

Europe and the United States, and to draw such an influx of settlers and capital as made the ex-boodlers of 1878-1896 sick with envy and their unsatisfied greed.

Canada was in a bad way from 1885 to 1896. As Professor Skelton says in his dispassionate survey (pp. 93 ff.): "The Canada of 1887 in which Wilfrid Laurier was induced to accept the leadership of the Liberal party, was a Canada very different from the land of promise familiar to young Canadians of the present generation. It was a Canada seething with restlessness and discontent. The high hopes of the fathers of confederation had turned to ashes. On every hand men were saying that federation had failed. Canada remained unappreciated and unknown; in Great Britain it was simply ignored, alike in official and in private circles. It was a country of gerrymanders and political trickery, of red parlor funds and electoral bribery. The whole political life of the country sank to low and stagnant levels, for it appeared that the people had openly condoned corruption in high places, and that lavish promises and 'glad hand' were a surer road to success than honest and efficient administration."

No, reader, this is not old "blue-ruin," Sir Richard Cartwright railing irresponsibly, as the glad handers said, at his political opponents. It is the considered judgment of a consummate historian writing in the cool, after lapse of thirty years. Mr. Skelton goes on:

"Sectional discontent prevailed. The Toronto Mail declared it better to 'smash confederation into its original fragments' than yield to French dictation (p. 90), and that it would be smashed seemed not beyond possibility. A racial and religious feud rent Ontario and Quebec. In 1886 the Nova Scotia Legislature had expressed the prevalent discontent by flatly demanding the repeal of the union. Economic depression prevailed, especially in Manitoba, where the Dominion had disallowed every provincial act seeking to charter railways. Foreign trade, which had reached a total of \$217,000,000 in 1873, was only \$247,000,000 in 1893. Homestead entries had risen to nearly 7,500 in 1882, but up to the middle nineties averaged fewer than 3,000 a year in the whole vast west. By 1896 the number had fallen to 1,800 (p. 129). Canadians themselves seemed to have lost faith in the west, for in this year the applicants for homesteads included only 570 settlers from the older Canada. The stock of the railway which had been built with such national effort had fallen to 50. In the phrase of a western Conservative paper, 'The trails from Manitoba to the States were worn bare and brown by the wagon wheels of departing settlers.'

The west grew only from 180,000 in 1881 to 250,000 in 1891, whereas Dakota alone grew from 135,000 to 510,000 in the same period (p. 99). In the Dominion as a whole one of every four of the native-born of Canada had been compelled to seek a home in the Republic, and three out of every four immigrants to Canada had followed the same well-beaten trail. There were in 1890 more than one-third as many people of Canadian birth and descent in the United States as in Canada itself. Never in the world's history, save in the case of crowded, famine-stricken, mis-governed Ireland, had there been such a leakage of the brain and brawn of any country."

Such was the state of our affairs when Laurier came in. Canada bore thus three marked resemblances to Ireland, in (1) misgovernment, (2) racial and religious discord, (3) a wholesale exodus. We were not "crowded" nor should have been "famine-stricken!" Let us have Mr. Skelton's summary of the methods by which the Laurier regime brought prosperity out of that ruin, national confidence out of national despair.

"Never had there been so systematic, thorough and successful a campaign for immigrants as that which was launched and directed by the minister of the interior, Mr., now Sir Clifford Sifton, (p. 221). He knew the needs and the possibilities of the west at first hand. . . . Among the western Americans he spread his glad tidings of the Canadian plains. Agents were appointed for each likely state, with sub-agents who were paid a commission for every settler who came. The land of promise was pictured in attractive, compelling booklets, and in advertisements inserted in seven or eight thousand farm and weekly papers. All inquiries were systematically followed up. Free trips were arranged for parties of farmers and for press