

A CYCLOPÆDIA *of* CANADIAN BIOGRAPHY

Borden, Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Laird, P.C., K.C.M.G., K.C., LL.D., Premier of Canada (Ottawa, Ont.), eldest son of Andrew Borden and Eunice Laird, was born at Grand Pre, Nova Scotia, on June 26, 1854. He was educated at Acadia Villa Academy, Horton, and for a time a Professor in Glenwood Institute, N.J. His great-great-grandfather went to Kings County, Nova Scotia, with early settlers from New England, in 1760, and upon returning to Massachusetts gave his land in Nova Scotia to his son, the great-grandfather of the subject of this sketch. Upon returning to Nova Scotia, Sir Robert studied law and was called to the Bar in 1878. He first practised at Kentville, N.S., and later moved to Halifax, succeeding the late Sir John Thompson, then Prime Minister of Canada, in the firm of Thompson, Graham and Tupper. Before removing to Ottawa he was head of the law firm of Borden, Ritchie & Chisholm, of Halifax, and for ten years was President of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society. He was made a Q.C. in 1900; an Honorary LL.D. of Queen's University in 1903; an Honorary LL.D., St. Francois-Xavier University in 1905; an Honorary LL.D. of McGill University in 1913. In 1896 he was elected to the House of Commons from Halifax in the General Elections, and re-elected in 1900, but was an unsuccessful candidate at the General Elections in 1904. Upon the retirement of Edward Kidd, M.P., for Carleton, Ont., he was elected by acclamation in his stead at the by-election held on February 4, 1905, and was re-elected by a large majority at the general elections in 1908, when he was also elected in Halifax, N.S. He later resigned

his Carleton seat, preferring to represent Halifax. At the General Elections of 1911, he was again returned for Halifax, and continued to represent that constituency up to the present time (1918). On February 6, 1901, he was chosen leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, and upon the resignation of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Cabinet on October 6, 1911, following the defeat of the Liberal Government on the question of Reciprocity with the United States, he was sent for by His Excellency Earl Grey and was entrusted with the task of forming a Cabinet. With a very large majority at his disposal, he found the task an easy one, and was successful in gathering around him men who have since carried on the government of the country in one of the most critical periods of its existence. At the time the first Borden government assumed office the world war was unthought of except as a vague speculation, which few students of world finance and world politics believed would ever become a fact, and the new Premier did not foresee that before him lay the most difficult task that had ever confronted a Canadian Government. In the summer of 1914 the conflict which ultimately developed into a war between the Central Empires and most of the other civilized powers, came like a bolt from the blue. On August 4, 1914, there was great curiosity in the chancelleries of Europe as to whether the overseas dominions of the British Empire would stand behind Great Britain. Germany, on the day she started the war, believed that they would not, and it was prophesied in Berlin that Canada would seek separation from the Empire. Sir Robert