

steered Canada most successfully through a time in which it was confronted with more serious questions than any other Government has had to face in our time.

The policy pursued by the Government during that crucial period placed Canada in the very front rank of nations. Canada, looking back upon that period, has every reason to be proud of the policy pursued by that Government, and we have no apology to advance by reason of any difference of opinion which may exist in the country in regard to the obligations which we assumed. I therefore say that in no case was the defeat of the Government due to scandal, extravagance, or policy.

It seems to me that if the late Government in any sense weakened itself, it was in playing the role of reform—the role which my honourable friends on the opposite side regard as their divine right. When we came into office, we, perhaps unfortunately, were seized with the idea that we had reached a period in the history of Canada when we could carry out successfully certain reforms, such, for instance, as we assumed and carried out, and I think successfully. At no period since Confederation were so many reforms placed upon the statute book as during that particular time. I need only refer to the policy of the Government upon Civil Service, upon prohibition, upon agricultural education, the policy pursued by the Government as to returned soldiers, the policy as to votes for women, a reform which has been very strongly opposed in Quebec by my honourable friends opposite. But, unfortunately, although we assumed the responsibility of carrying out all these reforms and placing them on the statute book and giving effect to them, the result was that the Government rather lost support in the general election than gained thereby.

I think I can say with some justification, that in the late election we sacrificed the prestige and the influence which we might have exercised, had we retained political patronage. We sacrificed that in the interest of placing upon the statute book civil service reform, whereby the Government of the country handed over to an independent Commission the appointment and regulation of the Civil Service.

During the war prohibition became a very interesting and very live subject. The late Government did not hesitate to give effect to what was then considered public opinion upon the subject. But I venture to say that the prohibitionists of Canada

did not support the Government in the late election.

I can say the same in regard to the farmers of the Dominion. We did not hesitate to place upon the statute book the most advanced legislation as to agricultural education. We appropriated something like \$20,000,000 for education in agriculture. Notwithstanding this fact, the farmers went back upon us.

And what shall I say of the manufacturers? During the last campaign we nailed to the mast the flag of adequate protection for the manufacturer, no matter what the consequences might be. But the manufacturers, observing that my honourable friends opposite were wobbling to such an extent upon the question of the tariff, thought it necessary to give their adherence to the Government now in office with a view to making them solid upon the tariff, and they went back on us.

We made the most generous provision for the returned soldiers. None of the Allied countries approached the generous treatment which Canada accorded to them. In fact, the treatment accorded by Canada to the returned soldier has been a matter of comment throughout the countries of the Allies. But I venture to say that the late Government did not receive the support of the returned soldiers, but that, owing to the uncertainty of the attitude of my honourable friends opposite, they said, "We will go with the Liberal party, inasmuch as they have promised us more." Consequently my honourable friends got the support, generally speaking, of the returned soldiers.

Then, votes for women. Why, we were in the very forefront of this particular reform, and we placed a most liberal provision upon the statute book, whereby women exercise the same rights as men in respect of the franchise. But unfortunately we were not able, it seems to me, to retain the support of the ladies, notwithstanding our policy on this question, for I observe that my honourable friends are here, notwithstanding the very militant attitude which they took in the province of Quebec against extending the franchise to women.

It seems to me, therefore, that the Liberal-Conservative party will have to depend upon the publicans and sinners of the community. We have never been able to get any very great support from the saintly section of the community, and seemingly are driven back to rely upon our old friends, the publicans and sinners;