, their assumption that French-Canadians were citizens of a lesser order, their calm ignoring of the lessons of history, their unwillingness to study the

problem and the case for bilingualism. Even among moderate men in Ontario, who joined with him in proclaiming the ideal to be, ensure adequate knowledge of English and then wherever feasible permit the adequate teaching of French, he found an unwillingness to face the question whether this actually was possible under the present regulations, and a refusal to run risks by opposing the popular mood. Not least, he felt that at this time of stress, when it was essential to maintain harmony and enlist the enthusiasm of all sections of the community, the action of the Ontario government in attempting to narrow the limits of the teaching of French was particularly unfortunate.

Early in 1915 he wrote to Sir Lomer Gouin:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Sir Lomer Gouin.—Translation)

Ottawa, January 9, [1915](#).

... However, that is only a detail; the most important thing for the moment is the school question in Ontario. Dandurand has doubtless told you of the talk I have had with him. You are on extremely difficult ground. Undoubtedly the French-Canadians have a serious grievance in this province. The question had been settled to general satisfaction by the Mowat government, through the regulations framed by Ross, his Minister of Education. It seems to me that it is upon this ground that the question should be kept.

On the other hand I am more than ever convinced that the violent agitation stirred up by our Nationalist friends, instead of aiding in a solution only makes the situation worse. That is what causes embarrassment; as you know, it is not the first time in the history of our country that a cause has been spoiled by the violence of those who make themselves its champions.

To Mr. Cowan he wrote freely:

I notice your special reference to the bilingual question. It so happens that George showed me your letter to him before I received yours, and I told him that I would take the liberty of writing you at once.

Do not commend me for what I have done, or refrained to do, in this matter. It has given me more concern than anybody else in the party, I feel quite sure. I have about come to the conclusion that I have lived too long and that my usefulness has gone. The reason is that I do not find in the party of to-day the same feeling that existed when you and I were younger than we are now. And this is confirmed by your statement that the feeling in Ontario is absolutely in favour of enforcing strictly Regulation 17, and "is prepared to oppose and slaughter any man or any party who talks of granting greater privileges to the French in the Province of Ontario."

Will you permit me to ask you if you have taken the trouble ever to read Regulation 17, and to make yourself acquainted with its purport? I doubt it, and if I am wrong I am prepared to apologize. You and I are too old friends not to be perfectly frank with one another. I stand to-day, with regard to the privileges of the French, exactly where I did, and where you did, and where the whole party did in the time of Mowat: and this attitude was that every French child should receive an English education in the schools of Ontario, with the privilege of being also taught in French.

Are you aware that Regulation 17 has completely revolutionized that policy? In short, Regulation 17 provides that in all schools in Ontario where French was taught in the month of June, [1912](#), it would continue to be taught, but in a restricted manner; and, further, that in all schools where French was not then taught, it should not be taught at all. I stated above that I did not believe that you had read that regulation, because I am sure, at least I believe, that it never entered your mind that in a civilized country the teaching of a second language, and such a language as French, could be thus ruthlessly prohibited. If in this I am wrong, and if really Toryism has made such headway in the province of Ontario that the Grits will not stand up to the policy of Mowat, then, I repeat, I have lived too long, and my only course would be at once to step down and out. I stand to-day by the policy on which we fought so many elections in Ontario from 1885 to 1896.

I tell you frankly that I have felt and still feel strongly upon this matter.

I know that I never appealed to race prejudice in any form whatsoever and under any circumstances; and that in my province I have had to fight desperate battles against those who were making direct appeals to the prejudices of my fellow-countrymen. But, if it has come to this, that the language of the race to which I belong is proscribed, then my fellow-countrymen have a just cause of complaint. It is no longer prejudice, and their cause ought to appeal to generous-hearted men like my friend Mahlon Cowan.

Ottawa, April 15, [1916](#).

MY DEAR MAHLON:

Many thanks for your letter.

I am afraid there is too much truth in your statement that the Liberal party to-day would not stand to the policy of Mowat, and this is the very reason which makes me feel to-day—even more than when I wrote you—that I have lived too long,—and that it is time for me to step down and out.

I am aware that T. C. Casgrain, the Bishop of St. Hyacinthe, Armand Lavergne and other extremists are creating a good deal of irritation in Ontario, but it is under such circumstances that sane and strong men have to stand up.

You are aware that I have fought those extremists all my life. I have no intention to relax that fight, whilst at the same time I shall have to fight the extremists at your end of the line.

I know very well that under these circumstances the party must suffer. This will always be the case. It was the case with Gladstone, when he fought for Home Rule in Ireland. His course was very much impeded by those wild Irishmen whose mad utterances were gleefully accepted and made use of by Tories to fight him.

To Mr. Fielding, who deprecated any discussion of the issue in the federal parliament, he made clear how much he felt the refusal of his English-speaking compatriots to put themselves in his place:

Ottawa, April 26, [1916](#).

The subject, and the views which you present have given me more anxiety, I believe, than even to yourself or to anybody else.

I see no other solution for it, situated as I am, than to step down and out, as evidently I have outlived my usefulness. . . .

I believe you will acquit me from race or creed prejudice, but I confess to you that I believe that my fellow-countrymen of my own race here are unfairly and unjustly treated.

Naturally, feeling that way, I am entitled to act accordingly. What is the remedy to be sought? I have steadily and absolutely opposed any attempt at disallowance. I do not see, however, why I should not make representations, as we did in the case of Home Rule and the New Brunswick schools in 1872 and 1875. If I were to remain silent under such circumstances I would certainly lose my own self-esteem and respect and, on the other hand, I know that the moderate action which I propose will be construed against the party, so long as I remain the head of it.

I have discussed the matter with our leading friends in the House and suggested to them that I should withdraw and pass the reins to some other hands. You know that I have always thought that the leadership of the party should be in the hands of one of the majority. This view strongly impressed me at first, and I am still of the same opinion.

My friends, however, are very earnestly, though, I think, very unwisely, deprecating any other course than my remaining in the present position.

There the matter stands at present. I am not convinced. My opinion is still very strong that I should step down, as I feel that in the present emergency the attitude which I must take will be detrimental to the party, though we must recognize that Toryism has made strong headway in Ontario, and that the policy of Mowat is now at a discount.

To Mr. N. W. Rowell, who as leader of the Liberal Opposition in Ontario was deeply concerned, he was more explicit:

Ottawa, March 1, [1916](#).

MY DEAR ROWELL:

I am just as alarmed as you are about the bilingual situation in Ontario. To me, however, the situation is a very simple one. I stand where the party has always stood for the last forty years, and for the system of bilingual schools established by Mowat.

The complaint is made, and rightly made, I believe, that in many schools, under that system, English was not taught at all and that the only language taught was French. This was an abuse which should not have been tolerated and which could be easily put an end to, simply by applying the regulations as made by the Mowat government, and insisting that every child should have an English education. It is the duty of the State, you say, [to see] that every child in the province receives a good English education. To this, I agree completely. You add that where the parents desire that their children should also study the French language, there should be no objection. To this, I also completely agree.

But this is exactly what is denied by Regulation 17. I have looked at these regulations carefully for the last two days. I must say for the Department of Education of Ontario that they seem to be much confused, not only in their ideas but in their language. As you read the last regulations, those of August, [1913](#), the French language can be taught with certain restrictions in all schools where it was taught in the month of August, [1912](#), but is not to be taught in any other school; that is to say, that, henceforth, the Orange doctrine is to prevail,—that the English language only is to be taught in the schools. That seems to me absolutely tyrannical.

Your suggestion that a commission composed of three men should study the situation, is a good one. . . .

With regard to the press report that the Quebec legislature has authorized municipalities in Quebec to make contributions towards a fund to carry on bilingual agitation in Ontario, I believe the case is not stated properly. I would be much surprised if a man of Gouin's prudence has allowed the passing of a law to carry on bilingual agitation. I will look into the matter right away, but what I believe is that the legislature has authorized municipalities to assist French children in Ontario in obtaining a French education in addition to the English education, which they must receive under the laws of the province.

Ottawa, April 18, [1916](#).

I notice what you say about the caucus of last week, and your hope that if the question was considered the decision was against introducing a resolution. I cannot refrain from expressing my strong disappointment. If the party cannot stand up to the principles advocated, maintained and fought for by Mowat and Blake, I can only repeat to you that it is more than time for me to step down and out.

Ottawa, April 28, [1916](#).

May I add another word to what you may think perhaps a too prolonged correspondence?

I agree with you that there were two principles for which Mowat stood all his life: provincial rights and fair treatment of minorities. In my judgment the latter principle, fair treatment of the minority, has been violated by the men now in office in Ontario. Do you believe otherwise?

As to provincial rights, I adhere to the principle. I strongly deprecated the idea of disallowance of the legislation of which the minority complains. Does the idea of provincial rights go to the extent that it will not receive the complaint of a minority?

Again and again, the Dominion parliament, on both sides, whilst refusing to interfere with provincial legislation, has made representations to legislatures which, in many instances, have produced most salutary effects and a modification of the legislation complained of. I go not further, and I regret exceedingly that even that much will not be granted by our friends in Ontario.

Ottawa, May 11, [1916](#).

You and I have renewed a line of cleavage which—I so judge from the tone of your letter just received—is final and beyond redemption.

That the powers of the province should be, and indeed are, paramount, is not questionable, and not questioned.

What I fail to appreciate is that the prayer offered for a reconsideration of the present regulations on bilingualism, should be harshly treated as an invasion of the rights of the province. Such a position is not logically and historically tenable, and here again the present attitude of the party at Toronto is at variance with the traditions laid down by the fathers. It is sufficient in this connection, to refer you to the Home Rule resolutions passed in the House of Commons with the approval of the whole party.

I write with a heavy heart. The party has not advanced; it has sorely retrograded, abandoning position after position before the haughty onslaughts of Toryism.

Believe me ever, my dear Rowell, with great respect,

Yours very sincerely,

WILFRED LAURIER.

The question could not be kept out of federal discussion. The issue had been created and until in some way understanding and settlement was reached, it would prevent full national unity. On May 9, Ernest Lapointe, himself a brilliant example of the value of bilingualism, moved, in the language he had learned since his coming to Ottawa in 1908, a resolution that "this House . . . while fully recognizing the principle of provincial rights and the necessity of every child being given a thorough English education, respectfully suggests to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario the wisdom of making it clear that the privilege of the children of French parentage of being taught in their mother tongue be not interfered with." Immediately, a Western Liberal, W. E. Knowles, raised the point of order that the legislation in question was not within the jurisdiction of the House, and was therefore not a proper subject for debate. The Speaker on the following day gave his opinion that there was no basis for the point of order. Mr. W. B. Northrup, an Ontario Conservative, thereupon appealed from the Speaker's ruling, but was supported by only eight other members, all Western Liberals. Mr. Lapointe then presented his resolution. The debate which followed did credit to parliament, with Mr. Lapointe, W. F. Nickle, Paul Lamarche, Claude Macdonnell, George Graham, and Frank Oliver,—who emphasized the need of one language in the polyglot prairie West—making the most notable contributions.

Sir Wilfrid supported the resolution in a speech which ranks as one of his strongest efforts, lucid, persuasive, restrained but vibrating with emotion. "It was," wrote the correspondent of the Conservative Toronto "World," "the greatest speech from an oratorical standpoint to which I have ever listened. Sir Wilfrid was in splendid form and he spoke with deep feeling. As he proceeded, his years dropped from him like a garment, and he seemed as vigorous and resolute as a man of thirty-five."

I appeal, not to passion or prejudice, but to the sober reasoning and judgment of my fellow-countrymen of all origins. I discard at once all reference to constitutional arguments. I do not here and now bring within the purview of this discussion the British North America Act. I do not here and now invoke the cold letter of any positive law. Still less do I question the paramount power of the legislature of Ontario to finally pass judgment upon this question and record the final verdict of its people. I rise, Sir, not for the purpose of giving advice or admonition to the province of Ontario. I rise to plead before the people of Ontario, in behalf of his Majesty's subjects of French origin in that province, who complain that by reason of a statute passed by the province they have been deprived of rights in the matter of education which they have enjoyed themselves and their forefathers before them, ever since Canada became a possession of the British Crown. . . .

I am of the old school of Mowat and Blake, the parent school of Provincial Rights. By that doctrine I stand. The province of Ontario, and the province of Ontario alone, will and shall determine for herself the decision. Yet is it forbidden by the code of the new converts to the doctrine of provincial rights that I stand at the bar before my fellow-countrymen of Ontario and make my plea? Is it forbidden that I respectfully present the petition of a humble servant of French origin? . . .

I know there is in the province of Ontario a sense of irritation at the position taken by some of my fellow-countrymen of French blood in the province of Quebec, who have from the first deprecated the participation of Canada in the present war, and who have exerted their influence to attempt at least to prevent enlistment. Alas, it is true; it is only too true. It is deplorable, and, to me, as unintelligible as it is deplorable. It is true, alas, that there are in my province men of French origin who, when France is fighting the fight of heroism which stirs the blood of mankind, remain with their blood cold, who tell us: "No, we will not lift a finger to assist Britain in defending the integrity of France, but we want our wrongs to be righted in Ontario."

Wrongs or no wrongs, there is a field of honour; there is a call of duty.

Sir, I am not prepared to say that my fellow-countrymen of French origin have no rights in Ontario; but I am prepared to say this, and I want my words to be heard throughout the length and breadth of this land. Whether my countrymen have rights or no rights in Ontario, whether those rights are granted or denied, these considerations are no bar to the duty which the French-Canadians owe to themselves and to the honour of their race to come forward in their fullest numbers and take part in the great struggle that is going on to-day in the land of their ancestors for the cause of freedom, and of the civilization of mankind. . . .

A journal published in the city of Toronto, edited by a man of great ability, an eminent writer who has given himself the mission of being the foremost advocate of a closer bond of union for the British Empire [Mr. J. S. Willison, of the Toronto "News"], has within the last ten days, inaugurated a new programme, the first article of which is, "One language and one language only." Under the present circumstances, this means

that only one language shall be taught in the schools of Ontario. Sir, I wonder if this new theory for bringing about unity of the Empire is to be applied in Wales, . . . and in the Highlands of Scotland, or in Malta, or in Egypt, or in South Africa. Sir, if there is one thing which to-day stands to the glory of England—a feat unparalleled in the history of the world—it is that to-day on the battle-field in Flanders there are men who do not speak a word of English but who for England have come forward to fight and die. If the Britisher, when he went to India, to Malta, to South Africa, had implanted that new doctrine of "one language and one language only," and had suppressed the language of the peoples who had just passed under his dominion, do you believe, sir, you would have seen that great and noble spectacle which has astonished and is still astonishing the world? No, sir. It is because British institutions everywhere have carried freedom and respect for minorities that England is as strong as she is to-day.

I want to appeal to the sense of justice and fair play of the people of Ontario, and to their appreciation of British institutions—no more. Even if I am wrong—and I hope I am not—I am sure that a frank understanding between the majority and the minority in the province of Ontario, between the two great elements which compose the Canadian people, may force a solution of this troublesome question. Every man in the province of Ontario, every man in this room who comes from the province of Ontario, whether he sits on that side or on this side, is determined that every child in the province of Ontario shall receive an English education. To that, sir, I give my fullest assent. I want every child in the province of Ontario to receive the benefit of an English education. Wherever he may go on this continent I want him to be able to speak the language of the great majority of the people on this continent. I want it, I say, not only because it is the law of the province, but because of merely utilitarian considerations. No man on this continent is equipped for the battle of life unless he has an English education. I want every child to have an English education.

After surveying the practice of other countries in the Empire, emphasizing the unanimous verdict of the Imperial Educational Conference held in London in 1911, upon the methods to be followed in bilingual teaching, and analyzing in detail the Ontario regulations, he continued:

Now I come to the point where I want to speak to my fellow-countrymen in the province of Ontario. When I ask that every child of my own race should receive an English education, will you refuse us the privilege of education also in the language of our mothers and our fathers? That is all that I ask to-day; I ask nothing more than that. I simply ask you, my fellow-countrymen, British subjects like myself, if, when we say that we must have an English education, you will say: "You shall have an English education and nothing else." There are men who say that in the schools of Ontario and Manitoba there should be no other language than the English language. But, sir, when I ask that we should have also the benefit of a French education, will you refuse us that benefit? Is that an unnatural demand? Is that an obnoxious demand? Will the concession of it do harm to anybody? And will it be said that in the great province of Ontario there is a disposition to put a bar on knowledge and to stretch every child in the schools of Ontario upon a Procrustean bed and say that they shall all be measured alike, that no one shall have the privilege of a second education in a single language? I do not believe it; and, if we discuss this question with frankness, as between man and man, in my humble opinion, it can yet be settled by an appeal to the people of Ontario. I do not believe that any man will refuse us the benefit of a French education.

An eloquent appeal, but an appeal made in vain, both within and outside the House. The government speakers took the stand that the question did not concern the federal parliament, and that its discussion would fan, rather than allay, the flames. In detail, it was urged that the Ontario regulations were not so drastic as they were represented, that the restrictions applied only to certain designated schools which had not been teaching English adequately, and that the question of teaching French in schools where it had not been taught hitherto was not determined by Regulation 17 at all, but by the old Regulation 15, which limited the teaching of French or German as subjects of study to sections where the French or German language prevailed, a regulation which had not been changed. The Ontario Liberals, while denying the charges of fanaticism and intolerance which had been made against Ontario outside the House, supported the resolution as a step toward reconciliation. The Westerners opposed. Eleven Western Liberals and one Ontario Liberal voted against the resolution, and five Quebec Conservatives for it.

Outside the House, Conservatives attacked Laurier as a disturber of the peace, an ally of Bourassa, the man responsible for Quebec's slowness in recruiting, while even some friends deprecated his stand as untimely. He felt the matter deeply. His stand, he was assured, whether or not expedient, was in accord with Liberal principles and Liberal traditions. If Liberals would not support it, that meant that they were forgetting the necessity of tolerance and diversity in Canada's governing, or were afraid to face popular prejudice as he had faced it in Ontario in 1886 and in Quebec in 1896. He considered the question a touchstone of popular and party attitude, a test of the success or failure of his lifelong striving for racial sympathy. The test was not reassuring. It was an evidence of his concern over the deeper issues at stake that the defection of the Western Liberals forced from him a rare outbreak of anger. One who saw him in daily and intimate intercourse for eight years declares that in all that time he never heard a single impatient or angry word pass Sir Wilfrid's lips but twice,—once over some trifling stupidity of locked and keyless trunks, once now over the refusal of the Westerners to make any concession to him who had made so many.

In letters to his friends he had more than once declared that the hesitation of the party to follow his lead was proof that he should have insisted upon his resignation being accepted when last he proffered it. Now the question had been put to the proof. During the debate the Liberal members had met in caucus by provinces. Senator Dandurand brought to him in his office their report; the Quebec and Maritime-province members were all supporting, the Western members opposing; the Ontario men, while in sympathy with the aim of the motion, doubted its expediency, but they would vote for it if Sir

Wilfrid so desired them. "No," he replied, "I shall not ask them; they should not expect that after all these years." He walked to the window, stood looking out in silence a few minutes, and then came back to his desk. "I have lived too long, I have outlived Liberalism. The forces of prejudice in Ontario have been too much for my friends. It was a mistake for a French Roman Catholic to take the leadership. I told Blake so thirty years ago."—"Yes, but those thirty years—" He was silent again and then scribbled a few lines: "I am resigning and shall announce my resignation in the House this afternoon. Please give this to George." Senator Dandurand took the letter to George Graham. Immediately the Ontario Liberals assembled. They had not realized that "the Old Man" took it so much to heart. At once they sent word that they would support the motion, and urgently requested him to withdraw his resignation. He was deeply moved by their warm expressions of confidence, and agreed to continue.

To an Ontario editor, who had made the criticism that the speech should have been delivered to the electors of Ontario, not to the members at Ottawa, and had gone on to insist that English must be taught adequately in every school in Ontario he wrote later:

What is the use of my going to Toronto or anywhere else in Ontario if I am to speak to deaf ears, ears voluntarily deaf? What is the use of trying to convince those whom I would address, if there is no possibility of changing their minds?

Did I say that I wanted children to issue from schools of Ontario without knowing English? Did I, on the contrary, not say that for every reason I wanted every child of French origin to speak English? Did Sir Oliver Mowat, when he established the system of which Dr. Merchant complained, intend that children of French origin should not learn English? If Dr. Merchant found that there were schools in which no English was taught, it was not as the result of the system established by Sir Oliver Mowat, but because that system was not properly enforced, and the remedy was not to alter the system but to insist upon the fulfilment of its regulations.

And again, somewhat earlier:

You add that Howard Ferguson and the extreme Orange element feel that there is party advantage for them in insisting upon greater restrictions in the teaching of French, just as Bourassa, Lavergne, and the extreme partisans on the other side feel that there is an advantage for them in insisting upon the recognition of French as an official language in the province of Ontario. We, French Liberals of Quebec, are fighting Bourassa and Lavergne; will the English Liberals in Ontario fight Howard Ferguson and the extreme Orange element?

To another Ontario friend:

You call my attention to the official interpretations of Regulation 17 which have recently been given to the press, and which were quoted in part in the debates in the House. It may be that the practice of the Department of Education is sometimes better than its regulations, and its intentions better than its grammar. I am advised that the Department is not altogether happy over its position, but is not prepared to make a frank reversal. Can you imagine anything more confused than these regulations and amendments and interpretations? . . . Doubtless the minister learned English in one of these hopelessly backward bilingual schools.

