

"So ended one of the few instances of successful retaliation in all the chequered annals of tariff history," says Mr. Skelton (p. 252). Thus at one stroke the Canadian people was benefitted in a material way, the Ottawa government made a beginning of autonomy in foreign affairs and at the same time "Canada made a distinct advance towards closer imperial union along the line of trade," (p. 184). "The British preference increased imperial sentiment" (p. 187). "It was a real bond of imperial unity simply because it was a free-will offering, given from motives of sentiment, not of profit." (p. 281.)

But Laurier did much more for Canada's prosperity. When in opposition during the 1880's he supported the C. P. R. project, but "criticized the large land grant and the exemption from taxation" (p. 59). Laurier always is for the common people against the avarice of corporations and combines. Had the C. P. R. policy been different he declared that "there might have been fewer millionaires in this country, but there would have been many more happy and contented homes." His criticism of the C.P.R. policy in the 1880's has been justified by the subsequent history of Canada. "The land grant was of least value to the company when most needed—in the early years. The freedom of the company to select land where they pleased gave them a mortgage on the West and power to deter possible rival roads. The exemption from taxation of the company's lands for twenty years after the issue of the patents and of its capital stock and equipment forever, threw unfair burdens upon the straggling settlers," (p. 60). Sir Wilfrid followed quite another policy in regard to railroads from the land-granting and exempting of the boodling 1880's or the high financing of the Borden-Rogers era.

"No more land-grants were given and when cash subsidies were bestowed the companies so aided were required to carry free government mails, materials and men, up to three per cent. of the subsidy. . . . The Laurier Government refused to take any share in the responsibility or cost of building the expensive and premature section (of the C. N. R.) through the Rockies. The Borden Government and the Province of British Columbia however, gave the aid desired for this venture. Another important development was the establishment, in 1903, with the results of the Dominion Railway Commission, to mediate between railway shipper or traveler," (p. 229-230.)

Prosperity came at last to a declining, famishing and obscure Canada, after the return of Laurier in 1896. In the elections of 1900, says Mr. Skelton, "The country as a whole evidently approved the Government's policy in the (Boer) war, and was not unmindful of the long-sought prosperity which was coming under a vigorous and many-sided policy for the development of the West and of all Canada. The preferential tariff and the prime minister's European tour admirably prepared the way. The British people now regarded Canada with lively interest and for the first time the people of the Continent began to realize the potentialities of this new northern land. The general impression thus created was followed up by more pacific measures aiming to bring in men and capital to extend and cheapen transportation and to facilitate production.

Sir Wilfrid had promised in the early nineties, referring to some dubious statistics used to prove that all was well with the country, that "when I am premier, you will not have to look up figures to find out whether you are prosperous, you will know by feeling in your pockets."

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What Laurier did in 15 years for the material prosperity of Canada is and will be incalculable. Professor Skelton's praise of his railway policy and the British preference has already been quoted. The personal magnetism of the great orator and statesman was itself an advertisement for Canada to force the obscure, struggling, debt-ridden, Tory-ridden colony for the first time upon the interested attention of the United Kingdom, Continental