



SOME up-to-date paper should start a "guessing contest" as to the real meaning of the Federal elections. The people went to the polls and delivered a verdict; but it seems to have been a "sealed verdict," if we are to judge by the difficulty that the party writers and leaders have in making out just what it means. A Delphic utterance was clear by contrast. The Government press happily see that one of its meanings was not to condone the wrongdoing of their party, and they call upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier to use his strength to drive out of his fold at least the most inky of his discoloured sheep. Ah! if Sir Wilfrid could only be got to realise his strength! He is one of the few public men whose modesty is a genuine weakness. He never did credit his own great strength. In 1896, when the Liberal party was confronted with the dilemma presented by the Manitoba School Question, Laurier would not believe that his personal strength was great enough to enable him to flatly oppose coercion and yet keep Quebec. It was Israel Tarte—so the story went—who preached at him on this point until he was willing to risk moving his six-months-hoist amendment; and this was very possibly the service rendered him and the Liberal party by Tarte which Sir Wilfrid had in his mind when he said, after that election—"There is nothing too good for Tarte."

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TO-DAY Laurier is dictator of the Liberal party. He could command half his Cabinet to "walk the plank," and his position would hardly be shaken in the country—if he chose the half with discretion. As for the "grafters," he can pitch every man of them out of the camp, neck and crop; and not the whole army of them could even embarrass him by way of revenge. His majority is large; and, to no small extent, it is a personal following. Probably no other Canadian—not even the magnetic Sir John Macdonald—had so large a personal following. The Liberal candidates in Quebec are almost universally regarded as "Laurier candidates"; and he has not a few personal followers in the rest of the Dominion. Moreover, those who do not love him for his own sake, would turn pale at the fear of losing his power to win elections. Laurier can give us a clean Liberal party if he will but make that his chief business during the next four years.

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AS for Mr. Borden, his position is naturally not so secure. They are beginning to whisper "resignation," and it is notorious that he does not relish political life. A twice defeated leader may be forgiven for re-examining his position. But one thing is at least plain, and that is that Mr. Borden is stronger than his Parliamentary party. No Conservative votes were lost during the late election because R. L. Borden was leader; but R. L. Borden lost not a few votes because of some of his following. If he decides to continue the fight, he ought to make it a preliminary condition that he be allowed to cut all the rotten material out of his party. No man can possibly lead a party who is afraid of it. Mr. Borden is now in a position to dictate terms—if he is to go on. The two leaders could guarantee us a campaign free from scandals in 1912.

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THE great number of constituencies which chose their members on local issues or personal feeling, show how a campaign without national issues degenerates into little parish contests. The candidates cease to be representatives of broad policies and become the fuglemen of some local faction or the victim of some county jealousy. The consequence is that the "verdict" is not as between the two great parties but only as between two local candidates; and the unpopularity of a nominee in one corner of his constituency may decide whether that riding be counted as supporting the Administration or condemning it. If there were so much as one big national question before the people, this would not happen. The voters would think more of the issue than of the personality of its representatives; and we should get a real national verdict from the polls which we could understand. The politicians ought certainly to give us an issue to

consider at the next elections; and that is primarily the duty of the Opposition.

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SIR WILFRID referred to this as his last appeal to the people from several platforms. After the encouraging majority that flowed in on the night of the 26th ult., we may surely regard this as no more than a rhetorical flourish. Why should Sir Wilfrid retire while he has the strength to serve his country? Sir John Macdonald died in harness; and there could be no better example. Mr. Gladstone talked retirement and did actually withdraw from public life to compose his soul with a view to entering the future life free from the distracting worries of earth; but he quickly emerged from that atmosphere of aloofness and calm at the call of a new issue, and led his party to victory and then to an entirely new battlefield. Great political leaders do not retire; they die. Men who have given a life-time to public service cannot learn the trick of private citizenship. Every question brings to them a great public responsibility which they are utterly unable to leave to others with the indifferent shrug of the average busy householder. They must speak; and their prestige gives to their lightest word the note of leadership. Imagine Chamberlain in good health and in retirement; and anyone else attempting to lead the Tariff Reform movement in Britain! When Roosevelt talks retirement, he is compelled to bury himself in mid-Africa; and even then most people expect him to return and lead the Republican hosts again in the near future.

N'IMPORTE

The Voting Competition

NO doubt many people have begun to think about "Canada's Ten Biggest Men" and the "Courier's" voting competition. Nearly everybody has a hazy notion of the list he would write down, but when he puts his pen to paper—it is different. Shall it be moral, or intellectual or physical force? Shall it be politicians, or educationists, or novelists, or the men who do things? Are the archbishops and missionaries and doctors and engineers and musicians to be overlooked in favour of the politicians, lawyers and railway-builders? Careful thought will bring up the names of fifty or even a hundred men who might, with some show of reason, be called "big".

The first voting paper received contained the following names: Dr. Osler, William Mackenzie, Charles G. D. Roberts, Archbishop Gauthier, Professor Shortt, G. A. Reid, Sir William Van Horne, B. E. Walker, Sir James Whitney and Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Another list runs: Lord Strathcona, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Hon. W. S. Fielding, Sir Sandford Fleming, Sir William Van Horne, Sir Percy Girouard, Dr. Osler, Dr. Parkin and Hon. Edward Blake.

Note the differences in these two: Laurier, Van Horne and Osler are the only three names which appear in both lists. On the two lists are seventeen different names. This gives some idea how widely people's ideas vary. It indicates also what good this competition may do. More lists will be published each week until the competition closes on December 31st. Only names of living Canadians are to be included.

The Romance of a Cloak

LORD HERRIES, father of the present Duchess of Norfolk, who died last month, belonged to one of the historic Roman Catholic families of Scotland. There are many ancestral treasures at Everingham Park, his stately Yorkshire residence; but it is said that the most prized of all is an old-world, faded lady's cloak with an extraordinary history.

William, fifth Earl of Nithsdale, one of the earl's ancestors, joined the Stuarts in the famous Rebellion of 1715, was taken prisoner at Preston, lodged in the Tower and sentenced to death. On the day before that fixed for the earl's execution, his devoted wife gained access to him in the Tower and, disguising him as a servant-maid with cloak and hood and painted cheeks, enabled him to accompany her and pass the sentries unchallenged. The cloak, preserved to this day, is that which covered the Jacobite earl as he passed forth in humble disguise. It is a story such as Sir Walter Scott would have loved to tell the generation that first read the Waverley novels about one hundred years ago.

A Novel of Jefferson's Days

IN the autumn of 1898, Miss Mary Johnston published her first novel, "Prisoners of Hope," which was succeeded by her great popular success, "To Have and to Hold," a romance of the early English settlers in Virginia. Miss Johnston's latest novel is "Lewis Rand," which was published simultaneously in America and Great Britain last month.