Yet these interpretations, if they show a desire to hedge, do not in the least explain away the objections which have been taken. It is declared that Regulation 17 does not apply to all schools in which French has been taught, but only to certain specially designated ones among them, in which English has not been taught properly. Do you, as a matter of fact, know of any bilingual schools in which Regulation 17 is not in force? If there are any such, is French taught there more freely and more extensively? If not, it is nonsense to say that the regulation does not apply. If so, then the Department is confessing that it is quite possible to teach English adequately and yet to give French more than the grudging scope of Regulation 17. . . .

Ontario was not the only province in which the bilingual issue was alive. In Manitoba, the new Liberal government of Premier Norris had rescinded the clause in the School Act, inserted as a result of the Laurier-Greenway agreement of 1896, which gave the parents of ten children speaking any language other than English the right to bilingual instruction. The unforeseen immigration of thousands of settlers from Central Europe had created an extremely difficult situation in many sections where Polish, Ruthenian, or German parents all clamoured for teaching in their mother tongue. The government insisted on securing a free hand, though informally undertaking not to disturb the privileges of the French-speaking citizens so long at least as the schooling was adequate. In a letter to a prominent French-Canadian in Winnipeg, Sir Wilfrid went at some length into this situation and into the general racial and constitutional background:

(Translation)

Ottawa, July 12, [1916](#).

The transition from winter to spring is always a depressing period for me, and I have perhaps felt it more this year than usually. Yet my health is still very good, and now that the sun has at last come back to us, I am feeling myself again.

I have read and reread your letter in reply to my own. I agree with you on all points but one, to which I refer later. We have reached a critical period in the development of Confederation, with regard to the rights of the French language. Unfortunately, the B. N. A. Act contains only one article on this subject, and the rights which are conferred upon us are very restricted alike in letter and in spirit. . . .

This article is so explicit that it seems to me impossible to interpret it judicially otherwise than in a wholly restrictive sense. The Nationalists,

however, maintain that since we have the right to speak French in the federal parliament and before the courts, we have the right to teach French in the schools of every province. Even if Section 133 were not positive and restricted, as it is, to conclude that the concession of a privilege carries with it an obligatory consequence seems to me a judicial heresy. . . .

It is an historical fact that without the French population of Quebec the union of the provinces of British North America would have been a legislative union; the French population of Quebec would never have consented to such a form, since that would mean its disappearance as a distinct element. It is Quebec that suggested the federal form, and it must be accepted with all its consequences. For the French population of Quebec the advantages have been immense; outside Quebec, in face of the positive terms of Section 133, the French tongue has nothing to look for aside from whatever sentiments the justice of the cause may arouse and whatever influence may be brought to bear on the majority.

The desire for centralization, which had not succeeded in getting entrenched in the constitutional act, was not long in reappearing and in aiming at domination, in spite of the letter of the law. Then began the struggle between the federal and the provincial governments, particularly Ontario and Manitoba. Experience has certainly made it clear that, after all, the division of power between the Dominion and the provinces is the only principle on which the Canadian Confederation can be worked. The province of Quebec is more interested than any other in the maintenance of this principle in its absolute integrity.

Yet from this comes also the anguish of the present hour. What are the rights of the French language other than those defined in Section 133, and, to come to the question of the moment, what are the rights of the French language in the matter of education? This question will be decided judicially by the Privy Council in the case which is now being heard. If the decision goes against us, what remains to be done, and to what tribunal must we have recourse? Here I come to the point where, unfortunately, I do not agree with you.

You believe in remedial legislation, but remedial legislation is provided for only under Section 93, and Section 93 applies only to denominational schools (Roman Catholic minority and Protestant minority). Whatever arguments may be devised to bring language within the category of denominational schools, you are confronted by this positive fact that in the province of Ontario, if the Catholic minority of French speech complains of Regulation 17 as an attack upon separate schools, on the other hand the Catholic minority of English speech makes no objection and in fact approves. In any case, were there a basis for remedial legislation, that remedy would be wholly illusory, and the objections which you recognize yourself seem to me peremptory.

What remains? Nothing but the means which has brought about every reform in British countries and which has transformed Great Britain itself; which has turned an oligarchy into a democracy; which has extended the franchise from one class to another in turn, until now it is the privilege of every class in the nation; which has abolished many of the privileges of caste and is on the way to extinguish what remains; which has brought about the replacement of protection by free trade; which has abolished the privileges of the Church of England in Ireland and is on the way to abolish them in Wales; which is proceeding to attack with the same success all that remains of the feudal regime; and which, finally, after a struggle of more than a century, has obtained the concession of Home Rule for Ireland.

That amounts to saying that in constitutional countries it is by persuasion, by moderation that in the end right triumphs. The struggle for Home Rule in Ireland has lasted for more than a century, but the cause has triumphed at last. That is the only resource remaining to us. Observe that this resource has always won, even in this country of ours; in Nova Scotia, where the bilingual method of teaching exists in practice though not by law, and so, too, in the province of New Brunswick.

To come now to what concerns Manitoba. I have had several conferences with members of the cabinet. I have not been able to persuade them to leave the Laurier-Greenway agreement alone. On this point, they have all taken a stand of blank refusal, alleging that the regulation has been abused, on behalf not so much of the languages, as of the Slav dialects, which are now met with in Manitoba. All have declared that they recognize that the French language has rights not based on law, but which they agree to respect.

I am informed that so far no change whatever has been made in the French schools. If this is so, is it not best to accept the régime of tolerance, such as exists in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick?

This is the conclusion to which I have come, and I submit it to you for your full consideration and for your own opinion. Not only have I no confidence in the violent methods of Senator Landry, but I see great danger in them. I have said so frankly to Landry, whose zeal I respect, but who is of too fiery a temper to be a safe guide. . . .

CHAPTER XIX

THE CLOSING YEARS

Canada's Achievement—The Recruiting Situation—Conscription Proposals—Imperialist Campaign—Borden and Conscription—Belated Coalition Offers—The Conscription Debate—Cleavage in the Liberal Ranks—The Western Convention—Railways, Franchise Act and Union Government—The December Election—Unionist Victory—The Failure of Conscription—Rallying the Forces—The End.

The bilingual question was a minor issue, but its discussion revealed, though faintly, some of the factors that were soon to shape action on the more temporary but more acute issue of conscription. The lines of cleavage within the party and in the country were drawn. As yet the wedge was not thrust in as deep as opponents had hoped and friends had feared. Sir Wilfrid's attitude undoubtedly weakened his position in the English-speaking provinces, but the immediate results were not marked. For the time, the government had no competitor in unpopularity.^[59] The election of Hartley Dewart in a provincial contest in south-west Toronto and of Mr. Wellington Hay in the federal riding of Perth and particularly the steady victory of the Liberals in the provincial elections, resulting in a change from 1911 of five Conservative and four Liberal administrations and of 280 Conservative and 187 Liberal members to seven Liberal and two Conservative administrations by the end of 1916, with 336 Liberal as against 180 Conservative seats, indicated a strong current. Some relief came with the resignation of General Hughes in November, 1916, for it was against Sir Sam that the most vigorous Liberal and independent criticism was directed. The correspondence exchanged at the time, with Sir Robert's charges of mismanagement and dictatorialness, "your desire to administer your department as if it were a distinct and separate government in itself," and Sir Sam's counter-charges of muddling incompetence, snobbish favouritism, and petty intrigue, did not in itself do the government any good. The storm of criticism was a sign of frazzling nerves. The government had undoubtedly made serious mistakes, and was to make more, but it had a great achievement to its credit. By the end of 1916, 400,000 men had been enrolled and 280,000 had gone overseas; a munitions industry employing 300,000 men had been built up; a tardy beginning made in direct taxation through the assessment of business profits, and a second domestic loan of \$100,000,000 subscribed twice over. As to how far the government and how much the people could claim the credit, there was room for debate, but unquestionably Canada's achievement, in the field and at home, was immensely beyond any dreaming when the war began, and not unworthy of the high need.

The clashing demands of the army and of production for men led in this year to much scattered discussion of relative needs and of means of holding the balance right. Recruiting in the beginning of the year brought in thirty thousand men a month; at the close of the year, with seasonal expansion, the growth of the munitions industry and the exhaustion of eligible men, the numbers fell to six thousand. The counter currents of opinion were seen in the demand of recruiting leagues for conscription, and from manufacturers and business men for selective enlistment which would leave their working forces undisturbed; and in typical utterances such as Lord Shaughnessy's speech in April doubting whether the premier's proposal to raise 500,000 men was practicable except at the cost of a serious drain on the country's working forces, the resolution of the United Farmers of Ontario against further draining of the scanty labour of the farms, and the demand of the munitions section of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association in March that munitions workers should be protected against recruiting. There was an increasing demand for compulsory service, but the leading newspapers on both sides of politics opposed it.

In September, the government as a compromise measure established a National Service Board to encourage recruiting while at the same time endeavouring to protect essential industries. Unfortunately the plan was marked from the beginning by the habit of the government in considering the war as a branch of the patronage system of the Conservative party. Of the eleven Directors of National Service appointed, ten were strong Conservative workers. The director-general, Sir Thomas Tait, resigned after three weeks' experience of government methods. In accordance with a resolution of the National Service Board, Sir Robert Borden then requested Sir Wilfrid to name five Liberal members to serve on a co-operating parliamentary committee of twelve, but in view of the conditions of which Sir Thomas Tait's resignation was only one evidence Sir Wilfrid declined this belated plea: "I feel, under the circumstances, in acceding to your suggestion any assistance to the cause which I have endeavoured to serve from the first day of the war would not be untrammelled and consequently as effective as if I continue to serve it according to my own ways as heretofore." Mr. R. B. Bennett succeeded as director-general, and carried on a vigorous campaign, in which he took repeated occasion to oppose the suggestion of conscription as disruptive of national unity. A national registration in December proved of little practical value. Sir Wilfrid's attitude to the conscription proposals, and his anticipation of the lengths to which the race

cry would be carried, are clear from a letter to a British Columbia supporter:

Ottawa, January 8, [1917](#).

I accept your kind wishes for myself and my wife with great pleasure, and I adhere to the old ways of our fathers in that respect, and I wish we would still follow their example in many other ways. There was a time when I thought that with the inventions of recent times, which have brought the world more closely together, a feeling of brotherhood would ensue, but the reverse has happened. The nations have opened ways of communication between them, not for the purpose of having peace and amity, but to assail one another even with more bitterness than before. The present war is a sad blow to those who had hoped for an advanced civilization.

Therefore, I come back to the old ways, and not only do I receive your greetings as they are sent, but I pray you to accept all my best wishes for the coming year, for yourself and your family.

What you tell me about the nature of the next campaign is quite true: the only tactics of the Tories will be "French Quebec." To talk of civil war in Quebec is simply sheer nonsense. There is a certain element noisy and bombastic, and this element is what is left of the "parti nationaliste." For two or three years before 1911, and especially in the election of 1911, they roused a very dangerous spirit; dangerous, not because it means civil war, but because it means a cleavage between French and British races. The Tories are reaping now what they sowed, for at that time they were in open alliance with the Nationalists.

The feeling in favour of conscription, which undoubtedly is making headway in the British provinces, is not a genuine one. The British people are averse to conscription, but the attitude which is represented as the attitude of Quebec maddens them, and every one who is in favour of conscription, except yourself, favours the movement not because he believes it necessary, but because Quebec is represented to be against it. On this point, even after reading your careful letter, I see no reason to change my views. If we have conscription, it is a severe blow to immigration, and without immigration what is to become of the country? Think of all this, and let me have your matured consideration.

I agree with you in everything that you say as to the necessity of winning this war. I think we have done well, very well indeed. But already agriculture and industry are suffering for the lack of labour. The acreage under seed in 1916 was less than in 1915 and, I understand, will be less still in 1917.

With regard to the coming elections, I fear nothing but the prejudice which will be the only weapon of the enemy. I have often regretted that I accepted the leadership of the party in 1887. My judgment was very keen at that time that the leader should be of the majority. We have not done badly, we have even done well, beyond all our expectations perhaps, but I have had to battle all the time against the insidious tactics which will be openly used, and more wickedly than ever, in the next campaign.

Along with the discussion of the organization of the nation for the war grew the discussion of a national or coalition government. The movement had different roots, the belief of patriots that only with a non-party or all-party government could Canada rise to the height of the need, and that only by coalition could a distracting war-time election be avoided, the belief of conscriptionists that only a coalition government could enforce compulsion, and the unwillingness of Ontario men to accept as the alternative to the existing government a Liberal administration in which Quebec would probably be strongly represented. The movement developed chiefly in Toronto and Winnipeg, and largely in independent and Liberal circles; the Liberal press, with the notable exceptions of the Toronto "Star" and the "Manitoba Free Press," were for the most part, and the Conservative press almost unanimously, against it. Sir Wilfrid's attitude to the movement and his quick appreciation of the personal and racial undercurrents involved, is indicated in a brief letter to Mr. Rowell early in 1917:

Ottawa, January 23, [1917](#).

MY DEAR ROWELL:

Your letter in no way surprises me. It is not the first that I have had on this subject of a national government.

The situation is simply this, that the government has been constantly losing ground, but a good many of those dissatisfied, and perhaps all, do not want to entrust the direction of affairs to a leader of French origin. Analyze the situation any way you please, and tell me candidly if this is not at the present moment the true and only difficulty. The constant appeals which have been made on that ground by the "News," the "Telegram," the "Orange Sentinel," and some other papers of the same sort have produced their effect, all the more so that the defence on our side has lacked vigour.

Under such circumstances a national government is proposed.

What is a national government? Is it anything else but coalition under another name; and after the experience of coalition in Great Britain during the present war, have you still much faith in it? The very fact that you and so many of our friends in Toronto are looking to a coalition government is abundant proof that my usefulness is gone. Of this I do not complain, especially after what happened to Asquith less than a month ago.

You want me to join a coalition if Borden invites me. Even in the face of your insistence, I am sure you would not expect me to join blindly, without first knowing what would be the programme of the next administration. There are many questions now looming up, which cannot be long deferred, and as to which you cannot expect me to join this or any other government, unless I knew at once where the new government would stand.

Do you think differently?

I write you frankly, and if you would come to Ottawa any time during the week, I would much prefer to have the occasion of going over that ground verbally than by letter.

That Sir Wilfrid had not erred in his analysis of the motives behind the movement was made clear in a notable address,

urging greater war sacrifice, delivered by an eminent Toronto business man, Mr. J. W. Flavelle, chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, before the Ottawa Canadian Club in December, [1916](#). Mr. Flavelle made it precisely clear that the group of imperialists for whom he spoke were determined to preserve, with or preferably without an election, an English-speaking bloc for the after-war making over of the Empire:

If a general election is held shortly, a racial cry will be inevitable and English will be pitted against French and French against English, and there will follow years of bitterness. Moreover, remember when the struggle is over, the group of men who will sit round the table in council with the representatives from other Dominions to determine what will be the future of this Empire will have to be a group of men chosen from this Dominion not by party guidance or by party methods, for it is inconceivable to me that a government sustained by the vote of a section of this Dominion which, no matter for what reason or conscience, were unwilling to bear their share in this struggle, would be permitted without civil strife to determine what part Canada should take in the Imperial Council which must follow the war.

The seventh session of the parliament elected in 1911 was opened on January 19, [1917](#). It was to be a momentous session, but little was accomplished at the outset. The Speech from the Throne announced the government's intention to seek a further extension of the life of parliament. Apparently, its intention was to prolong its own power without the risk of an appeal to the electors; there was no announcement and no appearance of any intention to offer the Opposition a share in the control of the administration. Within the Liberal ranks, the feeling was on the whole in favour of an election. Some urged the acceptance of extension on condition of coalition, either because they considered coalition desirable or because they considered the rejection of such an offer would put the government at a disadvantage. Sir Wilfrid's own feeling, whether because of the mismanagement in the war, or the growing uneasiness in the country and a moribund parliament's obvious losing of its grip, or because of his expectation of a Liberal victory, leaned toward an election, but no decision was made, awaiting events.

Parliament had scarcely met when it was proposed to adjourn. The new British prime minister, David Lloyd-George, had invited the prime ministers of the Dominions to attend a war meeting of the Imperial Conference, the first since 1911, and also a meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet. Sir Robert Borden accepted, but could not well take his hand from the helm in Canada. Sir Wilfrid therefore offered to vote the necessary war supplies and an interim proportion of other grants, in order to permit parliament to adjourn during the prime minister's absence overseas. This was arranged and on February 12 Sir Robert sailed for Britain, accompanied by his chosen colleagues, Douglas Hazen, Minister of Marine, and Robert Rogers, Minister of Public Works and Elections.

The Conference, which consisted, as usual, of the representatives of Great Britain, of the Dominions, except Australia (where the prime minister was in the throes of a general election), and, for the first time, of India, debated the usual inter-imperial issues. The resolutions provided for the future admission of India to Imperial Conferences, a self-contained trade and immigration policy to assist the development of imperial resources, a request to the Admiralty to work out after the war a scheme of naval defence of the Empire for the consideration of the various governments, and the postponement of any constitutional change until a special conference after the war, with the understanding, however, that any readjustment, while preserving existing self-government and recognizing the Dominions as "autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth," should also recognize "the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy and in foreign relations," and provide for continuous consultation on matters of common imperial concern. The Imperial War Cabinet, which consisted of the British War Cabinet and two other British members together with one representative from each Dominion and two from India, was an innovation in imperial affairs. It was devised by Mr. Lloyd-George, on the prompting of Round Table confidants, to provide a central executive authority for the whole Empire, dealing with the details of war policies and war problems in decisive administrative fashion, and hence differed wholly from the Imperial Conference, which was a meeting of governments to consider general policy. It meant practically that on certain days the Dominion premiers sat in the small inner British cabinet to which the conduct of the war had been devised. So well pleased were the members with the experiment that Mr. Lloyd-George declared it should be perpetuated, that an annual imperial cabinet should be held to discuss foreign affairs and other aspects of imperial policy; while Sir Robert Borden reported that a new era in the history of the Empire had dawned, a notable advance made in the development of constitutional relations which he was confident would "gradually but surely develop into a recognized convention."

The attitude of the prime minister of Canada in these meetings reflected the shifting and contradictory currents of the time. He stood for the national position in opposing, with General Smuts, any creation of an imperial parliament, and in urging the status of "autonomous nations." Yet this was contradicted in the recognition of imperial rights over the natural resources of the Dominions, in the assumption of a single foreign policy for the Empire, to be determined in London, and in the acceptance of the scheme of an imperial cabinet, which, if it meant anything, meant the creation of a new executive

authority, not, as Sir Robert termed it, "a cabinet of governments," but itself a new government for which the next effort would be to provide a legislative base,—in fact, the old imperial-council idea which Chamberlain and Lyttleton had urged and which Laurier had defeated.

Sir Wilfrid was not surprised at these developments. They were part and parcel of the attempt once more made during the war to crystallize imperial sentiment into centralized institutions. The activity of the Round Table groups; the urging of imperial parliamentary federation by their chief apostle, Mr. Lionel Curtis, and Mr. Lloyd George's secretary, Mr. Philip Kerr; Mr. Bonar Law's pronouncement for an imperial parliament after the war; Mr. Hughes's vague but vociferous demands for a share in determining imperial policy; the audacious endeavour to extend and implant an hereditary aristocracy in Canada, with the creation of three Canadian or ex-Canadian peers in 1916 and 1917, (Lord Shaughnessy, Lord Atholstan, Lord Beaverbrook), together with a baronetcy to Sir Joseph Flavelle; the participation by two Canadian members in the Paris Economic Conference, not as representing Canada but as part of a British delegation, and now the Empire cabinet proposals, all represented the same tendency. To all, he was firmly and increasingly opposed. The war had intensified his admiration for the English people; it had also intensified his belief that in free co-operation and not in a unified empire lay the hope of effective partnership and enduring friendship. The negative side of his view is sufficiently indicated in a letter to the editor of the "Manchester Guardian":

(Wilfrid Laurier to C. P. Scott)

Ottawa, February 13, [1917](#).

MY DEAR SIR:

I have your letter of the 19th ultimo, as well as the copy of the American number of the "Manchester Guardian" which I owe to your kindness and for which I pray you to accept my thanks.

I understand that you are now preparing, on the same plan, a Canadian issue of the "Guardian," and to this you would desire me to contribute an article especially devoted to the approaching Imperial Conference, and to the future relations of the Dominions with the mother country.

You will excuse me for not responding affirmatively to your request. I am strongly of the opinion that, at the Conference as everywhere else, the only questions discussed should be confined to the winning of the war. I thought the Paris Conference of last summer, on the subject of trade after the war, most inopportune, and any discussion at this stage of such a subject as future imperial relations would seem to me still more inopportune, not to use a more severe expression.

I may, however, offer you—if acceptable—my own personal views on the subject, on the understanding that they are merely for your information, with the sole object of presenting to you an aspect of the case which is seldom if ever heard on your side of the water.

You start with the proposition that everybody in England is anxious to give to the Dominions a voice in the determination of peace and war. These words sound well, but they are mere sound. You assert yourself that foreign affairs cannot be divorced from the domestic politics of the United Kingdom. If that be so—and I altogether agree—what voice can the Dominions have in questions of peace and war, except to express pious wishes? Of course, some council may be organized which may flatter the vanity or, if you prefer, the pride of the Dominions, but nothing worthy the attention of serious men, no real power to affirm or negative, since foreign affairs cannot be divorced from the domestic politics of the United Kingdom.

