

opportunist as to ends. . . . A wise opportunism, that met each issue as it arose and dealt with it in the light of long-held principles, kept the nation advancing steadily and advancing abreast."

That is, Laurier has aimed to keep the two Canadian races abreast and harmonious. He is still working at that, and still meets the issue as it arises, with a judicious application of rock-bottom principle. What serious historian will praise the principle and the consistency of Sir Robert Borden? Mr. Robert Rogers may earn condemnation if not praise for "principle" and consistency.

But to return to the great oration of June, 1877. The subject was "Political Liberalism," with particular reference to the question agitated in Quebec of the relation between the Church and the State.

"No true Liberal wished to deny the Church's officers the right which every citizen enjoyed of taking a part in his country's politics; Liberals had opposed, and would continue to oppose, every attempt of politicians in clerical garb to crush freedom of speech by spiritual terrorism. . . . On individual freedom alone could a sound national political system be built up. just as on colonial freedom alone had it been possible to build up a lasting imperial system." (p. 49-50.)

Mr. Skelton recognizes the uniformity of Laurier's imperialism with his Liberalism. Individual freedom as the basis of freer and fuller social or racial co-operation is the central and unifying principle. But of that and other matters more anon. In 1877 Laurier finished the victory for Liberalism in Quebec against ecclesiastical persecution. As Mr. Skelton says, (p. 50), the speech "was a master-stroke, both for freedom and for harmony."

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Closing his history of Canada since Confederation, Professor Skelton says (p. 325): "In Sir Wilfrid Laurier's career four goals of endeavor have been steadily kept in view—individual liberty, collective prosperity, racial and religious harmony and growth to nationhood. With rare consistency and steadfast courage these ends were held in view." We have seen how he battled against priest and prelate for the voter's independence. He has been as eager to secure the prosperity of the Dominion through the freedom of the individual. It is true that he has always been a moderate protectionist, though looking to free trade as an ideal, strongly favoring reciprocity with the United States as both parties in this country did until 1911 and an advocate of commercial union with Great Britain or still more with the British Dominions as more feasible. He pronounced against commercial union with the United States as early as 1887, leading the Liberal party with him (p. 112). He criticized especially in the 1880's the stupidities of the tariff as in its details it hampered the enterprise and welfare of the individual (pp. 41, 57, 111-112, 151-152). After his return to power in 1896 his government speedily corrected some of the stupidities. As Mr. Skelton says (p. 174), "In the revision of the old tariff beneficent changes were effected such as abolition of the duties on binder twine, barbed wire and Indian corn, substantial reductions on flour and sugar the substitution of *ad valorem* for specific duties and a provision for reducing the duty on goods controlled by trusts or combines. The duties on iron and steel were reduced, but increased bounties were given on their production in Canada. More important, however, than such specific changes was the adoption of the principle of a minimum and maximum tariff."

The next step towards freeing the Canadian community of impediments to prosperity a step also towards commercial unity of the Empire and towards an imperial solidarity based on national independence of the dominions and their closer trade relations was the British preference. Blocking the way to this were found certain old treaties made by Great Britain with Belgium and Germany, "strange bed-fellows." Sir Charles Tupper leading the Opposition declared that this difficulty could not be overcome (p. 175.) Sir Wilfrid overcame it and later punished Germany for tariff reprisals.