

CHAPTER XXVII.

RECENT EVENTS.

Changes.—The Earl of Aberdeen, who was at this time Governor-General, called on the Hon. Wilfred Laurier (Sir Wilfred) to form a new Ministry. One of the early measures of the Parliament was a change in the tariff, by which goods imported from Great Britain were made subject to lower duty than those from other countries. The Manitoba school question was settled by an arrangement allowing separate religious instruction to be given during the last half-hour of the daily session to pupils of different creeds by clergymen or others, according to the wishes of the parents.

The Queen's Jubilees, 1887, 1897.—Throughout Canada, as in other portions of the British Empire, Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887, the fiftieth anniversary of her reign, had been observed with joyous enthusiasm. And now, in 1897, ten years had been added to her life, giving her Majesty the longest reign that had ever fallen to a sovereign of England. The event, known as the "Queen's Diamond Jubilee," was celebrated in London with a splendor surpassing anything of its kind that the world had ever seen.

The Boer War, 1899.—The closing days of her Majesty's reign were clouded by war. In 1899 the two Dutch Republics of South Africa invaded the neighboring British territory, and insolently dictated terms of peace to Great Britain. The war that followed was a long and serious one, and it gave rise to many stirring incidents. The relief of Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking, after long siege by the Boers, caused great rejoicings throughout the British Empire. After Pretoria and Bloemfontein, the capitals of the Boer states, had been taken,