Nor is that all. If the Dominions are to have a real voice in questions of peace and war, two consequences must follow: foreign affairs must be removed from the exclusive control of the United Kingdom and placed in the hands of a real council, and the Dominions must back their voice with a regular and permanent system of contributions to a common fund of defense. This project seems to me very short-sighted. Those who champion it forget that at present and for many years to come, the economic position of Britain and of the Dominions is not and cannot be on a par. Britain by her geographical condition and historic traditions must ever maintain a large war budget. Canada—to speak of Canada alone—must devote her chief attention to internal development: railways, canals, rivers and harbours. To force on her a war budget must divert from and retard her development and, obviously, instead of working towards union, must produce the very reverse result.

Whilst in this war I am convinced that Canada should assist to the fullest extent of her power, I am equally convinced that no greater mistake could be made than to force her into a permanent military organization, which of necessity must paralyze her development. And to be perfectly frank with you, I have more than once in our parliament expressed the opinion that were England to engage in such a senseless war as the Crimean War, I would resolutely oppose Canada's participation.

If you tell me that the present connection is loose and unsafe, I answer that this loose tie put to the test of this war has proved stronger than any long-planned organization. Imperial federation is a great and noble idea. It has almost irresistible attractions. Whether it ever will be practicable is still a question. At present it certainly is not, and until the verdict of time has pronounced, the present connection seems to me the safest and the most promising.

When the prime minister, on his return, referred to the imperial cabinet as a development which would likely prove permanent, a body to advise the Crown in matters of common Empire concern, a body having authority, subject to ratification, of any action taken by the several parliaments of the Empire, Sir Wilfrid put his finger quickly on the inconsistencies of the proposal. Was the imperial cabinet to be a conference of governments or a distinct executive? What was the Crown? Was not the government of Canada as much His Majesty's government as the government of the United Kingdom? He replied, in the House debate on May 18:

This cabinet is to advise the Crown. What Crown? The Crown in Great Britain, the Crown in Canada, the Crown in Australia, the Crown in New Zealand, the Crown in South Africa, the Crown in Newfoundland, the Crown in India,—because under our present system of government the Crown is represented by ministers who advise it in all these different countries?

The imperial cabinet has no executive power; it can report, it can pass judgment, it can come to conclusions upon any subject, but its conclusions achieve nothing; they are simply reported to the Crown in parliament in Great Britain, in the different countries overseas, and in India. And when such a report has been made it may be accepted by one parliament and rejected by the other. . . . I do not object to it as a consultative body, but I object to terms being used, which, in their very nature, cannot accord with the rules of parliamentary government as it exists to-day in the British Empire, in the motherland and in the Dominions overseas. I do not object to there being consultations, quite the contrary. . . . A great deal of advantage is to be derived by frequent consultations between people and people. Ignorance has been, all through the ages, the cause of many discords indeed and of many wars; and when peoples are living under the same allegiance and are part of the same Empire, undoubtedly nothing but advantage can come from frequent consultation.

But these were speculative possibilities of the future. The country and its political leaders were now brought face to face with a grave and immediate crisis. Sir Robert Borden had returned to Canada on May 14. On May 18, after giving to parliament an account of his stewardship overseas, he announced the intention of the government to bring down shortly a plan of "compulsory military service on a selective basis." The Canadian troops at the front could not be maintained without large and steady reinforcements. It was now apparent that the voluntary system could not provide the needed men. Everything had been done, by government and people, that could be done, to stimulate voluntary recruiting. The sacrifice of the brave men who had died that Canada might live must not be in vain. For Canada there could be no hesitation. Sir Wilfrid in reply, took up Sir Robert's speech point by point, not forgetting to comment on his choice of colleagues, and ended with a guarded comment on the announcement that had been made. Canada was in the war to the end. As to the method to be followed to carry the war to the end, a good deal of consideration must be given before the settled policy of the country was set aside. Whenever the government made known its policy, it would be given due and fair consideration. He would not say whether it should be adopted or rejected; he would say that those who sat beside him would do their duty to the best of their judgment.

As to the motives for the government's sudden change of policy, opinion differed then and will differ until the files are opened on Judgment Day. Considerations of military necessity played their part, a genuine belief that Canada could not do what her honour, her interest, her duty to the men who had fought for her demanded, except by compulsion, and that by compulsion it could be done. Military considerations of another sort counted, but counted for much less,—the desire of prominent officers overseas to organize a fifth division in which there would be many high posts, rather than to send reinforcements under subordinate officers to the existing four divisions. The London atmosphere had not been without influence. The action of the United States in adopting conscription immediately after entering the war—it was not a mere coincidence that the premier made his announcement on the day that the Select Draft bill became law at Washington—removed a serious practical difficulty to compulsion in Canada. Racial prejudice was strong, not so strong among the leaders as among the rank and file, but still a factor. Political necessity warranted drastic action. The government had lost its grip on the country. The probability, in the public mood, was a Liberal victory in any election fought on its six-year record. The alternative was a coalition in which the government would have to give up half its places and half its power, perhaps the premiership. By declaring for conscription, while some risks would be run, the ginger groups, the for-God's-sake-do-something critics, would be propitiated. Quebec, lost in any case to the government, would be either split among Liberals and Nationalists, probably of the usual pliable type, or, if a unit, would provide a basis for attack and for solidifying the English-speaking provinces.

Sir Wilfrid, who had known for some days that the project was brewing, at once consulted his party, but he had himself no moment's hesitation in deciding to oppose conscription. It was not merely that he was by temperament and training a believer in individual liberty; or that he was opposed to fighting the devil with fire, alarmed lest in conquering Prussia the Allies would be conquered by the Prussian spirit and the Prussian worship of the State; he had never let a doctrine stand in the way of reality, and he had in him an iron strain that would go through unfalteringly with any policy once proved essential. But he did not believe that the necessity or the expediency of the step had been proved. He did not believe that conscription would bring any substantially greater number of men than a vigorous voluntary appeal; the falling off in enlistment was not due to the inherent defects of the voluntary method, but to the simple fact that the country was reaching its limit, that there was no longer any real great reservoir of available men. True, Britain and the United States had adopted conscription, but they had entered the war as principals: it would undermine the whole basis of the empire, destroy the whole spirit of free and friendly aid and sympathy, if compulsion were resorted to in a country which had gone in, not for its own sake, but for Britain's. Britain and the United States were not divided historically into distinct and compact racial groups,—except as to Ireland, and no English statesman had attempted to apply compulsion to Ireland,—whereas in Canada this division was the most fundamental and enduring fact in political life. Least of all

should it have been proposed in Canada by a government whose coquetting in turn with Imperialism and with Nationalism had done more than any other avoidable factor to bring about the very situation in Quebec of which complaint was made. There was no evidence in the government's record or in its arguments, that the whole field had been surveyed, the relative needs of men, munitions and food compared, the actual facts as to available men studied. Whether the motives were good or ill, the decision was a gamble; the loss was certain, great; the gain—at least, the gain of the nation—a hazard.

Writing to Sir Allen Aylesworth, the day after Sir Robert Borden's return, Sir Wilfrid, after quoting the prime minister's emphatic repudiation of conscription a year earlier, stated his case succinctly:

Ottawa, May 15, [1917](#).

He may change, I will not. Quite apart from this personal view, and simply from the point of view of winning the war, has a case been made out for conscription? There is a shortage of labour in agriculture and industry, in fact in every field where brawn and muscles are needed, and in the face of this condition people there are still yelling for more men being taken away from occupations in which they are so much needed. If we had been in office a survey would have been made at once as to how many men could be spared from their usual occupations, and, having obtained a reliable statistical record, we would have endeavoured, and I think would have succeeded, in having in the field by voluntary enlistment the number of men which we could afford to give, and to that policy we would have adhered, instead of changing and again changing, with confusion worse confounded as a consequence. Every man in a certain section is striving to make himself more popular than the other by shouting for a large number of soldiers. I say all this in the full consciousness that public opinion seems to have been swayed in Ontario to a feverish heat without any serious appreciation of the real situation.

But we are not in office, and what are we to do? I repeat: in so far as I am personally concerned, the way is clear, but I am alarmed as to the future. Toryism has obtained an enormous influence in Ontario. In fact, Ontario is no longer Ontario: it is again the old small province of Upper Canada, and again governed from London. There is only one difference and the difference is only in the name. Upper Canada was governed from Downing Street with the instrumentality of the Family Compact sitting at York, now Toronto. Canada is now governed by a junta sitting at London, known as "The Round Table" with ramifications in Toronto, in Winnipeg, in Victoria, with Tories and Grits receiving their ideas from London, and insidiously forcing them on their respective parties. As to the Tories, I am not surprised, they are in their element, true to the instincts of their nature, to the traditions of their ancestors, but for the Grits, oh! for the old spirit of sturdy Liberalism which still prevailed in my youth! Truly, I have lived too long.

I would have long ago opened battle upon this new organization of Toryism, which like the serpent sheds its skin, but ever remains the same reptile, but for my origin. The only answer would have been my origin, and this alone would have substituted prejudice for argument.

Now as to the actual situation. The probability is that Hughes's motion will never come up, but that the government themselves will introduce a conscription bill. As to this, I have of course no information, but I strongly believe that my surmise is the correct one. Were I to agree, it would be I, not they, who would be guilty of that "treason and shameful truckling to Bourassa and Armand" of which you speak, for Bourassa and Armand have built their strength in Quebec by accusing me of being a conscriptionist.

The situation is very different from what it was in 1896. Then when the government attempted to force upon a province the domination of the Canadian parliament, we stood strongly on the Liberal doctrine of provincial rights. I appealed to the Liberals of Quebec to stand firm by the traditions of their party, and they did.

Now, when the government is going to introduce a policy which is at variance with all the traditions of Liberalism what will the Liberals of Ontario do? As to the rank and file, I do not know; as to the leaders they have already received and accepted the dictation of the "Round Table."

And now to answer the last thought of your letter. There is need of more men at the front. How many men will conscription bring in? Just a few slackers, exactly the same as in England. How many men has conscription brought to the ranks in England? An infinitesimal number, so small that the actual figures have never been given to the public. Sir John Simon was supremely right, but Northcliffe and Carson and Toryism insisted and won their point, and won nothing else. It will be the same here: the number of men who can be spared from agriculture and industry is infinitesimally small. Conscription will take in a few, farmers and school-boys; this will be the supreme triumph of Toryism, but Toryism will once more have asserted its undying spirit of domination.

These are the views with which I regard the situation. In 1896 we stood by the true principles of Liberalism, with the chance of losing, and won because the Liberals of Quebec remained true. In 1917, I, for one, will again remain true to Liberalism, again with the chance of losing, but will win if the Liberals of Ontario remain true.

Five days later, in answer to a forecast that with compulsory service the government would sweep all English-speaking Canada, but declaring, "For myself I have one word alone to say; it is 'whither thou goest, I will go,'" Sir Wilfrid replied:

Ottawa, May 21, [1917](#).

Your last letter touched me very deeply. I am more grateful to you than mere words can express for this new manifestation of your old friendship, and also for the hearty concern which it betrays for my political welfare.

We are now sure to have conscription. My course is very clear, and upon it I have no hesitation and no misgiving. The result may be my own end, but I will go down with colours flying at the topmast.

To Sir Lomer Gouin he wrote, a week later:

(Translation)

. . . As to conscription, there can equally be no hesitation. After the agitation which has been carried on upon this subject, if we were to hesitate at this moment, we would hand over the province to the extremists; in place of promoting national unity, it would open up a breach, perhaps fatal.

As for myself, the situation is clear, but I doubt whether I will succeed in inducing our friends from the other provinces to accept it. The Eastern provinces will be nearly solid with us; Ontario solid on the other side, and the West perhaps divided; there is some ground for hoping for a fairly solid vote, but I am far from being sure.

The public discussion had made it plain that the compulsory-service proposals would not have plain sailing. On May 29, Sir Robert Borden proposed to Sir Wilfrid the organization of a coalition government, with equal representation for the two parties, aside from his own premiership, with the enforcement of conscription as the basis, and with elections postponed if possible. Later he modified this proposal to provide for the passing of a Military Service Act with a pledge not to enforce it until after a general election at which the coalition should seek a mandate from the people. The negotiations continued until June 6. While Sir Wilfrid felt that the offer of coalition after the determination, without a gesture or thought of consultation, of the all-important policy the coalition was to carry out, was insincere, while he felt that a proposal to have him join in carrying out a policy from which the premier would score all the political gain and he incur the political loss and the loss of principle, was preposterous, yet he was anxious to sound out every possibility of co-operation, and to consult his friends. When the prime minister made it clear that he would not agree to a coalition except on the acceptance of compulsory service, Sir Wilfrid definitely declined to take office. He could not take responsibility for a policy which he had no share in making, a policy devised to cover the failures of the government, and a policy for which he would have to bear the chief brunt of the attack. With the adoption of conscription, the chief argument for coalition had vanished: it was obvious to any one who faced realities that an election must be held, and that the country would be bitterly divided.

(Wilfrid Laurier to Premier Murray)

Ottawa, June 5, [1917](#).

MY DEAR MURRAY:

I thank you very sincerely for your letter. I will now present the situation as I view it. Permit me to say that the idea of forming a coalition government sounds very well, but the situation has been so bedevilled that hitherto I have not been able to see my way to accept.

There is not only the military situation, but there is also the economic question, the railway question and a multitude of other problems upon which we would be considerably at variance for, remember that the crowd of men with whom Borden surrounded himself, when he formed his cabinet, will still continue to try to influence him. I would not suspect his loyalty to his colleagues, but I would be afraid that he would unconsciously be influenced by a lot of men in whom I cannot have any confidence. That would be my view, even if conscription were eliminated, though, with the latter question eliminated, I might perhaps overcome my difficulties. But coalition is wanted to pass conscription, and to that I cannot agree. . . .

To Mr. Rowell he had written on June 3:

MY DEAR ROWELL:

If the present situation is distressing to you, which I can very well believe, I think you may be sure that it is no less painful to me, perhaps more, as I have more responsibility than any other in the unfortunate position in which we are.

I am quite as anxious as you are to send as many men as the country can afford to deplete itself of, if we can obtain them by voluntary enlistment; and I have always thought, and I am more than ever confident, that they can be had. But if you are to resort to conscription, I cannot agree. By conscription, you may undoubtedly assist the cause, but you will injure it more than you will assist, because you are going to create a line of cleavage in the population, the consequences of which I know too well, and for which I will not be responsible.

You will tell me, why should I not agree to conscription? Here are my reasons.

The people, I have no doubt, can be reconciled to the sacrifice, here as elsewhere, if they are properly educated to it. It is not only the people of Quebec who are opposed to conscription, but my correspondence satisfies me that in every other province there is amongst the masses an undercurrent [indicating] that they will be sore and bitter if at the present moment a conscription law is forced upon them. Remember that from the beginning of the war, through the prime minister, the government affirmed and re-affirmed that there would be no conscription; and one of the ministers, Mr. Crothers, if I mistake not, stated with the elegance peculiar to him that any such statement was a "Grit lie." To have all of a sudden, without preparation, without a word of warning, launched the policy of conscription was, you will admit, with me, a singular want of foresight on the part of the government. This is the general idea. Now as to my own self.

When I introduced the Naval Policy, with the full approval of the Conservative party, as you will remember, I was assailed, viciously assailed, by the Nationalists of Quebec, on the ground that this Canadian navy—Canadian in peace time, Imperial in war time—was nothing short of a national crime; that under no circumstances should we fight for England; that it was the first step to conscription. I had to face the issue, and faced it by stating that the navy, Canadian at all times, in war time might be placed at the service of the imperial authorities; that Canada was a free country, and might, if it so chose, fight for England, as in certain circumstances it certainly would; that the navy was in no sense a first step towards conscription; that enlistment for the naval service would be voluntary, as enlistment for land service. I fought the issue upon those lines, always protesting that I was opposed to conscription.

Now if I were to waver, to hesitate or to flinch, I would simply hand over the province of Quebec to the extremists. I would lose the respect of the people whom I thus addressed, and would deserve it. I would not only lose their respect, but my own self-respect also.

I appreciate whatever you say in favour of national unity. I do not think I can be charged with not having it in view during the last three years, from the very day that the war broke out.

I have been approached to enter a coalition government. My friends, especially those from Ontario, have pressed me very warmly to agree to it. It was always repugnant to me, but in order to help the cause, I would have been willing to put aside my personal views, tardy though the offer was. But the basis upon which it was offered to me was unacceptable. I am not in a position yet to put it before you, but I sincerely believe that when it is made known, it will satisfy neither the conscriptionists nor the anti-conscriptionists.

I wholly agree with you in the deduction which you make from Balfour's speech, that in a struggle such as the present one, we must be prepared to give up the normal party divisions. Indeed, so much do I believe in this, that I am quite prepared to see my friends take a different attitude from my own, and support conscription whilst I will oppose it. The only solution seems to me this: have an appeal to the people, have it right away, either in the form of a referendum or an election. Let the people decide, and if they decide in favour of conscription, as it seems to me they will, under present circumstances, from the attitude of our friends in Ontario, whatever influence I may have will be employed in pleading to the Quebec people that the question is settled by the verdict of the majority, and that all must loyally accept the issue and submit to the law: and this will be no light task, but a task to which I will devote myself with all my energy.

During these discussions Sir Wilfrid was visited by Sir Clifford Sifton. Sir Clifford was no longer in parliament, but he was still in politics, with close relations with Western political leaders and wide-spreading business interests. They discussed the proposals. "You are opposed to conscription," his visitor summed it up; "good. You are opposed to coalition; good. You are opposed to an extension of the term of parliament; no, you should agree to that." Why? Sir Clifford would give no answer, other than the general consideration that the Liberal party would stand a better chance in an election a year later. The real reasons Sir Wilfrid could not fathom, though he believed they were connected with the desire to have an amenable parliament for the enactment of certain plans for meeting the approaching crisis in the affairs of the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific. Once it was clear that his advice on the really vital one of the three points would not be taken, and that an election was inevitable, Mr. Sifton sought the same ends another way, seeking, it might be, a still more amenable parliament by supporting coalition and supporting conscription.

On June 11, the prime minister introduced the Military Service Act, providing for the division of all male British subjects into classes according to age and family status, for exemption in case of essential war occupation, serious individual hardship, or conscientious objections, and for the establishment of tribunals to deal with exemptions and to hear appeals. Sir Wilfrid moved an amendment providing for a referendum of the electors before further consideration. In the debate, the Liberal forces were badly split. Graham, Pardee, Guthrie, Nesbitt, Charlton, Ross, of Ontario; Carvell, A. K. Maclean, H. H. McLean, Loggie, of the Maritime provinces; and Clark, Cruise, McCraney, Buchanan, Turriff, Douglas, Champagne and Neely of the West, spoke and voted for conscription, while McMillan, McCoig, Truax, German, Thomson, Knowles and Sinclair voted first for the amendment and then for the main motion. Two Quebec Conservatives and nine Nationalists voted for the referendum. A six-months hoist amendment received only nine Nationalist votes. The third reading carried on July 24 by 102 to 44.

Sir Wilfrid wrote during the debate:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Sir Allen Aylesworth)

Ottawa, June 22, [1917](#).

It is quite true: in these recent weeks, I have often thought of resigning, but whenever I sat down to think the matter out, my courage rose up against the difficulties which I saw impending were I to give up the fight, now especially that the fight has become a losing battle. Oh! but what a wrench at all my heart's strings!

Yesterday it was Pardee, and to-day it will be Graham! Graham and Pardee as dear to me as my own brothers! Do not, however, think hard of them, for I do not. They have behaved all through most honourably, and there is not and there will not be any loss of friendship between us. The pain is not less acute on their side than on mine, and I know only too well the difficulties which faced them.

Those I hold responsible are the Liberals of the "Round Table" group, who by their alliance with the Tories, have forced the government to take up the issue of conscription, at so much risk to and danger for the country. How it will all end, I venture not to predict. I still hope, perhaps against all hope, that when this nightmare is over, we may still maintain the party together.

To you I owe more gratitude than my words can express. My courage will not flinch, but your friendship assuages some painful moments.

Frequently letters came from Ontario men who seemed to imagine that Laurier had only to raise his finger to induce Quebec to take any stand he suggested. To one correspondent, later Mr. Rowell's successor as leader of the Ontario Opposition, he replied:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Wm. Proudfoot)

Ottawa, June 29, [1917](#).

I sincerely wish that I had the power which you attribute to me. It is easy for you to make a suggestion about the province of Quebec, and then to add as you do: "If successful, and I have no doubt you would be, you will come out of the ordeal the strongest public man now or at any previous time in Canada."

Permit me to say, with all deference but with absolute certainty, that you do not know the situation in Quebec as it is. You forget that for the last seven years I have been represented in Quebec by the Nationalist press as a conscriptionist, working for conscription and preparing it. You forget also that these slanders were subsidized by the Conservative party, and carried out by men who are now sitting with the government. If I were to flinch in this matter, instead of coming out the strongest man in Canada, past or present, as you say, I would simply lose the confidence and respect of those who believed in me when I said that I was against conscription. This I will not do for any consideration. I would lose my own character, and it would not help the cause which I have as much at heart as you have.

This conscription issue has been thrown to the public without consideration on the part of the government as to the consequences; feeling sure, however, that in so doing they would destroy the Liberal party, which they have partially done already. When this was done, there was only one salvation for us: it was a referendum, which would have solved the question and which would have silenced all opposition. Our friends would not take my judgment upon this. I regret it more than I can say, but if the position is to be redeemed it is certainly not by the way which you suggest.

To a Winnipeg correspondent he presented a further summary of his position:

Ottawa, September 27, [1917](#).

