

has shown a capacity for meeting new and unforeseen emergencies; his political ability has expanded with the additional tests imposed upon it.

Recent politics is a comprehensive illustration of these assertions. The position of the Liberals called for a leader who combined tact and decision, and who could gain the support of Quebec. The Catholic vote in that province had for many years been pledged to the support of Sir John Macdonald and the Conservative party, and it was deemed almost impossible to win a Liberal majority there. Sir John's influence was paramount, and his administration seemed like a constitutional fixture. During a speech at a banquet given him shortly after his return to power in 1878, he made the laconic boast, "The Grits will never get in power in my time"; and he made good his word to the day of his death. But shortly after 1887 the Liberals discovered that their new leader could hope to rival Sir John himself in many of the influences which win and keep the support, and even the affectionate loyalty, of political followers. Not only so, but he won the good opinion and good will of many Conservatives who had nothing but cold respect to soften their antagonism to preceding Liberal leaders. Soon the trial of his strength was made under most difficult conditions. He had to marshal the Liberal forces against the protective system on the one hand, and — seemingly impossible task for one who is himself a spiritual subject of the Pope — against the Roman Catholic hierarchy on the other. The Manitoba school question, with whose salient points the reading public of the United States is already familiar, arose by reason of the Manitoba government's refusal to restore the system of Roman Catholic separate schools which had been abolished by that province in 1890. The question had become one of great importance and perplexity, less by reason of the immediate interests involved than by the racial and religious prejudices aroused. Both the main issues, the tariff and the school question, were complicated with others, which increased the difficulties to be overcome.

Mr. Laurier's attitude on both questions has made him the undisputed master of the Canadian situation. With regard to the tariff, the platform of the Liberal party between 1887 and 1891 differed from that adopted after the latter date. The