

*from Mr Gibson*

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The role of the pioneer in Canadian development has often been described. The pioneer has been looked upon as an explorer, a fur trader, a farmer who first broke the plains with his plow, or levelled the forests to build a home. There have been, as in all new lands; pioneers in agriculture, in industrial development, in missionary enterprise, in scientific achievement. But in Canada, at least since Confederation, we have had fewer pioneers of another sort. Of pioneers in politics there have been perhaps a handful; of pioneers in the social approach to the political needs of Canada one has been pre-eminent for more than forty years, William Lyon Mackenzie King.

It was a new thing, in 1900, for a man still in his twenties, to be called upon to organise the Department of Labour of Canada, of which he became the first deputy minister. It was perhaps even more remarkable to entrust this responsibility to a man whose background and persuasion had been strengthened first by post-graduate study in the United States, Britain and abroad, and had been sharpened by first-hand, enquiring contact with industrial conditions of an anti-social and revolting kind. It may not have been a pleasant discovery, this seeking out the facts of the case, where the uniforms of postal employees were made under sweat-shop conditions. But it marked the man Mackenzie King with a stamp of social concern which is still a vibrant and perhaps the major concern of his whole being: over all nations is humanity, and it is humanity which must be the master, not the servant.

The man Mackenzie King was marked out for some part of the arena of politics. His grandfather, for whom he was named, was the most peppery controversialist in Canada's political development under British sovereignty; and