I am just as anxious as you are yourself to win the war. The only question is which is the best policy: is conscription the best means to the end? You may remember that last fall, when Sir Robert Borden and Mr. R. B. Bennett were touring the country for the organization of what they called the National Service, Mr. Bennett disclaimed with great force, in all his speeches, the policy of conscription. This he did in the presence and full concurrence of Sir Robert Borden; and the reasons which Mr. Bennett gave, though not expressed in any way to satisfy me, still showed very clearly the conviction then entertained by the government. You noticed also that as late as the month of June, when the government had altered their views and announced that they would resort to conscription, Sir Clifford Sifton pronounced himself most emphatically to Dr. Neely, M. P., against any idea of conscription. These different opinions were all expressed at a time when the military situation was the same as it is to-day, no better and no worse.

What is the reason for the change? The military situation being the same, the reason must be sought elsewhere, and elsewhere there is no other reason than a purely political one, and the object not to win the war but to win the elections. Permit me to look over the situation with you a moment.

Is it not true that the main reason advocated for conscription—not so much publicly as privately, not shouted but whispered—is that Quebec must be made to do her part, and French-Canadians forced to enlist compulsorily since they did not enlist voluntarily? If this is not the main reason advanced in Winnipeg for conscription, I hope you will tell me frankly that I am in error, and then I will know that Winnipeg is an exception to all other centres where conscription is advocated.

It is quite true that Quebec has not enlisted proportionately as the other provinces. No one regrets it more than I do, but could any other result be expected?

After reviewing the Conservative-Nationalist alliance, he continued:

... Do you wonder that under such circumstances, when these men appealed for volunteers in Quebec, that such appeals should have fallen very flat?

You may ask me now, all this being granted, what is the remedy? My answer is that the remedy cannot be to apply compulsion upon people who have thus been educated against conscription. It is always an easy task to arouse passion and prejudice, to quell them is more difficult. To arouse passion may be the work of a moment, to quell a storm may be the work of years.

This is the situation, and I am satisfied that more can be obtained from the people of Quebec by persevering appeals than by compulsion. I make bold to believe that we Liberals who were defeated in 1911 can obtain more from the people of Quebec than the men who defeated us by such mischievous conduct.

If you want any further evidence that the conscription act was passed for political purposes alone, you find it in the infamous act just passed for the disfranchisement of men who are by the laws of the land our fellow-citizens. By the conscription act all British subjects resident in Canada between the ages of 20 and 45 are liable to be called, but by the War Times Election Act subsequently passed, all naturalized subjects born in enemy countries, and naturalized after the 31st of March 1902, are disfranchised, unless they enlist. Do you see in these two acts any evidence that the government intend to win the war, or to win the elections?

These are the main reasons which have directed my attitude in the present contest. We have gone voluntarily into this war for a noble object, and I still believe that we can reach the end by adhering to the principle collectively and individually.

Let me add in conclusion that if there be any further information or further explanation which you desire, it will be my duty and still more my pleasure to answer any enquiry with which you may favour me.

The long discussion of conscription, in parliament and in the country, had inevitably widened the cleavage in the Liberal ranks. Public meetings in Toronto and Winnipeg, addressed by prominent men of all parties and none, had vigorously supported the government's proposal; public meetings in Montreal had voiced an equally vigorous and more violent and frothy opposition. Whether it was that patriotism raised men above party or that racialism sank them below it, the bonds of party allegiance slackened. Sir Clifford Sifton and Sir Robert Borden were quick to see the renewed opportunity for

coalition, but coalition of a limited kind. They were met half-way by a group of Liberals, chiefly of provincial rather than federal activity. It was now clear that the original arguments advanced for coalition had lost their force; a war-time election could not now be avoided, and a partial coalition instead of averting a racial cleavage would intensify it. But other factors had force. Honest conscriptionists, eager to have an administration solid and whole-hearted in the policy which they considered indispensable to winning the war; partisans keen on splitting the Liberal party; racialists determined to isolate Quebec and put it in its place; railway financiers and speculators fishing in troubled waters, aided the movement.[60]

Toronto and Winnipeg were the chief secondary centres of the new attempt to form a quasi-union government, with the West obviously the determining factor. In Ontario, many private and two semi-public meetings were held to endeavour to bring the Liberals into line. On July 20, a meeting of Ontario Liberal members and candidates was held in Toronto. Unexpected hostility developed. While there was difference of opinion, the majority present pronounced against extension of parliament, against coalition with the Borden government, against the enforcement of conscription until after another voluntary effort, and for the continued leadership of Laurier. More success was met with the Liberal editors of the province. Meeting in Toronto six days later, they supported conscription of men and conscription of wealth, and called for a union government on this platform, but not under Sir Robert Borden's leadership. In the Western movement, Sir Clifford Sifton took direct charge. On July 3 he issued a manifesto demanding union government and conscription, with an extension of parliament's term if possible. A few days later he arranged more quietly for the calling of a Convention of Western Liberals in Winnipeg, and, going West, sought to arouse opinion in a series of public addresses. His success was limited. The West held him chiefly responsible for the defeat of reciprocity and distrusted his financial affiliations.[61]

Then on August 7 the great convention of a thousand delegates met in Winnipeg. The plan was to form a distinct Western Liberal party which would endorse conscription, renounce Laurier's leadership, and support a Union government, if possible under a Liberal or neutral leader. The majority of the Manitoba provincial leaders, dominated by the "Free Press," were strongly in support of this policy; the majority of the Alberta leaders, not including the premier, A. L. Sifton, were opposed, with British Columbia and Saskatchewan divided. But once again the organizers of the movement had failed to allow for the Old Adam of party prejudice and particularly for the intense personal loyalty to Laurier. The Alberta delegates, marshalled by Frank Oliver and C. W. Cross, were particularly vigorous, but the whole convention was so obviously committed to Laurier's leadership that Dr. Michael Clark took the train for home the first day without attempting to address it. Behind the doors of the committee rooms fierce controversy waged, ending in a platform appearance of harmony among the leaders and the adoption of resolutions by unanimity or overwhelming majorities, condemning the gross incompetency of the Borden government, calling for a vigorous and co-ordinated rallying of all Canada's forces for the war, including the increased production of food and munitions, the repression of profiteers, and "the maintenance, in unimpaired strength at the front, of our fighting forces and the taking of all steps necessary to secure required reinforcements for this purpose." To the latter resolution an amendment adding "and by compulsion if necessary," was rejected, by some on the ground that conscription was implied and by others because of opposition to conscription. On the following day a resolution was enthusiastically carried recording the convention's "admiration of the life and work of the greatest of all Canadians, Sir Wilfrid Laurier," and its hope that his ability and "matchless statesmanship may be utilized in reuniting the people of Canada in this great crisis, in the successful prosecution of the war, and in carrying out the platform laid down by this convention." The second movement had failed. The West was on the whole for conscription, but aside from a few quarters there was little of the Ontario bitterness against Quebec, and a strong affection for Laurier.

The project of union seemed scotched. Yet the forces that made for it, good and bad, were strong, and still a third attempt followed. With a patience, a persistence, and an adroitness for which his critics had not given him credit, Sir Robert Borden continued his negotiations, and, incidentally, Sir Clifford Sifton continued his. In the West, the Manitoba element which had been defeated in the convention, found expression in the "Manitoba Free Press," owned by Sir Clifford but under the direction of J. A. Dafoe, and in meetings of Liberal supporters. On August 21 Premier Norris voiced public opposition to Laurier's leadership and his readiness to support a Union government under Borden. Provincial leaders of the more westernly provinces who favoured conscription were not yet prepared to agree. They were prepared to abandon Laurier, but not to follow Borden. On August 17 the prime minister accepted the resignation of Robert Rogers, who had been under judicial fire in connection with his Manitoba career, but had been strongly backed by the Conservative members at Ottawa; one substantial obstacle to a Union government was thus removed. After conferences at Ottawa on August 20 between Sir Clifford Sifton, his brother A. L. Sifton, and a Western member J. G. Turriff, J. A.

Calder, the dominant figure in the Saskatchewan government, and T. A. Crerar and H. W. Wood, leaders of the Western farmers' movement, and conferences in Winnipeg three days later between Messrs. Sifton, Calder, Crerar and Wood, William Martin and C. A. Dunning of Saskatchewan and A. B. Hudson of Manitoba, an offer was made to the prime minister to join a Union government under the leadership of any one of six other men, three Conservatives and three Liberals. At a caucus of the Conservative members at Ottawa on August 29, Sir Robert submitted this proposal, and offered to retire altogether or to serve under Sir George Foster. The caucus would not listen to this suggestion, and expressed approval of Sir Robert's past and future conduct.

Meanwhile two significant developments were under way at Ottawa. One had to do with the railway situation which was not far in the background of all the Union discussion. The Canadian Northern had not found relief in the government gifts of 1913 nor the government loans of 1914. The railway, or the bond-holders and pledgees behind it, were again in straits. Rather than make further advances, the government proposed to take over the road, at a price to be set by arbitration. The Opposition did not object to nationalization, but urged that it was preposterous to pay a cent for a road confessedly in bankruptcy, and that defalcation proceedings should be taken under the provisions made by the government itself in the Act of 1914. After a vigorous discussion, in which there was no element of obstruction, as the government benches contributed more words to the debate than the Opposition, the bill was jammed through under closure on August 29.



THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING DAY

(May 13, [1918](#))

The other measures were a revision of the machinery for recording the vote of the soldiers overseas, and a War Times Election Act to establish a new franchise in Canada. The provisions of the latter measure were announced by Mr. Meighen, its chief framer and defender, in the Commons on September 6. On the plea that the soldiers could not poll their full vote, the franchise was conferred upon the women next-of-kin of all overseas men. On the plea that their sympathies were with the enemy, all former citizens of Germany or Austria, and all former citizens of other European countries whose mother tongue was German, who had become naturalized in Canada since 1902, were to be deprived of the franchise. This extraordinary measure was at once attacked by the whole Opposition, but was forced through. The pretences urged in its behalf were flimsy and insupportable. There was no difficulty, and no reason to anticipate any difficulty, in polling as large a proportion of the soldiers' as of the civilian vote. There was doubtless some lukewarmness or even sympathy with the enemy among some of the German settlers in the West, but to assume that the Czech and Slovak, the Ruthenian and the Pole, who made up the bulk of the settlers from the enemy powers, had any love for Austria or Germany was to fly in the face of facts, and to deprive Russians and Swiss of votes because German was their mother tongue was even less defensible. The majority of these people, who had found prosperity under the Laurier régime, were Liberals, had been so before any international issue arose, and doubtless would be so still; that was sufficient to warrant breaking the solemn pledge of citizenship. As for the special women's franchise, it was assumed that pride in privilege and the argument that conscription would bring relief to their men overseas, would throw this vote wholly to the government. It was frankly a stacking of the cards, a gerrymander on a colossal scale, an attempt without parallel except in the tactics of Lenin and Trotsky to ensure the dominance of one party in the state. The excuse given that the end justified the means, that any measure was warranted which would prevent the victory of a leader whose policy was traitorous and disastrous, begged the question and added insolence to highway robbery.

The War Times Election Act achieved Union government. It compelled the Western Liberals who had sought union on their own terms to accede to it on Sir Robert Borden's terms. James Calder held the key to the Western situation and James Calder handed it over very shortly after this blackjack was brandished. Meanwhile Robert Rogers was forced to watch his old rival Clifford Sifton taking up his original idea and inducing the prime minister, who had refused to use it to elect a Conservative government with Rogers in, to use it to elect a Unionist government with Rogers out.

Before giving in, a section of the conscriptionist Liberals sought one more solution. Early in October three Liberals waited on Sir Wilfrid Laurier in his study to suggest that he resign in favour of an English-speaking leader. They intimated that the leadership of a French-Canadian, opposed to conscription, would be a handicap in their communities, and that even in spite of the War Times Elections Act, a Liberal party under a conscriptionist leader would have a chance for victory. Sir Wilfrid, who had more than once sought in vain to resign, was surprised by this intimation, but at once replied that if there was any general feeling in that direction he would immediately withdraw; he would therefore consult his friends. On the way home, one of the visitors stopped at a news agency, and stated that Sir Wilfrid had definitely resigned. The blaze of astounded query and indignant protest from every quarter next day revealed the fatuity of the suggestion. The Liberal party was clearly doomed to defeat, but it was not doomed to dishonour; any change in leadership in that crisis would not have averted defeat and would still further have accentuated the racial cleavage. Sir Wilfrid took the train immediately for Toronto and Montreal, where he consulted political and personal friends. Their insistence confirmed his rising pugnacity, and he stayed.

The union negotiations now came quickly to a head. For a week Ottawa swarmed with Liberal and ex-Liberal and near-Liberal politicians, soon to be transformed into Unionist statesmen. The decision of the Westerners to enter had made it merely a question of personnel. On October 12, Sir Robert Borden announced his new Union cabinet. Even in the face of certain defeat, few of Laurier's federal colleagues had accepted office; Charles Murphy, William Pugsley, D. D. McKenzie, had supported him throughout, and George Graham, though opposed on conscription, would not go in. A. K. Maclean and Hugh Guthrie, and later F. B. Carvell, were the only members of the federal group to enter the new administration. The other Liberals were drawn from provincial politics or private life: Mr. Rowell, General Mewburn and a Labour representative, Senator Robertson, from Ontario; Mr. Calder from Saskatchewan; Mr. Sifton from Alberta; Mr. Crerar from Manitoba, and Mr. Ballantyne from Quebec. It was not found possible to induce any French-Canadian of weight to join Messrs. Blondin and Sévigny. Unquestionably, the new administration was individually a strong one, however its members would succeed in pulling together.

The day after the new cabinet was formed Sir Wilfrid wrote to his staunchest Nova Scotia lieutenant:

Ottawa, October 13, [1917](#).

MY DEAR MACKENZIE:

In the first place let me again pray you to accept my very sincere thanks for your kind and warm telegram.

The whole story is that it was represented to me by some friends that under present circumstances an English-speaking leader would be more acceptable to the Liberal party. My answer was that if such was the wish of the party, I would undoubtedly resign, but the matter could not be decided without reference to the party itself. This was a confidential talk, but some indiscretion was committed—I do not know by whom—and a distorted announcement was made in the press to the effect that I had resigned. This brought me a shower of representations, your own included, showing me conclusively that the feeling was far from unanimous, and if I may judge, the feeling is preponderant that I should continue at my post. The formation of the Union government, so-called, has confirmed me in this view; and now I am in the fight to face a murderous winter election, even if I have to die for it. This is not the time to desert the ship.

I just learned that Carvell was sworn this morning. As to Murray I had a visit from him yesterday accompanied by Maclean. He told me that he would not decide anything without previous consultation with his friends and that he was returning to Halifax with that object in view. He came and very frankly asked me, as I thought, my opinion. I told him that my views were well known, as I had already declined to form part of a so-called Union government: but I would not presume to give him any advice. He left the matter altogether in the hands of our Nova Scotia friends. I have the greatest confidence in Murray's judgment and loyalty, and if he were to accept it would be the worst blow of all. But it is for you and for our other friends to discuss the matter with him.

I can see no reason to change my attitude. But there have been so many defections since prorogation that I am prepared for the worst every day.

In the meantime I cannot conceal from myself the fact that the Western defection is a serious one. In Saskatchewan the whole of our organization passes into the hands of the Conservatives, and we have little hope there. In Manitoba the local government will be against us, but their influence, though still large, is not what it was. In Alberta the new local government will be with us, and we can look to a good account there. In British Columbia I am not in a position to make any statement. Our friends are very enthusiastic in that province, but the conscriptionist sentiment is very strong.

And now, my dear Mackenzie, I have unfolded my whole thought to you, and my prayer is that the Lord may preserve me from having to sit face to face and not side by side with my old friend Murray. . . .

In the election campaign which followed, conscription was the dominant issue. The Liberals endeavoured to shift the fighting to the incompetence and grafting revealed in the conduct of the war, but the people could not now be interested. The government forces insisted it was a plain issue of going on with the war or quitting, of supporting or deserting the men at the front. Conscription was necessary; voluntary enlistment had failed to reach the half-million mark set, to equal the casualties, particularly now in the heavy fighting in the mud of Passchendaele, or to equal proportionately the Australian or New Zealand level; with Russia out, the emergency was pressing. It was fair; it meant equality of sacrifice between man and man, between province and province. It was businesslike: it saved the effort and the indignity of begging men to fight for their country, saved the waste of enlisting unfit recruits, saved the married man with responsibilities going because the young slacker would not go. The leaders of the Canadian forces called for it. It had been adopted by Britain and the United States and every European combatant. Its adoption would convince Germany that Canada was in the war to the end, and her resistance hopeless. The Opposition leaders denied its necessity: voluntary enlistment had not failed, running six to seven thousand a month in 1917 until May; the half-million mark was wholly arbitrary; few armies could expect after three years of war to keep new recruits equal to wastage, it was not being done in Britain, with conscription, and the casualties of Passchendaele called for inquiry as to the conduct of the war rather than for unlimited new contingents; Australia and New Zealand had no munitions industry and with their distance from the war could not meet half so well as Canada the pressing, almost famine, conditions in Europe's food supply. If Russia was out, the United States was in, and would have to raise nearly six million men before it equalled Canada's record by voluntary enlistment; the trouble was not to find men but, according to the British Shipping Controller, to find ships to transport them overseas and food to maintain them. It was not necessary to form a fifth division; there were ample men to supply reinforcements for four divisions. It was significant that in South Africa conscription for European service had never been seriously proposed and it had been proposed in Australia only to be beaten on a referendum. As to the urging of the officers, "I have never heard of a general," Sir Wilfrid declared, "in this war or any other who did not want more men." Equality of sacrifice between individuals was impossible, in face of the accident of age or a flat foot or early marriage or engagement in an exempt occupation. Wiser selection might have been possible, some had gone who should have stayed, some stayed who should have gone, but by and large the composition of the forces did not greatly differ from what selective tribunals would have secured. To secure equality of enlistment among communities, it would be necessary to secure first identity of race, of sentiment, of social conditions, of industrial organization. The proposal would bring few more men than the voluntary system; it was disrupting Canada to appease a few hysterical patriots and to win an election.

But it was not merely the arguments, but the force behind them that counted. The government had practically the whole English-speaking daily press, save the London "Advertiser," the Calgary "News-Telegram" and the Edmonton "Bulletin"; it had the organization of both parties in most of the provinces; it had funds for advertising and organization. A Victory Loan campaign in November provided organization, enthusiasm, advertising, which were diverted to the government's aid in December. Practically every city-dweller in Ontario and the Western provinces who admitted he was in the leading citizen class backed Union. The Protestant pulpits, with a few Roman Catholic prelates like Bishop Fallon assisting them, became Unionist strongholds. On the Sunday before the election, which came on a Monday, three out of four Protestant pulpits, in accordance with skilfully devised circulars from the Unionist headquarters and with personal promptings, urged the support of the government as a sacred duty; in the palmiest days of the hierarchy in Quebec, no such fusillade of ecclesiastic advice had ever been fired in Canada. In the cities, the Unionists seemed to have things their own way. Not so in the country, where many of the leaders in the farmers' organizations condemned the campaign as arrogant and hysterical. A fortnight before the election the rumours from the rural districts of Ontario brought panic to Unionist headquarters; a special Sunday council was called at Ottawa, and the final proof that conscription was devised to win the war and not to win the election came with the public pledge from the Minister of Militia, General Mewburn, that farmers' sons would be exempted:

"I will give you my word that if any farmers' sons who are honestly engaged in farm work and in the production of foodstuffs, are not exempted by the tribunals and are called up for military service, I will have them honourably discharged."

The campaign for conscription enlisted many noble qualities. The mother, dreaming night and day of the boy facing death overseas, starting at the sight of every telegram, wearing herself out knitting for him and other mothers' sons, and longing for the day, which she believed conscription would hasten, when he would come back to her; the honest patriot, determined that his country would not weaken in its task; the strong party man, sacrificing old associations and old prejudices at the call of duty, did honour to their country. But there were other motives not so commendable concerned: the racial hatred against Quebec, the arrogant assumption of exclusive patriotism; the twisting and suppression of Laurier's statements; the weak swimming with the tide of prejudice. The Toronto "News" criticizing Laurier as "a demagogue, a charlatan and a mountebank," a Montreal Scotch-Canadian declaration that "if Laurier were to win he would win leading the cockroaches of the kitchen of Canada to victory," advertisements of a Toronto Citizens' Union Committee appealing for "a solid Ontario to prevent the domination of a solid Quebec," asserting that "a Laurier victory will be the first Canadian defeat," that "Laurier is the tool of Bourassa," that "our Victory Loan must not be handed over to Quebec to spend," the posters declaring that "a vote for Laurier is a vote for the Kaiser," were typical instances of the campaign that lashed the English-speaking provinces into passion in the last few weeks of the campaign.^[62]

Sir Wilfrid faced the bitter and hopeless fight with undaunted courage. In his election address, on November 4, he insisted that conscription was hindering rather than helping to win the war, defended his policy of a referendum, showed that Australia had not "quit" after rejecting conscription, reviewed the Borden-Bourassa alliance, denounced the War Times Election Act as vicious in principle and vicious in detail, "a blot upon every instinct of justice, honesty and fair play," urged generous treatment to soldiers' families and to injured men, held the government responsible for unchecked profiteering, and proposed a constructive programme for the rebuilding of Canada after the war. In the East he spoke little; one meeting in Quebec, one in Ottawa and one in Arnprior were all that renewed illness permitted him to make in the month following his manifesto.

With virtually no English-speaking press, with no funds, no organization, and hosts of old supporters alienated, the task that fell upon himself and the faithful few was overwhelming. In Quebec, the whole phalanx of Liberals, federal and provincial, French-speaking and English-speaking, stood solid; Henri Bourassa, who did not run himself, advised support to the Liberals as the lesser evil, but Armand Lavergne contested a seat—in vain—against both a Liberal and a Conservative. Feeling ran quite as high as in Ontario, and while there was less of the cheap abuse of opponents there was much frothy exaggeration and mob attacks on government speakers. The Maritime provinces, as usual, avoided the worst excesses of the central provinces; Premier Murray gave a cautious blessing to Unionism, but did not fight for it; Mr. Fielding supported it with slightly greater warmth; Dr. Pugsley retired to the haven of a lieutenant-governorship; E. M. Macdonald did not run, but the other leaders stood fast. In Ontario, in spite of the whirlwind of denunciation, there were a number of strong candidates, George S. Gibbons, A. C. Hardy, Frank Denton, W. D. Gregory, Gordon Waldron, Herbert Horsey, W. C. Kennedy, I. E. Pedlow, E. C. Drury, Duncan Ross, A. B. McCoig, Reuben Truax, the latter four supporting conscription but opposing the government, in addition to Charles Murphy and Mackenzie King, but the

warmth of the contest left them little opportunity for work outside their own ridings. Sir Allen Aylesworth and Hartley Dewart on the platform and John Ewart with his pen threw themselves into the breach. In Manitoba, only two former members of parliament, J. P. Molloy and J. E. Adamson, now stood with Laurier; all the provincial ministers were opposed. In Saskatchewan, Premier Martin gave a moderate support to Union; W. R. Motherwell, George Langley, George Bell and W. F. Turgeon, of the Martin cabinet, supported Laurier; the organization was in Mr. Calder's pocket. In Alberta, C. W. Cross, J. R. Boyle, W. Garipey, and G. P. Smith, all local ministers, with A. G. Mackay, reinforced Frank Oliver, while in British Columbia, J. H. King, F. C. Wade, W. W. B. McInnes, J. W. deB. Farris, M. A. Macdonald and Joseph Martin, back in Canada after an erratic course in the British House of Commons, were active.

Realizing that the West held the deciding voice, Sir Wilfrid, in spite of illness and December rigours, made a hurried trip through to the Pacific coast accompanied by Walter Mitchell and Hartley Dewart. At Winnipeg on December 10, next day at Regina, at four meetings in Calgary on the 12th, and five in Vancouver on the 14th, he addressed great crowds whose cheers made it clear that in spite of calumny his name was still a watchword to tens of thousands. From Vancouver he turned east, and heard the results of the polling on the journey.

The result, as modified later by the soldiers' vote, was an overwhelming victory for the Union government. In the Maritime provinces, the Liberals held ten seats, the Union Liberals seven and the Conservatives fourteen. In Quebec, there was a solid Liberal block of sixty-two against one Union and two Conservative members. Ontario returned eight Liberals, twelve Union Liberals and sixty-two Conservatives. In the West, only two Liberal candidates survived against eighteen Union Liberals and thirty-seven Conservatives. In the whole Dominion, there were eighty-two straight Liberals, thirty-eight Union Liberals and one hundred and fifteen Conservatives, or a government majority of seventy-one. On the government side there was only one French-Canadian, returned for an Ottawa seat. The vote of Quebec was not a surprise, except in its emphasis. The equally emphatic vote of the West was unexpected, and to Sir Wilfrid, after his brief but encouraging trip, the chief disappointment. The soldiers' vote went twelve to one for the government, as against fourteen to eleven in the Australian soldiers' vote on the conscription referendum. The different result in Canada's case revealed the extent to which undisguised official pressure and racial antipathy against Quebec supplemented the natural desire of the man in the trenches to make his home-keeping fellow do his turn. As usual, but in more pronounced degree, the results did not correspond fairly to the popular vote. In Nova Scotia, the Liberals should have had half, instead of one-fourth the seats, and in Ontario, one-third instead of one-tenth, while in Quebec, the government polled one-fourth the vote and secured one-twentieth of the seats. In Ontario, Laurier polled sixty thousand votes more than in 1911. Much of this lack of correspondence between votes and seats was due to the system of single-member constituencies, and incurable unless with the adoption of some method of proportional representation. Much of it, however, in the case of the soldiers' vote, was due to flagrant manipulation and wholesale jobbery, the ballots being assigned to close constituencies regardless of the men's real residence.

Sir Wilfrid took the result with his usual serene courage. The strain of his Western trip confined him to his room for a week, but did not daunt his spirit. To a member of the Press Gallery,^[63] Herbert Chisholm, who spoke to him of the great ovations which had greeted him in the West, he cheerfully replied from his pillows: "Yes, they cheered for me, but they didn't vote for me."

The personal attacks, deeply as he felt them, unwarranted as he knew them, he magnanimously forgave. It was harder to reassure himself that his life-work of bringing unity to English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians had not come to ruin. Yet he soon regained confidence. "I still have faith," he wrote, "in the sound sense of the Canadian people and in the broad forces that make for national unity on a basis of fair and respecting partnership. Once the war is over, no election, no dozen elections, no unscrupulous propaganda, can prevent Canadians more and more becoming Canadians first, and when they are so, we shall hear less and less of Ontario and of Quebec."

A friend wrote him on December 19:

Is there any answer to the question, "What happened?" Possibly I might suggest one. Calder told me, before Union Government was formed, that with the Franchise Act and \$100,000, every follower of the government, no matter what it was, could be elected west of the Great Lakes. In Ontario the situation was complicated, and had not the government interfered with the working of the Military Service Act we would have had at least 25 seats. As it was, they sent representatives through every riding releasing the farmers, sons from the draft, altogether illegal of course but nevertheless it was done. The women's vote was largely in favour of the government. The fact that the Protestant clergy took a prominent part reached the women voters more than anything else, and appeals they made in the homes as well as in the pulpit went straight to the sympathies and sentiments of the mothers and wives, who were told that unless the government was returned their relatives would never come back from the front, but if Unionism was supported their loved ones would be allowed to come home in a few weeks.

Sir Wilfrid replied:

You give me in your letter the true cause of our defeat. As it was expressed by Calder, so it was expressed to me by him: the government could carry every seat in the West with the War-Times Elections Act. Knowing the means and methods so well, and being in the government himself, he has worked the trick.

My trip westward convinced me that the masses of the people were with us, but effective means were taken to stifle their voice and have not a real but a mechanical majority.

Ontario did not surprise me. Our friends were very confident of electing twenty-five, but it seemed to me that they were over sanguine, and that the racial cry would work its effect.

To an Ontario candidate he wrote:

Ottawa, December 27, [1917](#).

The result in Ontario did not surprise me. With the press of the province almost unanimous against us, it would have been difficult to hope for victory, or even for a fair show. What the press failed to achieve the women and parsons completed.

It has been my lot to run the whole gamut of prejudices in Canada. In 1896 I was excommunicated by the Roman priests and in 1917 by Protestant parsons. Let us take it cheerfully, however, and be prepared to continue the fight for the good cause.



SIR WILFRID LAURIER

Photograph taken at Senator David's home, Montreal, a few weeks before his death.

To a Liberal friend in command of a regiment overseas he gave another angle of the situation:

Ottawa, January 18, [1918](#).

You tell me that in this election you went against me. In this, let me tell you frankly, you were wrong, but if it be any consolation to you, you know that you were not the only one. The party has been largely with you in the present issue. Your reason to take the stand which you took is: "To us speedy reinforcements seem to take precedence of all else." I appreciate the point of view, but you will see how far wrong you were. The conscription measure was introduced in the first week of June. We are now in the third week of January and not ten thousand men, if indeed half that many, have been brought into the ranks by this measure. By next June you will not have one conscripted man across the ocean, and I doubt if you will have any number by the first of January next. You may perhaps have a few hundred, but never the figure contemplated.

The wrong of the measure is forcing it upon an unwilling people; and by this I do not mean the French-Canadians alone. All the labour classes protested against it and asked for a referendum upon it. In Quebec public opinion had been created by the alliance of the Nationalists and jingoes in the election of 1911 when, as you remember, the Nationalists carried on a campaign upon the cry that under no circumstances should Canada participate in the wars of Great Britain. But it would be of no use to recriminate. The government has won not upon the merits of the issue but by the working of the War Times Elections Act. You are still a Liberal—I have no doubt of that whatever—but you will find, when the war is over, that it will be difficult to undo the mischief which has been done. It would have been far easier to have the men by voluntary enlistment, if the government had applied itself to the task with some judgment.

As Sir Wilfrid indicated in this letter, the Military Service Act did more to win the election than to win the war. It failed absolutely in the ostensible aim of providing greater reinforcements than the voluntary system. The government had had a free hand in framing the measure. No effort or expense was spared in its enforcement. A huge administrative staff was set up, each office with its full equipment of shining desks and elaborate files; forms and instructions and regulations rained from the Printing Bureau; medical officers and reviewing boards, local tribunals, appeal courts and a central appeal judge (Mr. Justice Duff) were appointed, with militia representatives to check exemptions; police were enrolled to round up defaulters. In Quebec as elsewhere, once the issue was decided at the polls, the act was accepted, and its operation given full scope.

Yet the legions promised did not appear. The first shock to the sanguine supporters of the act came when it was found that of the 404,000 of the first class, unmarried men from twenty to thirty-four, who had registered by the end of 1917, [380,000](#) had claimed exemption; the next, with the announcement that there were 118,000 claims for exemption from Ontario as against 115,000 from Quebec (out of 125,000 and 117,000 registrants). Local tribunals, particularly in Quebec, were charged with being farcically lax; on the other hand, the military representatives appealed nearly every exemption in Quebec, but allowed 90,000 in Ontario to go unopposed. Exemptions were reviewed by the appeal judges and later by Justice Duff; by the end of March, some 364,000 out of 372,000 cases had been decided. In Quebec 108,000 exemptions had been finally approved, and in Ontario 104,000. Sir Robert Borden had insisted in June that it was absolutely essential to have 70,000 men by December 31, [1917](#). By March 31, [1918](#), the number ordered to report for duty was only 31,000, of whom 5,000 defaulted, the net yield being less than 26,000. Supporters of conscription were slow to admit its failure, but in the face of this breakdown criticism could not be wholly suppressed. "The spectacle offered by the operation of the draft system has not been encouraging," the Montreal "Gazette" declared in March; "the government appears to have established a system which if it gets the men at all, will get them so slowly that whatever military advantage depends upon expeditious reinforcement will be lost." The Toronto "Globe" referred to "the widespread feeling of disappointment," while Mayor Church of Toronto stated: "The Military Service Act will cost the country millions and is getting very little results. If the government had spent one-quarter of the money in voluntary recruiting, they would have got more men."

Writing to an Ontario friend, Sir Wilfrid commented:

Yes, it is admitted by foes as well as by friends that the session opened as satisfactorily as we of the Opposition could desire. In the House, the few of us Liberals who have survived are all united. We have no ambition to defeat, even to harass the government. Quite the reverse: our only aim is to help and assist.

It is now felt on the Treasury Benches that conscription was a failure, and that coercion will not produce the results which its authors anticipated. There are strong reasons for believing that the government would quietly let the act pass into oblivion, but the blind, the fools and the miscreants who coerced the government to coerce still hold the whip high over their heads. And now the band of the blind, the fools and the miscreants is being strengthened by those other blind, fools and miscreants who at this moment are stirring up the people of Quebec to violence and riot.

Of course violence must be put down and obedience to the law maintained. . . .

. . . I am very much alarmed at the situation in Quebec. Our troubles however are nothing. The situation in Europe is alarming almost to heartbreaking. For the moment the German offensive seems to be arrested. We are thankful, not that we won, but that we did not lose more. Yet I see no alternative. The fight must go on. Peace to-day would be a German peace and after the experience of Russia, we know what a German peace means.

Wilson is easily, as you well say, the world's Liberal leader. He is more; he is the leader. The principles and ideals which he put forth were

admirable and admirably expressed. In my opinion he made a mistake in hoping that the peace ideals of which he made himself the champion may find an echo in Germany, and there rouse the democratic forces. In this I believe—how I would hope that I am wrong!—his judgment was wrong. So long as Germany is victorious, democracy in Germany will be impotent, and perhaps silently acquiescent to triumphant autocracy. Principles are eternal, but German democrats have always shown themselves stronger in theory than in practice. This has also happened elsewhere.

In this country public opinion seems at last to have been aroused by the scandalous crop of titles with which we are yearly vexed. Nickle, I am told, is in dead earnest. We will be only too glad on our side, to second his efforts,

Yours very sincerely,
WILFRID LAURIER

The military crisis caused by the German drive for the channel ports in March gave occasion for a change in policy. The government decided to cancel all the exemptions granted to men of twenty, twenty-one and twenty-two years of age. A resolution sanctioning an order in council to this effect passed parliament by a vote of 114 to 65. The validity of the order-in-council was tested in the courts, denied by the Alberta Supreme Court, whose orders were overridden by the military authorities, and upheld in a four-to-two division of the federal Supreme Court. So far as the cancelling of exemptions affected farmers' sons, it was a plain breach of the promise given on the eve of election. A huge deputation of farmers, mainly from Ontario, stormed Ottawa, but met little sympathy and much ridicule. Sir Robert Borden insisted that there was "a still more solemn covenant" with the men who stood with their backs to the wall in Flanders. In the cities, the farmer began to take the place of the French-Canadian as the target of criticism, and the farmer on his part learned the value of election pledges and the weakness of unorganized masses. The farmer had received his second lesson. City-made tariffs and city-made standards of patriotism were very largely responsible for the political organization and victories of the farmers that followed.

When the end came in November, [1918](#), some 83,000 men had been enrolled under the act, or had reported voluntarily after its enactment; of these, [7,000](#) were on compassionate leave and 15,000 on farm leave, so that the actual yield was 61,000 men, of whom few ever saw France. Of these, Ontario yielded more than Quebec. The slacker remained a slacker still, some 24,000 defaulters escaping apprehension. The act, even with the cancelling of exemption, did not yield as many men a month as the voluntary system, and even if allowance were made for the cumulative exhaustion of the supply of men, and the greater proportion available for infantry duty, it was clear that the test of experience had gone against the measure. It yielded no margin of reinforcements to balance the stirring of passion and the cleavage of race and province it provoked. It did produce the Unionist party.

The first session of Canada's thirteenth parliament was a quiet one. The government had a fair quota of important measures to its credit, granting woman suffrage, bringing the outside civil service under the merit system, enacting daylight-saving, and increasing income and business-profits taxes. Aside from the cancellation of exemptions, the most contentious question was the movement against titles, particularly hereditary titles. W. F. Nickle, seconded by A. R. McMaster, moved the abolition of all hereditary titles, to be met by the prime minister with the unexpected statement that the government had already taken action by order-in-council requesting that no honour be conferred upon Canadians, save for service in the present war, except with the approval of the prime minister, that no further hereditary titles be granted, and existing titles be made to terminate with the present holder: Sir Wilfrid was prepared to go much further:

Is there any reason why there should be the bestowal of titles of any kind in Canada? Everybody will, I believe, agree that in Canada, badges, titles, honours and trappings will never take root. We are a democratic country; we have been made so by circumstances. . . . If my friends will join me, I am quite prepared, if we can do it without any disrespect to the Crown of England, to bring our titles to the market-place and make a bonfire of them.

There were few open defenders of this exotic device. Sir Robert Borden, it is true, threatened to resign if an amendment involving the abolition of non-hereditary titles as well, were carried.

Throughout the session, Sir Wilfrid pursued a policy of conciliation. He knew that differences of tradition and the difficulties of reconstruction would inevitably disintegrate the coalition ranks. He urged, in vain, the repeal of the War Time Election Act, but he made no personal attack on any of his former supporters. The light was in the window for the wanderers to return. To an ardent Western supporter he counselled tolerance:

Ottawa, December 23, [1918](#).

The situation is a very simple one to me. It is never sound policy to harbour a grudge nor even to resent an injury, except when inspired by sheer malice. With regard to those who deserted us and went into the Union government we shall be spared the trouble of deciding whether they should be taken back or kept out, with the exception of one and perhaps two; they will all remain with the Union and support the Conservative policy without any shame about it. As to the rank and file, when we have the convention—which I think ought to be held during the course of the coming year—the platform of the party will be defined and all who accept it will be welcome without any question put as to their past.

As to the Union government, it is very much as your friend expressed it: they have still lots of support but very few friends.

With regard to the War Time Elections Act, the question must be put straight to the majority now behind the government to repeal it. If they refuse, they will thereby deem it essential to their salvation to keep alive that instrument of iniquity, and in the next election the contest will be directly and openly between Might and Right.

In any case, growing weakness would have prevented a very vigorous campaign. In June and July Sir Wilfrid faced much pain. A visit to Senator Casgrain's home at Val Morin and to Sydney Fisher's Alva Farm, restored something of his strength, but every exertion left him exhausted; he would nod in conference, fumble for a word. Yet his wonderful memory for men at least had not yet failed him. As he was sailing down Lake Memphremagog, in a little steamer, an old man came aboard from a wayside port, passed along the gangway, halted, to be greeted by a sharp glance from Sir Wilfrid, the glad uttering of his name, a warm handclasp, and a lively exchange of reminiscences. It was a friend of law-student days whom he had not seen for fifty years, and yet through all the disguises of age and time he had instantly recalled him.

Well or ill, Sir Wilfrid never lost interest in books, and particularly in books bearing on Canadian life; a letter to a young friend in these months is typical:

(Wilfrid Laurier to Léon Mercier Gouin.—Translation)

Ottawa, September 8, [1918](#).

MY DEAR LÉON:

Yes, I know quite well Louis Hémon's "Marie Chapdelaine," the first and unfortunately the last work of that young author too soon taken from us. As I was taking the train at Quebec one day to return to Ottawa, an enthusiastic friend put it in my hands. I read it through at a sitting, at first from curiosity, and then with growing interest.

It is a very thorough psychological study of the life of our pioneers and settlers.

The opening pages are very vivid and very true to life. The worshipping assembly scattering after the "Ite Missa est"; the hubbub at the church door; the interjections, the sallies full of wit and malice,—all that is closely observed and well described.

The characters are excellently drawn. Father Chapdelaine, eager not so much to farm as to clear the ground and make a farm; Mother Chapdelaine who would have liked to live out her whole reign in the old parishes; François Paradis, brave in toil as in peril, at once adventurous and calculating; Marie Chapdelaine, strong and valiant,—all these characters have lived; all are clearly types which the author has met and has studied from the life.

Might I, however, make a further comment? Hémon has not been as fortunate in grasping the spirit of all this sturdy folk. He pictures them as striving, but striving joylessly, with a sort of resigned but sombre fatalism, to snatch from the soil a wretched existence, regretting their lot and yet persisting in it.

That is not the attitude of the settlers who attack our forests, not from necessity but from choice; for proof, Samuel Chapdelaine himself.

Beyond doubt, the labour is hard and it must be unceasing. The soil, in our northern climes, is not as lavish as in the lands of the sun, but it responds freely to labour and effort. In the humble settler's hut, his log cabin, one must not look for the abundant comfort of the old parishes, but there are always bread in the pantry, pork in the salting-tub, warmth and gaiety at the fireside.

All these pioneers, it is true, love to dwell on the obstacles they have to surmount and to exaggerate the rudeness of their life. Odilon Desbois, a settler whom I knew very well in Arthabaska, said one day in my presence: "I am on the eleventh range of Trigwick, far from bread, behind the meat." That is the invariable story of our people; they are pleased to cry poverty and famine. Hémon should have remembered that "the Frenchman born a grouser" remains a grouser.

With this reservation, and it is the only one, Hémon's book remains a work of worth and beauty.

You have piqued my curiosity with the photograph you have sent me, and for which please accept my thanks. Some day you must explain to me all the people in the group. It is not enough that you have marked Hémon and Chapdelaine; there is in this photograph a whole story which I should be happy to learn.

I should have liked to reply immediately to your last letter, but at that time I was absolutely incapable of writing a letter or even of dictating it. I was then absolutely without strength; my strength had failed me at a stroke, and it has taken weeks to pull me together. Heaven be thanked, I am myself again. You will lose nothing by delay: some fine day I shall send you a reply to your heresies [on federalism].

My best wishes to your gracious little wife.

>Your devoted friend,
W. L.

During the winter Sir Wilfrid's strength seemed to revive. His speeches at meetings of the newly formed Western Ontario Liberal Association at London in November and the Eastern Ontario Association in Ottawa in January were vigorous and in his best vein. He concluded his London address to the Young Liberals with the memorable words:

As for you who stand to-day on the threshold of life, with a long horizon open before you for a long career of usefulness to your native land, if you

will permit me, after a long life, I shall remind you that already many problems rise before you: problems of race division, problems of creed differences, problems of economic conflict, problems of national duty and national aspiration. Let me tell you that for the solution of these problems you have a safe guide, an unfailing light, if you remember that faith is better than doubt and love is better than hate.

Banish doubt and hate from your life. Let your souls be ever open to the promptings of faith and the gentle influence of brotherly love. Be adamant against the haughty, be gentle and kind to the weak. Let your aim and purpose, in good report or ill, in victory or defeat, be so to live, so to strive, so to serve as to do your part to raise ever higher the standard of life and of living.

Yet force was failing fast, and it was only his strong will that enabled him to persist in the preparations for the second session, which was to open on February 20, 1921. On the preceding Saturday he attended a Canadian Club luncheon, going on to his office in the Victoria Museum. While alone in his inner rooms, he had a slight stroke of paralysis and fell, injuring his head slightly. Recovering, he showed his characteristic dislike of fuss by saying nothing of it to those about him, and going home in the street car rather than have his motor sent for earlier than the usual hour. Next morning, as he was dressing for church, a second stroke came. He rallied slightly, but lapsed into unconsciousness at midnight. The end came at three on Monday afternoon. A pressure from his hand to the hand of the companion of his life beside him and the whispered words, "C'est fini," were the only signs of consciousness in his last hours. Then came a week of a nation's mourning, the thronging to Ottawa of vast crowds of sorrowing pilgrims, the tribute of parliament, voiced feelingly by Sir Thomas White and Rodolphe Lemieux, the thousands of messages of sympathy and tribute from King and cottager, the State funeral, the solemn services in the Basilica with orations in French by Mgr. Mathieu and in English by Father Burke, and the laying to rest in the cemetery of Notre-Dame. Wilfrid Laurier's body had gone back to the soil of his native land and his memory had become its abiding heritage.

APPENDIX I

Translation

CONTRACT OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN FRANÇOIS COTTINEAU, CALLED CHAMPLAURIÉ AND MAGDELAINE MILLOTS

1676—August 24th

Before Benigne Basset, King's Notary, of the Island of Montreal in New France, and the undersigned witnesses, appeared François Cottineau called Champlaurié, resident of the Seigneurie of La Chesnaye, at present living in this city of Montreal, son of the late Jean Cottineau, formerly a vine-grower of the borough of St. Clou, near La Rochefoucaut of the diocese of Angoulesme, and of Jeanne Dupuis, his father and mother, on the one part, and Magdelaine Millots, daughter of Jacques Millots, resident of the said city of Montreal, and of Jeanne Hébert, her father and mother, on the other part. These parties, in the presence and with the consent of their parents and friends, for this purpose assembled for both parties, namely, for the said François Cottineau, Seraphin Marganne, Esquire, Sieur de la Valtrye, Lieutenant in the Carignan Regiment, Pierre Perthuy called La Line, resident of the said city of Montreal, and Bernard Mercier called La Fontaine, resident of the said seigniory of La Chesnaye; and for the said Magdelaine Millots, the said Jacques Millots and Jeanne Hébert, her father and mother, Robert le Cavellier called Deslauriers, and Adrienne du Vivier, her grandfather and grandmother, Sieur Antoine Forestier, her uncle, representing Marie Magdelaine Cavelier, his wife and maternal aunt of the said Magdelaine Millots, Ignace Hébert, her uncle, Jean Baptiste Le Cavelier, her uncle on the maternal side; Philippes de Carion, Esquire, Sieur du Fresnoye, Lieutenant of a Company of Infantry in the L'Estrade Regiment, Paul Maurel, Esquire, Ensign in the same Regiment, Sieur Abraham Bouat, Nicolas Hubert, Master Tailor, Pierre Caillé, Sieur de la Rochelle, also Master Tailor, Sieur Gilles Lauson, Master Copper-smith, Urbain Geté, farmer, Jacques Hubert, also a farmer, Guillaume Gourany, Antoine Brunel, all living in the said city of Montreal; they avowed and confessed having made and agreed in the articles and promise of marriage which follow: that is, the said François Cottineau has promised to take the said Magdelaine Millots as his wife and spouse, and likewise the said Magdelaine Millots has promised to take the said François Cottineau as her husband and spouse, and to make and solemnise marriage in the faith of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome as soon as may be, and as will be advised and determined among them, their parents and friends, if God and our Holy Mother Church consent and agree thereto, and according to the Custom of Paris to be one and common in all goods movable and immovable owned and acquired.

They will not be bound by the debts and mortgages of one another made and created before the solemnization of their marriage; those of the future, if any there are, will be paid and acquitted by the person who makes and creates them and from his property. In behalf of this marriage, the father and mother of the future wife have promised to give and provide to the future espoused persons the day after their espousal as part payment of the marriage settlement, a sum amounting to seventy-five livres, including a milch cow and other animals as may be estimated for them, this sum of seventy-five livres to remain with the two parties together in their community. The future wife will be dowered with the sum of two hundred livres of Tours according to the dowry agreed upon beforehand, and paid once and for all into the customary dowry according to the said Custom as she may desire. In the event of the death of the future husband without living child of this marriage, the said future husband has made gift on account of death, to the future wife and to the kinsmen of all and each, the goods of their said community, to whatever value the whole may mount up, to be enjoyed by her and hers as their own legal property; and also, if the said future wife happen to die before the said future husband, without living child by them two, the said future husband will enjoy, during his life only, the goods of the said community, half of it to be returned to the heirs of the said future wife, as best qualified to succeed and have share. For thus etc., promising and binding each in his right etc., renouncing etc., made and passed in the said city of Montreal in the house of the said Sieurs Forestier, before noon of the twenty-fourth day of August of the year one thousand six hundred and seventy-six, in the presence of Sieurs Jean Gervaise and Jean Bousquet, witnesses residing therein, and undersigned along with the said Sieur de la Valletrie, Perthuy, Millots, Le Cavelier, Forestier, Ignace Hébert, the Sieurs De Carlon, Maurel, Hubert, Caillé, Lauson, the said Sieur Bouat, the said future husband and wife, their other kinsmen and friends.

LAVALTRIE

PR PERTHUS A. BOUAT

MILLOTS
LE CAVELIER
MAUREL
NICOLAS HUBERT
JAQUE HUBERT
GILLES LAUSON
A FORESTIER
MLLE CAVELIER
CARION
PIERRE CAILLÉ
JEHAN GERVAISE
BASSET
IGNACE HEBER

APPENDIX II

MESSAGES FROM HIS MAJESTY GEORGE V., FEBRUARY, [1919](#):

To Lady Laurier: "The Queen and I are deeply grieved at the news of your irreparable loss. We recall the days of more than seventeen years ago, since which time we have regarded Sir Wilfrid with feelings of friendship and esteem. We offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your sorrow."

To the Governor-General, the Duke of Devonshire: "I have received the news of the death of Sir Wilfrid Laurier with true regret. Canada will mourn for one who dearly loved his country and will remember with pride and gratitude his great powers of administrative genius."

From a Canadian follower:

"Sir Wilfrid Laurier was the best man I have ever known. His instinctive honour, his kindness and forgetfulness of self, that shining out of nobility and distinction of character which men called magnetism, made every man who entered his presence a better man for it."

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FOOTNOTES:

[1]Replying some time later to a Liberal member, James McMullen, who had in opposition been a stern critic of government expenditure, counting every year the silver spoons in Rideau Hall, and who now queried the establishment of ministers of Customs and of Inland Revenue of full cabinet rank, Sir Wilfrid wrote:

"I know, my dear McMullen, that you have always taken a very strong view on this subject. You have always been of the opinion that the number of cabinet ministers ought to be reduced. You know that this is a subject as to which I could not agree with you. I have always holden to the view that to govern effectively a country like Canada with a population spread over such a very large territory, and with the necessity of giving cabinet representation to all sections, no prime minister could undertake to reduce the cabinet. . . . Supposing you were to drop one cabinet minister, that would be an economy of \$7,000, but if the reduction was from the province of Ontario, I do not believe that the people of Ontario would be satisfied. The comparison is often made between Canada and the United States in this respect. The United States has only seven cabinet ministers, but you must remember that these ministers have no legislative duties; they can give all their time to the administration of their departments.

"I have given this question very ample consideration, and as I am responsible for the guidance of the party in these matters, I think I can claim that our friends generally should give way to my own judgment in this instance, the amount involved after all not being very considerable."

[2]D'Alton McCarthy at Owen Sound, April 30, 1896: "I am no longer a Tory; I was kicked out of the party. I am not a Liberal, for they will not let me in. I stand, however, to do right, and I do not care a straw whether I have to oppose Grit or Tory.... I want to see that government voted out. I would be well pleased to see Mr. Laurier come in. Any change must be for the better. No change can be for the worse. If the Liberal party goes in, and I think it will, I shall do what lies in my power to keep them straight as I did the Conservatives."

[3]Speaking in parliament in March, 1897, Mr. Tarte declared: "In the diocese of Chicoutimi there is not one Roman Catholic who goes to confession without being asked if he is a subscriber to my sons' paper, 'La Patrie'. . . . If the answer is in the affirmative the man is told that he has to send back the paper or that he will be refused the sacraments of the Church. . . . My honourable friends of Protestant persuasion may not understand fully the meaning of those words. A man to whom the sacraments are refused is a man who cannot be buried in consecrated ground. He is a disgraced man before his countrymen and cannot live among them. Practically he is a doomed man."

[4]To a group of Liberals, with Mr. Tarte's sons in charge.

[5]Replying to a letter of Mr. Drolet, recounting on unimpeachable authority a statement to this effect made in high places by one of the Canadian bishops then in Rome, Mr. Laurier made this unusually full confession of faith:

"Ottawa, 15 December, 1896.

". . . The settlement which we have obtained from the government of Manitoba satisfies every sensible man in Canada, but the clergy of the province of Quebec will not pardon us for what it calls their check of last summer. They want revenge at all costs, and unless the Holy See intervenes in time, we are threatened with a religious war whose consequences alarm me. But we cannot draw back. Certain members of the clergy are blind: if their way of thinking is to prevail, not only will we have a war of religion, but thousands upon thousands of good Catholics will be brought to hold religion responsible for the faults and excesses of its ministers. That must be avoided at all costs. . . .

"I have read with regret the remarks which Mgr. N. made about me, in the Vatican itself. I am astonished, even though I have come to expect all manner of attacks. However, I would never have believed there was so much malice in the heart of a certain set. My dear Drolet, you have known me for well on to forty years; you know that I have never paraded my religious convictions, but that they exist; I can appreciate to-day how much influence they have over me, when I say that they have not been shaken by the attacks of those whose mission it is to preach Christian charity.

"Whatever comes, 'il faut marcher droit son chemin.' That was your old Pontifical Zouave motto; it is mine to-day. We must keep the straight road. I see clearly and distinctly the goal. I do not know whether we can reach it, but I am full of hope and courage.

"It is a singular thing, that these violent acts, this ignorance of conditions in our own country, this war to which we are going to be exposed, far from estranging me from the Church, draws me closer to it. I feel how superior religion is to all that often is done in the name of religion.

"W. L."

It is conceivable that, knowing the chevalier's impulsive diplomacy, Mr. Laurier was not altogether surprised to hear that he had read this letter to all the high ecclesiastical authorities he met, one of whom declared in ecstasy, "Why, your Mr. Laurier is the only Christian in Canada!"

[6]TO HIS HOLINESS LEO XIII:

"Most Holy Father,—We, the undersigned, members of the Senate and members of the House of Commons of Canada, and representing therein the Liberal party, present ourselves before your Holiness as respectful and devoted children of Holy Church, to complain of the existence of a state of things which, if allowed to continue, might be extremely dangerous to the constitutional liberties of this country, as well as to the interests of the Church itself.

"Your Holiness has already been made aware of the conduct and attitude of certain prelates and of certain members of the secular clergy who, during the general elections in this country, in the month of June last, intervened in a violent manner in restraint of electoral freedom, taking sides openly for the Conservative party against the Liberal party, and going so far as to declare guilty of grievous sin those of the electors who would vote for the candidates of the Liberal party.

"Sincerely attached to the institutions of our country, which insure to us Catholics the most complete liberty, we respectfully represent to your Holiness that these democratic institutions under which we live and for which your Holiness has many times expressed sentiments of admiration and confidence, can only exist under perfect electoral freedom.

"Far be it from us to refuse to the clergy the plenitude of civil and political rights. The priest is a citizen, and we would not, for a single instant, deprive him of the right of expressing his opinion on any matter submitted to the electorate; but when the exercise of that right develops into violence, and when that violence, in the name of religion, goes to the extent of making a grievous sin out of a purely political act, there is an abuse of authority of which the consequences cannot but be fatal, not only to constitutional liberty, but to religion itself.

"If, in a country such as ours, with a population consisting of persons of various creeds and wherein the Protestant denominations are in the majority, Catholics did not enjoy, in all matters relating to legislation, the same political freedom as their Protestant fellow-countrymen, they would *ipso facto* be placed in a position of inferiority, which would prevent them from taking the legitimate part which they are entitled to take in the government of the country, with the possibility, moreover, of conflicts between the various groups of the population which history shows to be very fraught with danger.

"Then again, an active and violent intervention of the clergy in the domain of political questions submitted to the people must, of necessity, produce against the great mass of the Catholic population a degree of irritation manifestly prejudicial to that respect which religion and its ministers should ever inspire and command.

"Some twenty years ago, his Holiness Pius the IX, your illustrious and lamented predecessor on the Pontifical Throne, acting through the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, deemed it his duty to put a stop to certain abuses of a similar character, and forbade the intervention of the clergy in politics. This prohibition was generally respected so long as his Eminence Cardinal Taschereau was able to guide the Church in Canada, but since old age and infirmities have paralyzed his guiding hand, the abuses to which your illustrious predecessor had put a stop, have begun again, and threaten once more to create trouble among us and to compromise, not only Catholic interests in this country, but the peace and harmony which should exist between the various elements of our population.

"Again affirming our absolute devotion to the faith of our fathers and to the Church of which you are the Supreme Head;

affirming our respect and attachment for the person of your Holiness, our attachment to the interests of our country and to the Crown of Great Britain, its ægis and protector, we beg that your Holiness will renew in our behalf the most wise prescriptions and prohibitions of your predecessor; protect the consciences of the Catholic electors, and thus secure peace in our country by the union of religion and liberty,— a union which your Holiness has many times extolled in those immortal encyclicals whose precious teachings we desire in all things to follow; and, lastly, grant to the children of the Church, now addressing your Holiness, the Apostolic Benediction.

"Ottawa, October, 1896."

[7]In 1910-11, the last year under Mr. Fielding's direction, the ordinary expenditure was \$88,000,000 and the total \$123,000,000; in 1920-21, the ordinary expenditure was \$362,000,000 and the total, \$533,000,000.

[8]A sentence inserted in the draft memorandum, in Mr. Laurier's hand.

[9]See page 392.

[10]The premiers present were: Canada, Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier; New South Wales, Rt. Hon. G. H. Reid; Victoria, Rt. Hon. Sir George Turner; Queensland, Rt. Hon. Hugh M. Nelson; South Australia, Rt. Hon. C. C. Kingston; Western Australia, Rt. Hon. Sir John Forrest; Tasmania, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Braddon; New Zealand, Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon; Cape Colony, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Gordon Sprigg; Natal, Rt. Hon. Harry Escombe; Newfoundland, Rt. Hon. Sir William Whiteway.

[11]In accordance with the opinion of the law officers, the Canadian government applied the minimum tariff on goods from Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, the Argentine, and other most favoured nations for the rest of the year. The next budget repealed the reciprocal tariff and established, as from August 1, 1898, a straight British preferential tariff, granting a reduction of one-fourth of customs duties on wares from the United Kingdom and certain of the low tariff British colonies.

[12]May 26, 1898: ". . . It is no exaggeration to say that he has raised the standard of civilization. . . . Indeed, since the days of Napoleon no man has lived whose name has travelled so far and so wide over the surface of the earth; no man has lived whose name alone so deeply moved the hearts of so many millions of men. This last half-century in which we live has produced many able and strong men who in different walks of life have attracted the attention of the world at large, but of the men who have illustrated this age, it seems to me that in the eyes of posterity four will outlive and outshine all others: Cavour, Lincoln, Bismarck, and Gladstone. . . . Mr. Gladstone undoubtedly excelled every one of these men. He had in his person a combination of varied powers of the human intellect rarely to be found in one single individual. He had the imaginative fancy, the poetic conception of things, in which Count Cavour was deficient. He had the aptitude for business, the financial ability which Lincoln never exhibited. He had the lofty impulses and generous inspirations which Prince Bismarck always discarded even if he did not treat them with scorn. . . .

"He ennobled the common realities of life. . . . May I be permitted without any impropriety to recall that it was my privilege to experience and to appreciate that courtesy made up of dignity and grace which was famous all over the world but of which no one could have an appropriate opinion unless he had been a recipient of it. . . .

"In a character so complex and diversified, one may be asked, what was the dominant feature, what was the supreme quality, the one characteristic which marked the nature of the man? Was it his incomparable genius for finance? Was it his splendid oratorical powers? Was it his marvellous fecundity of mind? In my estimation it was not any one of these things. Great as they were, there was one still more marked, and if I have to give my own impression I would say that the one trait which was dominant in his nature, which marked the man more distinctly than any other, was his intense humanity, his paramount sense of right, his abhorrence of injustice, wrong, and oppression wherever to be found or in whatever shape they might show themselves. Injustice, wrong, oppression, acted upon him as it were mechanically, aroused every fiber of his being, and from that moment to the repairing of the injury, the undoing of the wrong, the destruction of the oppression, he gave his mind, his heart, his soul, his whole life with an energy, with an intensity, with a vigour, paralleled in no man unless it be the first Napoleon."

[13]Sir Wilfrid's conversational comment on the governor-generals he had known may be noted here:

"The Canadian governor-general long ago ceased to determine policy, but he is by no means, or need not be, the mere figurehead the public imagine. He has the privilege of advising his advisers, and if he is a man of sense and experience, his advice is often taken. Much of his time may be consumed in laying corner-stones and listening to boring addresses, but corner-stones must be laid, and people like a touch of colour and ceremony in life; some men, particularly mayors, even like making formal addresses to governor-generals or any one else who may be compelled to listen.

"Lord Dufferin was in many ways an ideal governor-general for the early stages of the Dominion. His touch of the blarney gave us the good conceit of ourselves needed to help us through our first awkward hobbledehoy years. He had tact and a quick

shrewdness that carried him far. He was prone to magnify his office and incidentally Dufferin. He was always speaking to the galleries. He had no special oratorical gift, but a pleasing literary gracefulness. His fellow-Irishman, Lord Lansdowne, was a man of another mould, a strong mind, of clear-cut judgment, distinctly our ablest governor. Lord Stanley was an affable gentleman, no more, but Lady Stanley was an able and witty woman; she did not seek the lime-light, content to shine in the family circle. The warm heart and unresting energy of the Aberdeens are not forgotten in Canada. Lord Minto had much sound sense, a stronger man than was thought. When he came to Canada first, he was absolutely untrained in constitutional practice, knew little but horses and soldiering, but he took his duties to heart, and became an effective governor, if sometimes very stiff. Lord Grey took his duties still more seriously, but scattered his efforts. The Duke of Connaught, the last governor in my day, was the rigidly trained and repressed constitutional monarch, correct and aloof, knowing nothing of Canadian political affairs and caring less; he might well have taken occasion to give a hint to Sir Robert Borden about his dismissals of office-holders."

[14]"Secretary of State for War and Commander-in-Chief desire to express high appreciation of signal exhibition of patriotic spirit of people of Canada shown by offers to serve in South Africa, and to furnish following information to assist organization of force offered into units suitable for military requirements. Firstly, units should consist of about 125 men; secondly, may be infantry, mounted infantry, or cavalry; in view of numbers already available, infantry most, cavalry least, serviceable; thirdly, all should be armed with .303 rifles or carbines, which can be supplied by Imperial Government if necessary; fourthly, all must provide own equipment, and mounted troops own horses; fifthly, not more than one captain and three subalterns each unit. Whole force may be commanded by officer not higher than major. In considering numbers which can be employed, Secretary of State for War, guided by nature of offers, by desire that each Colony should be fairly represented, and limits necessary if force is to be fully utilised by available staff as integral portion of Imperial forces, would gladly accept four units. Conditions as follows: Troops to be disembarked at port of landing South Africa fully equipped at cost of Colonial Government or volunteers. From date of disembarkation Imperial Government will provide pay at Imperial rates, supplies and ammunition, and will defray expenses of transport back to Canada, and pay wound pensions and compassionate allowances at Imperial rates. Troops to embark not later than 31st October, proceeding direct to Cape Town for orders. Inform accordingly all who have offered to raise volunteers."

[15]His cautious attitude is well revealed in a speech in Bowmanville, on October 17, replying to the criticism that the government had not done enough: "My only answer to that is this: We as a government and especially I as the head of the government have in all these matters to think and go slowly and to act formally and with due consideration. For my part, so long as I have the honour to occupy my present post, you shall never see me carried away by passion or prejudice or even enthusiasm. I have to think and consider. I have to look to the right and the wrong. I have to see what will be the effect of any action that we take."

[16]W. Sanford Evans, "The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism," 1901, p. 60.

[17]Sir Wilfrid, in the early stages of the conflict, had been influenced in his opposition to Kruger's position by the knowledge that Chief Justice de Villiers, whom he had met and come to regard very highly in London during the Jubilee, was a strong critic of Kruger's conservatism and had publicly and privately—as intercepted letters afterward showed—urged the Boers to yield to the British demands. He was, therefore, the more impressed, as was Lord Minto, by letters of the Chief Justice giving another angle:

13 May, 1901.

". . . I quite agree with you that President Kruger ought to have displayed more liberality toward the newcomers but I fear that the exaggerated and distorted accounts which have been sent over of Boer oppression have affected your judgment in the same way as they have affected the judgment of the great majority of the British people. 'The policy,' you say, 'of admitting settlers simply to make helots of them, is intolerable.' I have traveled a good deal over the world and have nowhere seen a more flourishing people than these so-called 'helots' were before the war. They looked with utter contempt upon the President and his people, and I quite agree with Lionel Philips that the great majority of them did not 'care a fig' for the franchise. Be that as it may, the President did induce the *Volkerand* to pass a law conferring the franchise on outlanders after seven years' residence. That law was somewhat clogged by undesirable conditions, but before the negotiations were closed the President consented to a proposal which had been made by Mr. Chamberlain himself that the law should be submitted to a joint commission for amendment. The answer he received was that the offer now came too late and that the British government would formulate their own demands. Meanwhile troops were being moved from all directions toward the Transvaal. Thirteen eventful days passed during which both Presidents implored of the British government to state their demands for consideration. No answer came and in a fit of frenzy, which I for my part would not wish to excuse, Kruger issued his arrogant ultimatum. But can any one doubt that the issue was forced upon the Transvaal government? The information before them was such as to convince them that their independence was aimed at. Chamberlain of course did not wish for war if he could attain his objects without war, but those objects were utterly inconsistent with the continued independence of the state. No British Colony enjoying responsible government would have borne with the interference with its internal affairs to which this nominally independent state was being subjected. The negotiations should be read by the light of the historical events which preceded them and if so read I cannot understand how any impartial person, with any sense of justice or fairness, can support Chamberlain's action. The chief argument that I now find adduced on the British side is that the unpreparedness of Great Britain shows how little its rulers wished for war. The real fact, however, is that the government believed itself to be prepared and never expected that it would require more than 20 or 30 thousand men to promenade to Pretoria and reduce the Boers to subjection. Believe me, dear Sir Wilfrid, that a supreme tragedy is being enacted in South Africa. The British people, who deplored the fate of Dreyfus, are unjustly accusing and punishing a whole people. Their minds have been poisoned by a venal press and by lies which have been sown broadcast over the land at the

bidding of a capitalist clique which owes all its wealth to the liberal gold-mining laws of the republic. Up to the commencement of the war Her Majesty had no more loyal or law-abiding subjects than the Dutch of the Cape but their sense of loyalty and of affection for the Empire has been completely destroyed by the unjust attack upon the liberties of a neighbouring people to whom they are related by the closest ties of kinship. The abuse heaped upon the Dutch since the war by the English press has tended still further to alienate them. . . .

"You suggest in your letter that I should try to influence the leaders of the republics to put an end to a needless war. Even if I were in South Africa there would of course be no means of communicating with the enemy. Knowing, myself, the benefits of British rule, I should be very glad if I could induce the Boers to submit and cordially accept such rule. But with these people the preservation of their independence is a sacred mission. It may be a foolish sentiment but I cannot help respecting it. To us it may seem foolish and indeed wicked to prolong a war which can have only one issue, but to them submission, especially after the declarations of the British government, probably appears to be nothing short of a crime."

[18]Mr. Charlton found Mr. Edward Farrer also in Washington on a mission of inquiry. After observing the need of publicity to dispel the ignorance of Canadian affairs prevalent in the United States, he continued. "In this connection I may say that Mr. Edward Farrer is in a position to render us very important services, and is doing so at the present time. While it would not be prudent or judicious in my opinion to associate Farrer publicly with any work in connection with negotiations, or for you to hold direct public communication with him to any considerable extent, yet it is well, I imagine, to let him know that his services are appreciated, and that the value of the service he is capable of rendering is thoroughly understood. I find he stands well with newspaper men in Washington, and is intimately acquainted with the leading newspaper correspondents in that city. He also has wide acquaintance with American public men, and I think that he is disposed to use his influence loyally for the benefit of Canada, and that he has given up the idea of persisting in the presentation and urging of his political union sentiments."

[19]To Joseph A. Choate, April 28, 1899: "You are by this time probably aware of the great difficulties that surround the arrangement of any controversy in which Canada is concerned. The Dominion politicians care little for English interests. Their minds are completely occupied with their own party and factional disputes, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier is far more afraid of Sir Charles Tupper than he is of Lord Salisbury and President McKinley combined; while the habit of referring everything from the Foreign Office to the Colonial, followed by a consultation of the Canadian authorities by the Minister of the Colonies, produces interminable friction and delay." W. R. Thayer, "The Life and Letters of John Hay," II, 205.

[20]House of Commons, March 31, 1899. The Canadian Commissioners found one instance of local interests in their own body. One of the most controverted tariff questions was a long-standing lumber war, the United States admitting Canadian logs free but taxing its lumber, Canada replying with an export duty on logs, the United States rejoining with an extra tax on lumber equal to the export duty. Then Ontario, in 1897, took a hand, its Liberal government forced in its growing weakness to accede to the Conservative proposal of compelling licenses on Crown land timber-limits to manufacture in Ontario. Mr. Charlton, who had told Sir Wilfrid on his appointment that they could only do their best, "believing that a Higher Power will shape events," and who incidentally was a large exporter of logs from Ontario to Michigan, decided to take a hand himself in shaping events, carrying on an indiscreet newspaper campaign which led Mr. Hay to protest that he was making the irreconcilables in his own camp more irreconcilable, and even seeking, without the knowledge of his colleagues, to have the British government intervene against the Ontario law. Sir Wilfrid lost little time in bringing these activities to an end.

[21]British and Canadian statesmen had frequently pressed for demarcation, but save for an informal reference by Dr. Dawson in 1886, had not claimed the inlets. "We found ourselves hampered to the most extreme degree," declared Sir Richard Cartwright in the House (March 22, 1899), "by the extraordinary apathy and indifference which the government of Canada for the period of eighteen years from 1878 to 1896 had manifested in regard to this question." As to the government of the 1873-78 period, Sir Richard made no comment. It is plain, in Mr. Christopher Robinson's words, that "until the completion of the Canadian Pacific, Canada knew more of Egypt than she did of British Columbia itself." The one protest which the Canadian government had attempted to make, and which, if made, would greatly have strengthened its position, had been fozzled by the British ambassador at Washington. In 1889 Sir John Macdonald raised a definite protest against the occupation of territory bordering on the Lynn Canal, but in view of the fact "that the Foreign Office disapproves of communication from Ottawa to Washington direct," he asked Tupper to ask Salisbury to instruct the British minister to convey the protest to the State Department; Sir Lionel Sackville-West, writing from a comfortable summer hotel veranda, informed Mr. Bayard that some Canadians had raised some objection to some action of Americans about a charter somewhere in the Alaska region, whereto Mr. Bayard had naturally replied it was not so, and the matter ended.

[22]"We have not suggested that unless every one of the questions submitted to the Commission can be settled none of them should be, but it appears to us that the Alaska boundary is the one of all others which it is most important to have settled if good relations are to be maintained between Great Britain and the United States. The nature of the difference is such that from circumstances which may arise at any moment, and which are too obvious to need statement, acute controversy and even the risk of conflict may arise. Moreover, it is a question which there will be no better chance of settling at a future time than there is now, and one which, in our opinion may be settled without difficulty by nations acting in a friendly spirit. On other points we are to make concessions with a view to avoid friction and differences in the future. We are willing to do so, but we cannot feel it

reasonable that we should be required to take such a course, if this far greater cause of danger is to remain in existence when in our opinion it might quite well be removed."

[23]The letter ran, in part:

". . . The claim of the Canadians for access to deep water along any part of the Alaskan coast is just exactly as indefensible as if they should now suddenly claim the island of Nantucket.

"I believe that no three men in the United States could be found who would be more anxious than our own delegates to do justice to the British claim on all points where there is even a color of right on the British side. But the objection raised by certain Canadian authorities to Lodge, Root, and Turner, and especially to Lodge and Root, was that they had committed themselves on the general proposition. No man in public life in any position of prominence could have possibly avoided committing himself on the proposition, any more than Mr. Chamberlain could avoid committing himself on the question of the ownership of the Orkneys if some Scandinavian country suddenly claimed them. If this claim embodied other points as to which there was legitimate doubt, I believe Mr. Chamberlain would act fairly and squarely in deciding the matter; but if he appointed a commission to settle up all these questions, I certainly should not expect him to appoint three men, if he could find them, who believed that as to the Orkneys the question was an open one. . . . I wish to make one last effort to bring about an agreement through the Commission which will enable the people of both countries to say that the result represents the feeling of the representatives of both countries. But if there is a disagreement, I wish it distinctly understood, not only that there will be no arbitration of the matter, but that in my message to Congress I shall take a position which will prevent any possibility of arbitration hereafter; a position . . . which will render it necessary for Congress to give me the authority to run the line as we claim it, by our own people, without any further regard to the attitude of England and Canada. If I paid attention to mere abstract rights, that is the position I ought to take anyhow. I have not taken it because I wish to exhaust every effort to have the affair settled peacefully and with due regard to England's honor.'

"What passed through the minds of the British Ministers when they heard, confidentially, the President's decision, is not reported. Possibly, they realized that the claims which the Canadians had pushed for the past five years were only a bluff; assuredly they knew that Mr. Roosevelt meant what he said, and it was no secret that he had already sent troops to Alaska; at all events, they appointed as England's representative Lord Alverstone, who, as it turned out, supported the American contention."—Thayer, "Life of John Hay," 11. 209.

[24]Mr. Tarte writes November 21, 1898: "Then there is the 'kicking' of Pacaud. M. Langelier 'a kické,' he has been named judge; M. Choquette 'a kické,' he has been named judge; Pacaud is wondering why he should not arrive somewhere 'en kickant.' Be assured that is the frame of mind dominant in the district of Quebec." To which Sir Wilfrid replies: "It was good tactics to put Langelier on the bench; it was good tactics to do the same for Choquette; the best tactics for us to use toward Pacaud would be to give him a newspaper rival. His claims do not lack justice . . . but if he uses that tone and makes war on us, there will be no alternative."

[25]January 27, 1903.

[26]"Lord Dundonald in his position is charged with the organization of the militia, but must take counsel here when organizing a regiment. He is a foreigner,—no. . . ."

SOME HON. MEMBERS. "No, no."

SIR WILFRID LAURIER. "I had withdrawn the expression before honourable gentlemen interrupted. He is not a foreigner but he is a stranger."

SOME HON. MEMBERS. "No."

SIR WILFRID LAURIER. "Yes, he does not know the people of the Eastern Townships, where these light dragoons are to be enlisted. I doubt if he was ever in the town of Sweetsburg or in the county of Brome or the county of Missisquoi."

Sir Wilfrid's mastery of English was complete, in readiness and felicity of phrase, though when ill or fatigued the English word came to him less easily than the French. To the end, his pronunciation of English was frequently distinctly French in the placing of accent.

It was a habit of his when debate in the House was tedious to snap his fingers and bid a page bring a large English dictionary from the Library, and then to sit absorbed for an hour running his long finger down column after column of words.

[27]The order, after defending Mr. Fisher's action, continued: "Even if Mr. Fisher's action had been as erroneously stated, there would still have been no justification for the course pursued by Lord Dundonald. Lord Dundonald is an officer of the Canadian Government, a high officer, it is true, but still an officer of the Government, subject to all the limitations which are usually imposed upon public officials in regard to the action of their superior officers. For an official to make a public attack upon Ministers of the Government under which he serves is a proceeding so totally at variance with the principles which must necessarily obtain in the

administration of military as well as civil affairs that it cannot with propriety be overlooked. It is impossible to do otherwise than characterize the speech of Lord Dundonald as a grave act of indiscretion and insubordination."

[28]"Sir, I have been told that my meaning was contemplated, was offensive and insulting. I have been in this House for many years, I have seen some of the veterans of former combats pass away, I have been engaged in combats with some of them, I have fought a good many hard struggles, but I am not conscious in all the years of my life, in all the struggles in which I have been engaged with gentlemen on the other side of the House, I am not conscious that I ever deliberately used an offensive word toward any man or toward any class. I never sought a fight, but I was never afraid of a fight. Whenever I had to fight, I think it will be admitted by friend and foe that I always fought with fair weapons. I have been told to-day on the floor of this House twice, that when I used the word 'foreigner,' there was in my heart a sinister motive, there was in my heart a feeling which found expression. Sir, I have only this to say: I disdain to make reply to such an insinuation. If sixty years of what I believe to be, after all, an honourable life, a life which has certainly been one of loyal devotion to British institutions, is not a sufficient answer to such an insinuation, I will not attempt to make an answer."

[29]

FEDERAL ELECTIONS, 1904

	Seats	
	Liberal	Conservative
Prince Edward Island	1	3
Nova Scotia	18	0
New Brunswick	7	6
Quebec	54	11
Ontario	38	48
Manitoba	7	3
North West Territories	7	3
British Columbia	7	0
Yukon	0	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	139	75

[30]Sir Wilfrid could face this outlook unflinchingly for himself, and equally for others, as this letter to a witness Liberal member who had lost his convention, owing, he claimed, to wire-pulling and the family influence of his rival, and who proposed to run as an independent:

(Translation)

Ottawa, Sept. 18, 1909

"My dear X:

"I have just received your letter. I must express my regret in having to tell you frankly that I do not at all agree with you: I know the county well enough personally to be informed exactly on the situation.

"You forget that you, and I as well, are no longer as young as we used to be when we campaigned together. The young are coming up and taking the place of the old fellows. That is what has happened to you in your county, and that is what will happen to me before long in Canada. Let us submit with good grace to the inevitable.

"The convention was like all other conventions. Your friends could have been there as well as L.'s, and if they were not, it is because they do not exist or because they have less zeal than L.'s partisans. In either case the decision of the convention settles the point. It is impossible to maintain a party without discipline. I hope that you will recognize this voluntarily."

[31]In the summer of 1904, the Toronto "News" and a few other Ontario newspapers declared that the concession of provincehood was being deferred until after the elections because the hierarchy was demanding separate schools. Writing to a former Ontario supporter, who in 1905 was one of the leading figures in the attack upon the Autonomy Bills, Sir Wilfrid made his position clear:

Ottawa, June 7, 1904

. . . "Why, in the name of patriotism, attempt to resurrect the now dormant separate school question? Why, when we have

profound peace, attempt to prejudge public opinion? The school question will come up again all too soon. It will come in a very different form from what it was in 1896, but with the same bitter passions on both sides, and again it will be my lot to fight extremists and to place and maintain the question where it has been placed by the British North America Act. It is not my intention here and now to argue with you. . . . Let me tell you that I see my way clear before me. My policy is all made up in my mind. I will go into the struggle with no misgivings as to its soundness and with no apprehension as to the results.

"In the meantime I would only ask you to remember that Confederation was a compromise, and that for the great object of bringing together the disjointed provinces, George Brown made great sacrifices of private opinion. Let me also ask you to remember that the work of effecting the union, is far from complete. The work must be continued in the same spirit in which it was conceived, and I certainly indulge the hope that you and I will always find it easy to stand on that ground."

[32] In a letter to a Regina friend, written on March 14 and made public during the provincial election in 1905, Mr. Walter Scott, after referring to the "almost unpardonable bungling" over the affair, and expressing the belief that a compromise could be effected, commented on this phase of the situation:

"It was impossible to evade the issue. To leave the subject wholly within the provincial control was bound to be objected to by Roman Catholics because they were bound to look then to very quickly see the last vestige of their Separate Schools disappear. Laurier had induced Quebec to swallow twice,—in 1896 and again in 1899 over the South African business. Neither Manitoba nor Ontario thanked him very emphatically on either occasion. In the present case the hierarchy would have too much reason behind their contention. I don't for a moment think that the case for the Separate School is legally or constitutionally binding, but morally the case is pretty strong and in my view it would simply be going beyond all reason to expect Laurier to induce Quebec to swallow a third time with the weight of the moral argument so strongly against him.

"I do not believe that Laurier or any other member of the cabinet beyond Scott and Fitzpatrick thought other than that Section 16 of the bill simply provided to continue existing conditions. We North-West members advised this provision and we were told that our advice would be followed. Laurier's speech indicated nothing further to me ... Sifton's analysing acumen quickly picked out the meaning of the clause which without question would remove the separate schools from public regulation."

[33]

1. NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES ACT, 1875

When, and so soon as any system of taxation shall be adopted in any district or portion of the North-West Territories the Lieutenant-Governor, by and with the consent of the Council or Assembly, as the case may be, shall pass all necessary Ordinances in respect to education; but it shall therein be always provided, that a majority of the ratepayers of any district or portion of the North-West Territories, or any lesser portion or subdivision thereof, by whatever name the same may be known, may establish such schools therein, as they may think fit, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor; and further, that the minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish separate schools therein, and that, in such latter case, the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic separate schools shall be liable only to assessment of such rates as they may impose upon themselves in respect thereof.

2. ORIGINAL CLAUSE 16 IN THE AUTONOMY BILLS.

1. The provisions of Section 93 of the British North America Act, 1867, shall apply to the said Province as if, at the date upon which this Act comes into force, the territory comprised therein were already a province, the expression "the Union" in the said section being taken to mean the said date.
2. Subject to the provisions of the said Section 93 and in continuance of the principle heretofore sanctioned under the North-West Territories Act it is enacted that the Legislature of the said Province shall pass all necessary laws in respect of education and that it shall therein always be provided (a) that a majority of the ratepayers of any district or portion of the said Province or of any less portion or subdivision thereof, by whatever name it is known, may establish such schools therein as they think fit, and make the necessary assessments and collection of rates therefor, and (b) that the minority of the ratepayers therein, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may establish Separate Schools therein, and make the necessary assessment and collection of rates therefor, and (c) that in such case the ratepayers establishing such Protestant or Roman Catholic Separate Schools shall be liable only to assessment or such rates as they impose upon themselves with respect thereto.
3. In the appropriation of public moneys by the Legislature in aid of education and in the distribution of any moneys paid to the Government of the said Province arising from the school fund established by "The Dominion Lands Act" there shall be no discrimination between the Public Schools and the Separate Schools, and such moneys shall be applied to the support of the Public and Separate Schools in equitable shares of proportion.

3. CLAUSE 16 AS AMENDED

Section 93 of the British North America Act, 1867, shall apply to the said Province, with the substitution for paragraph 1 of the said Section 93 of the following paragraph.

- (1) Nothing in any such law shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to Separate Schools which any class of persons have at the date of the passing of this Act, under the terms of Chapters 29 and 30 of the Ordinances of the North-West

Territories passed in the year 1901 or with respect to religious instruction in any Public or Separate School as provided for in the said Ordinances.

(2) In the appropriation by the Legislature or distribution by the Government of the Province of any moneys for the support of schools organized and carried on in accordance with the said Chapter 29 or any Act passed in amendment thereof, or in substitution therefor, there shall be no discrimination against schools of any class described in the said Chapter 29.

(3) Where the expression "by law" is employed in paragraph 3 of the said Section 93 it shall be held to mean the law as set out in the said Chapters 29 and 30, and where the expression "at the Union" is employed in the said paragraph 3, it shall be held to mean the date at which this Act comes into force.

[34] In a letter to Mr. Bulyea Sir Wilfrid stated the reasons for passing over Mr. Haultain, and, in consequence, for suggesting that Mr. Bulyea himself should take the Lieutenant-governorship of the other province rather than oppose his old friend:

"Ottawa, 25 July, 1905 ". . . At the outset, I had indulged the hope of an easy solution, a solution that seemed so natural as not even to suggest the possibility of another and different one.

"When you and Haultain came to Ottawa, in the early part of January last, I thought, and indeed every one thought, that as soon as the two provinces came into existence, the then existing government of the Territories would naturally become the government of Saskatchewan.

"The attitude of Haultain has made this, in my judgment, an impossibility. When in the early part of the struggle which followed the introduction of the bills, Haultain went out of his way to openly take sides with the Opposition, I am free to admit that I was keenly disappointed but even then I did not come to the conclusion that the breach was irreparable. When, however, he threw himself into the contests of London and North Oxford and especially when he announced his intention of carrying on the provincial elections on the avowed policy of destroying the school system of which, some weeks before, he had said that if he were a dictator, he would not change a single disposition of it, he left us no alternative, but to accept the declaration of war.

"I realize that such a condition of things must be particularly painful and embarrassing to you. On the one hand I know full well that you never approved Haultain's course. On the other hand, the ties of friendship which have grown between you and him, resulting from long association in the same administration, would make it a most invidious task for you, to have to oppose him and to fight, with all the firmness which a political contest means in this country, and especially such a contest as is involved in the policy of which he has declared himself the champion. . . .

"I have thought it therefore my duty to place at your disposal, one of the two Lieutenant-governorships, that is to say the Lieutenant-governorship of Alberta as the other is already filled. . . . "

[35] (*George H. Bulyea to Wilfrid Laurier*)

"Edmonton, Dec. twenty-six, 1905

"The elections of Alberta and Saskatchewan are over and I think that you will admit that my judgment in both cases has not been very much at sea. In this province there were no complications, and the result was a clean sweep for the Liberals. . . .

"As I told you before, I thought the question of sympathy for Haultain would be a serious factor; there is no question that this was more serious than his policy as to schools, and unfortunately, quite a number of our Liberal friends refused to withdraw their support from him. Toward the end of the campaign, however, this was more or less forgotten, and had no further complications arisen, Scott would probably have carried 21 out of the 25 seats. Our friend at St. Boniface, however, in his mistaken zeal, issued the memorandum which, unfortunately, became public. It was absolutely unnecessary, as Haultain had alienated the Catholic vote, and the distorted use and colouring that was given to this document by Haultain and his friends had a most disastrous effect on the non-Catholic vote. I have very little hesitation in saying that had Haultain's manifesto been issued a week or ten days sooner, Scott could not have carried the province. However, it is not for the purpose of referring to this question that I take the liberty of writing you. You are no doubt aware in a general way, of the attitude of the C. P. R. in both provinces. In the constituencies of Banff, Calgary and Gleichen in this province, the C. P. R. had practically charge of the campaign and every influence they could use, fair or unfair, was brought to bear on the Liberals.

"Mr. Whyte issued instructions that his officials were not to interfere, and I may say I believe Mr. Whyte was sincere and that these instructions were issued in good faith. However, it made no difference to the officials, and when Mr. Cushing at Calgary protested to Mr. D. about his interference, after said instructions had been issued, D. practically told him that he did not care a — for Whyte, that he took his instructions from some one higher than he was.

"The influence of the C. P. R. can be felt, also, in every point in Saskatchewan province where they had a pull. They voted all their officials and most of their men, particularly their section-gangs all over the southern portions of the province. . . . They have shown their hand, and, I think, if I might presume to offer you this advice, I would make it war to the knife from this out. . . . My suggestion would be to take the revised version of the golden rule: 'to do unto others as they would do to you, and do it first.' . . ."

(*Wilfrid Laurier to G. E. Bulyea*)

"Ottawa, 1 January, 1906

. . . "The result both in Alberta and Saskatchewan is quite satisfactory. I am not, however, without anxiety for the future on account of the unfortunate action of the Archbishop. The bad impression which was created by his unwarranted interference may

still be revived at any moment as it may give Haultain and his friends a permanent opportunity of holding before the public the scare of clerical interference. This is a constant danger and similar breaks can always be expected from this impetuous man. Our friends in the West, however, should know by this time that he is no friend of ours and must be closely allied with Haultain as with the Manitoba Tories, either in Dominion or Provincial politics.

"The suggestions which you make with regard to the C. P. R. are certainly worthy of consideration, and I am sure there is no mistake in believing that they have tried a double game, protesting their innocence at this end, and working with all their might at the other. . . ."

[36]

(Wilfrid Laurier to Hon. J. P. B. Casgrain.—Translation)

"Ottawa, April 20, 1905

"My Dear Senator:

"I am not as optimistic as you are. I believe that I shall pull through this difficulty, but I am not sure that I shall pull through, as you suggest, Stronger that at the beginning. Matters are going not too badly at the moment in the English-speaking provinces. I believe that there is in fact a distinct reaction in our favour. But our friend Bourassa had begun, in Quebec, a campaign which may well cause us some trouble...."

[37]The discontent within the party as to the Ontario leadership may be gathered from a public interview of one of the whips, George D. Grant, early in 1906: "We Ontario Liberal members are very much dissatisfied. We feel great regret on account of Sir William Mulock's retirement; he has held the confidence of the Liberals of the old school. The only members of the cabinet from Ontario in whom we have confidence are Aylesworth and Hyman."

Early in 1908 the Toronto Reform Association voiced a similar complaint to Sir Wilfrid: "The Liberal party in the province is in an extremely apathetic and comatose condition. The old Liberals are becoming discouraged and disinterested and the leaders of the party in the province are not putting their claims before the people in such a way as to hold their own with the young men. . . . We appreciate fully the great services and sacrifices rendered the party by the senior Ontario representatives in your Cabinet, but notwithstanding these, at the present time, age and physical disabilities prevent some of your ministers from taking such a part in the coming campaign as a Cabinet Minister is expected to take."

[38]Sometimes grace was given, as in the following unique documents, drawn up in Sir Wilfrid's handwriting, and signed by the erring minister:

(1) "I hereby tender you my resignation as member of your administration and Minister of ———, and ask you to place the same in the hands of His Excellency." . . . Ottawa, ———, (signature).

(2) "I hereby pledge my word to Sir Wilfrid Laurier that I will never again taste wine, beer, or any other kind of intoxicating liquors, in token of which engagement, I place in Sir W. L.'s hand my resignation as member of the cabinet and minister of ———, with the date blank, leaving it to him to fill the blank and act upon it, should I fail in my promise."

Alas for human promises—a year later Sir Wilfrid filled in the blank.

It was perhaps as a result of the confusion caused by the two favourite lines of attack by Conservative statesmen that a Simcoe County farmer, a staunch old Grit, declared that he had not been surprised to hear about some of the ministers, but he was really shocked by Wilfrid Laurier's goings on with that Italian hussy, Mary del Val: a story which Sir Wilfrid much enjoyed.

[39]The importer of these boxes, which were labelled "Beehives," was asked at a little country station by a Hornerite preacher for a contribution to the church funds; in his nervousness he handed over twenty dollars, whereupon the preacher declared to the bystanders that he must return immediate thanks: looking about, he chose the "beehives" to kneel on, and prayed the Lord to bless the good and generous brother in his work.

[40]Yet the printing would never go round. To a prominent member who complained he had never been able to secure any contracts for his paper, Sir Wilfrid replied: "I am not surprised that you cannot get any printing from the departments; I have never been able to get any for a paper in which I take an interest in Quebec."

[41]It was in a similar situation that a former master dispenser of patronage, Sir Charles Tupper, had devised an ingenious plan. Sir William Van Horne complained to Sir Charles that he was sending a preposterous number of recommendations for passes on the Canadian Pacific. "True," Sir Charles replied, "but it is difficult to decline what people consider costs me nothing. Hereafter, when I send you a letter recommending a pass, and sign it 'Yours truly,' throw it into the waste-basket; when I sign it 'Yours sincerely,' please give it consideration; but when I sign it 'Yours very sincerely,' you simply must not refuse it." "And," added Sir William, "after that, every blessed letter from Tupper asking for a pass was signed, 'Yours very sincerely.'"

[42]General Election Results, 1908

	Liberals	Conservatives
Nova Scotia	12	6
New Brunswick	11	2
Prince Edward Island	3	1
Quebec	54	11
Ontario	37	49
Manitoba	2	8
Saskatchewan	9	1
Alberta	4	3
British Columbia	1	6
Yukon	1	0
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	134	87

[43]See page 107

[44]"A visit to England," Sir Wilfrid observed one day, "is in many ways a pleasure, even if it involves an uncomfortable voyage for a poor sailor. The throb of the world's affairs in London, the stimulus of contact with men of high and disciplined capacity, the comfort of town and country life in a land cushioned with tradition, where leisure is an art and hospitality a science, makes a deep appeal. Yet it was always a strain. The endless round of dinners and receptions would wear down a body stronger than mine, but there was more than that. Along with much genuine and spontaneous kindness one felt the incessant and unrelenting organization of an imperialist campaign. We were looked upon not so much as individual men but abstractly as Colonial statesmen, to be impressed and hobbled. The Englishman is as businesslike in his politics, particularly his external politics, as in business, even if he covers his purposefulness with an air of polite indifference. Once convinced that the colonies were worth keeping, he bent to the work of drawing them closer within the orbit of London with marvellous skill and persistence. In this campaign, which no one could appreciate until he had been in the thick of it, social pressure is the subtlest and most effective force. In 1897 and 1902 it was Mr. Chamberlain's personal insistence that was strongest, but in 1907 and after, society pressure was the chief force. It is hard to stand up against the flattery of a gracious duchess. Weak men's heads are turned in an evening, and there are few who can resist long. We were dined and wined by royalty and aristocracy and plutocracy and always the talk was of Empire, Empire, Empire. I said to Deakin in 1907, that this was one reason why we could not have a parliament or council in London: we can talk cabinet to cabinet, but cannot send Canadians or Australians as permanent residents to London, to debate and act on their own discretion. Fortunately, there were some good friends who seemed to like us for ourselves, not least the children. . . .

"Chamberlain was the first English statesman whom we came to know intimately. I was much impressed by his force and directness. He was ambitious, but not for himself alone. Unfortunately our views often clashed. There was little serious discussion in the Colonial Conference of 1897, which was a mere curtain-raiser. The debates were academic; we did not come to sufficiently close quarters to bring out the cleavage of opinions. But in 1902 a dead set was made to take advantage of the supposed wave of imperial enthusiasm following the Boer War. Chamberlain was the head and front of the campaign. He pushed his own plan of an Imperial Council, and backed Brodrick and Selborne in their schemes of imperial defence. He handled the discussion skilfully; when it was apparent refusal was coming, he headed off Selborne and Brodrick and took up the questions later in private conference."

[45]

(Wilfrid Laurier to Senator Béique.—Translation)

"London, July, 1907.

"MY DEAR BÉIQUE:

"I have just received your letter, and hasten to convey to you my very sincere thanks. I dreaded very much the voyage to England and the work that awaited me there. I believe, however, that all has gone well, and even in England the appearance is that the attitude which I have taken meets, not with general, but with a fairly general, approval.

"As to the principal point, the question of the creation of an Imperial Council, there is undoubtedly disappointment in certain quarters, but the more the question is discussed the clearer it will become that the conclusion that we reached finally was the only possible one under the circumstances, and even from the political standpoint. The original proposal which was submitted to us and which received the support of several members of the Conference, was, in my opinion, a grave error, pregnant, it may be, with the

most deplorable consequences. . . . "

[46] To a Montreal author who had sent him the proofs of an article, he wrote, in November, 1907:

"Your article is very well written; there are many things in it which I sincerely admire, but since you have been kind enough to submit me the paper you will permit me to take exception to some of your views and expressions. I would specially call your attention to this sentence: 'We are not fooled by Mr. Botha's, "We love England," any more than we are fooled by Mrs. Parnell's, "Union of Hearts."' I think you do a grave injustice to a brave man, who, before the war, was opposed to the policy of Kruger, and whose views would have averted the war if followed by this old and narrow-minded peasant, and who now, having made his peace with England, is satisfied to live a free man under British institutions. Your sentence implies that General Botha is playing the hypocrite. For this you have absolutely no reasons that you could show and you base your opinion simply upon the suspicions which have been expressed from time to time, and even now, ever since responsible government was given to the Transvaal. In my opinion the action of the British government in giving freedom to the Transvaal was a bold, manly act, as well as statesmanship of the highest kind, and its loyal acceptance by General Botha and those who were lately engaged in the war with him is equally honourable."

[47] The term adopted by the leaders of the movement must be used, even though Nationalists in Quebec as in other provinces who took all Canada for their home, protested against the appropriation of the word by what they considered a provincialist faction.

[48] When in the debates in the Canadian House of Commons in 1910 a Liberal from the Yukon referred to the naval panic as based largely on "the reckless lying of respectable people," he was considered to have said one of the things that one does not say.

[49] "This House fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada, as they increase in numbers and wealth, to assume in larger measure the responsibilities in national defence.

"The House is of opinion that under the present constitutional relations between the Mother Country and the self-governing Dominions, the payment of regular and periodical contributions to the Imperial treasury for naval and military purposes would not, so far as Canada is concerned, be the most satisfactory solution of the question of defence.

"The House will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in co-operation with and in close relation to the Imperial Navy, along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last Imperial Conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire and the peace of the world.

"The House expresses its firm conviction that whenever the need arises the Canadian people will be found ready and willing to make any sacrifice that is required to give the Imperial authorities the most loyal and hearty co-operation in every movement for the maintenance of the integrity and honour of the Empire."

[50] It was a favourite device of Laurier, in letter and in campaign speaking, especially in Ontario, to stir party loyalty by these fighting words, linking his opponents with Family Compact days, and stirring his followers to emulate the stern unbending Grits of old. How his eyes would twinkle as he rolled out the r's!

[51] Sir Wilfrid observed one day: "Of colonial statesmen, the South-Africans left the strongest impression. There is no man I am prouder to call my friend than Louis Botha. His massive strength and simple honor, his unquestioning devotion to duty, his utter lack of thought of self, his moderation and close grip on fact, carried South Africa through desperate straits. He has high abilities, but it was his character, his calm sincerity, that rallied men to him. Smuts has not his force, but he has sympathy, vision a well-thought-out philosophy of life, that make him a sounder guide than most of the European public men I knew.

"The Australians for the most part were a disappointment, distinctly inferior to the Afrikanders. Perhaps it was their remoteness, perhaps their racial unity, that gave them a parochial insularity, a lack of perspective in world affairs. Barton was the ablest, but lethargic. Deakin was a very likable man, of brilliant endowments, a splendid orator, with much fire and force. He was open-minded to new ideas; perhaps too much so, as he seemed unable to hold any steady course. Hughes appears to be a cross between Churchill and Lloyd George. Seddon, New Zealand's 'King Dick,' was a powerful leader of men, a man of much rugged force and shrewdness, but a ward politician rather than a statesman. Sir Joseph Ward was given prominence in 1911 through the exigencies of imperialist politics. At each imperial conference some colonial leader was put forward by the imperialists to champion their cause. In 1897 it was obvious that they looked to me to act the bell-wether, but I fear they were disappointed. In 1902 it was Seddon; in 1907, Deakin; in 1911, Ward. He had not Deakin's ability or Seddon's force. His London friends stuffed him for his conference speeches; he came each day with a carefully typewritten speech, but when once off that, he was at sea."

[52]Early in 1914 the leaders of the Hindu nationalist movement, apparently with some German aid, determined to break this barrier or at least cause some friction in the attempt. A Japanese ship was chartered to carry four hundred Sikhs, largely former British soldiers, from Shanghai to Vancouver. Under the direct-voyage and two-hundred-dollar rules, as well as a 1913 regulation suspending all immigration of labourers owing to business depression, the Borden government held them ineligible to land, but found difficulty in enforcing deportation until H. M. C. S. *Rainbow* brought its guns to bear. By a strange irony, this nucleus of the new Canadian navy was first used to prevent British subjects from landing on British soil. On their return to India, the deported Sikhs broke into violent riots leading to a notable loss of life.

[53]"Mr. Sifton," Sir Wilfrid remarked one day, "was the master mind in parliament. He could discern the current political tendencies, put his finger on the popular pulse, better than any other man in my experience. His executive capacity was extraordinary; but not more so than his secretiveness. He never told his whole mind even to his closest intimates. I could not fathom the reason for his attitude on reciprocity."

[54]"During my ten years of editorship of the 'Globe' the Hon. Clifford Sifton, and what the Conservatives called Siftonism, was absolutely the heaviest and most irksome burden we had to carry. Knowing for years, as we did, that he had carried a knife in his boot for members of the government, it was no surprise, but rather an infinite relief when he joined the ranks of Borden and Bourassa."—J. A. Macdonald at Paris, Ont., Sept. 19, 1911.

[55]In Ontario, it is interesting to note, the Liberal slogan was precisely the reverse: "A vote for Borden is a vote for Bourassa."

[56]"The *Montreal Star*," the most violent and influential press opponent of the Laurier government in the election, thus greeted the new cabinet: "There were the highest hopes throughout the country that with his huge majority Mr. Borden would feel free to give us a government wholly unshadowed by even a question as to the character or reputation of any of the Ministers. It would be pure hypocrisy for the *Montreal Star* to pretend that this has been done. . . . Sinister influences have been granted admission to the Privy Council Chamber at a time when they might have been rigidly excluded."

[57]Writing to a London friend May 13, 1916, Sir Wilfrid perceived at once the folly of the executions which followed: "What a blunder these terrible executions have been, following the foolish attempt at rebellion in Dublin. I could not put into words the feeling of horror these executions inspire, and I cannot conceive a more serious political error. That the Asquith government should display so much severity at Dublin, while it leaves Carson in Belfast free to preach and organize rebellion with impunity, seems to me an act of the utmost feebleness. I know that I am judging from a distance and that there may be circumstances which justify these barbarities, but with the light that we have here, I do not hesitate to repeat what was said about the execution of the Duc d'Enghien by Napoleon, 'It is worse than a crime, it is a blunder.'"

Two months later, and writing to the same friend, he declared: "As to John Bull, I cannot be as severe as you are. It is true that the government of Ireland by England for the past three centuries has been abominable. But consider the endeavours that the Liberals have been making for a century to remedy the evil and give Ireland self-government. Consider also that in a constitutional country like England, reforms are always and necessarily slow. After all, this very slowness ensures stability."

[58]"I went to the Premier," declared one of these members, Mr. Andrew Broder, "and told him that if investigation were to be decided against, I would have to vote against him. He said that if I voted against him it would do him more harm than if almost any other member of the party did so. I replied that I could not alter my view, at any time of life, that I would have to go straight to the end. I don't believe the Premier quite realizes what is going on. He doesn't seem to know the situation. The people know what is going on. These are not the days of the Marlborough wars. The people of Canada are on trial for their honesty."

[59]A trained newspaper observer with an unusually intimate knowledge of Ontario politics, wrote on Sept. 14, 1916, of impressions gathered during two weeks at the Toronto Exhibition:

"Really, Sir Wilfrid, it was a revelation. It took my breath away. I would not now be surprised to see anything happen in Ontario. Meeting the visitors one by one, now one from Barrie, now one from Sudbury, now from Peterboro, and so on, it was always the same, discontent and disgust with the Borden administration. So far as I could diagnose it, Sam Hughes and Camp Borden play a big part, but no bigger than does Borden himself. The people have the idea that the premier is a man without forcefulness or personality and without leadership, and that he is afraid to make any definite move."

[60]To Mr. Rowell Sir Wilfrid wrote on July 4: "As to a coalition government, or, as you call it, a national government, I am less and less in favour of it. I have evidences coming to me every day that certain railway interests are actively at work amongst our friends still, with a view of forming a coalition. Such sinister influences are not calculated to impress one favourably. Anything

which is not done openly always seems to me dangerous."

[61] A Western minister, who later supported Union government but for whose honour as well as ability Sir Wilfrid continued to have the highest regard, thus wrote on August 4;

"August, 1917.

"DEAR SIR WILFRID:

"I do not think that you need have any fears of the influence of Sir Clifford Sifton in the West. His appearance as an ally of Sir Robert Borden has been met with a storm of resentment, which has done much to consolidate the public feeling against the present government.

"I agree with what you say about the desirability of national unity. I am sure this will be kept before the convention, but in my opinion, it will not be possible to evade dealing with war issues. I think this should be done in a frank and straightforward manner, and hope as a result a policy will be adopted that will be to the best interest of the country as a whole. I recognize after the war is over and conscription forgotten that the natural allies of the people of the prairie will be found in rural Quebec.

"It is not possible for any one to successfully steer this convention, but its pronouncements will in all probability accurately reflect Western opinion. . . ."

(Wilfrid Laurier to W. M. Martin)

"Ottawa; July 31, 1917.

"MY DEAR MARTIN:

"I had hoped after our short interview of the other day that you would be able to come again to Ottawa, and we would have an opportunity of continuing our exchange of views. I regret it all the more in view of the western convention which has been called by Sifton.

"As to the convention itself, I have no objection, far from it; I always favoured it. I thought it would be a good move to have the Liberals of the western provinces put their programme into concrete form. The movement, however, seems to me a dangerous one. It is not for the purpose of having the programme of the western Liberals that the convention is called, but rather to split the Liberal party.

"It has been my policy all along to keep the Liberal party together on broad national lines, appealing to no creed and no race. Bourassa endeavoured to split the Liberal party in Quebec and created the Nationalist platform based upon creed and race. Sifton is attempting to do the very thing at the other end of the line and remake the Liberal party upon creed and race. The only difference is that in one case the party was to be French and Roman Catholic, and now it should be Protestant and English. The one is just as mischievous as the other.

"Moreover, the attitude taken by Sifton is not only mischievous, but it is untrue. He bases his propaganda upon the extreme attitude of the Nationalists, for which he makes me responsible, and which—even now—I am fighting in the province of Quebec.

"Upon the question of conscription as I early realized that there was a divided opinion even in the English speaking provinces, I would not make it a party question. If Sifton has his way he will try to commit the western Liberals to conscription.

"I submit to you that the best policy is the policy which we adopted here, to leave it an open question and to confine your resolutions to the broad questions for which western Liberals have long striven, and which will be still alive when conscription will be dead, not to be resurrected,—certainly not for many generations.

"I submit to you these views in all sincerity and the full belief that the policy here laid down is the policy which will keep the Liberal party a unit from one end of the country to the other, not only for this day but for all times.

"Believe me ever, my dear Martin,

"Yours very sincerely,

"WILFRID LAURIER."

"Hon. W. M. Martin,
"Prime Minister's Office,
"Regina, Sask."

[62] Welcome in the storm of such abuse were letters such as the following from the chivalrous son of a strong and prudent father, under whose leadership no more than under Laurier's, could Canada have been suffered to drift to the verge of the precipice:

"WINNIPEG, NOV. 21, 1917.

"The Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, G. C. M. G.,
"Ottawa, Ont.

"MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

"As I learned from this morning's papers that this was the anniversary of your birth, I write, as I have frequently done before, to tender you my most hearty congratulations and to express the hope that you may be long spared to us in health and strength. Having been brought up in a different school of thought, I have never seen eye to eye with you in matters political, but, from the first moment that I met you, to the present time, I have received at your hands nothing but the most courteous treatment, and I can assure you that I prize highly the friendly regard that you have always shown towards me. It must be gratifying to you to know that, even at a moment like the present, when we are in the midst of a General Election, where the issue involved is one likely to excite political passions more than an ordinary contest would, there are thousands, who think as I do, who entertain towards you nothing but the most friendly feeling and who wish you well from the bottom of their hearts. Indeed, I can say truthfully that by far the greater part of the Conservative party in Canada, although strongly opposed to your political views, have an esteem for you personally that it is hard to overestimate, and are always delighted to hear anything to your advantage outside the political arena.

"With kindest regards and best wishes, I remain, my dear Sir Wilfrid,

"Yours very sincerely,
"HUGH J. MACDONALD."

[63] Sir Wilfrid never gave an interview for publication, but he was always on close and friendly terms with newspaper men, particularly members of the Press Gallery. He would talk freely, and never had his confidence abused. While he never followed the common practice of reading newspapers during debates in the House, he was very often to be seen running through files in the Commons reading-room, while on the table of the morning-room at home a large number of Canadian newspapers were always to be found, ranging from the "Orange Sentinel" to "Le Devoir."

Transcriber's Note:

Spelling and grammar have been maintained as in the original. Obvious typos and printer's errors have been corrected without comment.

[End of *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (Volume II)* by Oscar Douglas Skelton]