

French Canadians, whose sympathies are with the Boers, would have made it impossible. As it is, Laurier persuaded Quebec, and Ontario had already taken the lead in urgency. But though the French Canadians follow their idol, even in his South African policy, their real mind is voiced by Tarte, with his 'no precedent' cry. That is the issue of the future—is the South African war to be a precedent? The Imperialists of Toronto are raising it by pressing that arms should be stored and barracks built in order that Canada may become a military power ready to support the empire in any venture. Quebec Liberals are sullenly but obstinately opposed to all this. But men like to know what they are fighting about, and thus the war has raised the profoundest issues of Imperial government. How is it that none of these issues have been raised in the political warfare here? I have already noted that there is no discussion and no real knowledge about South African questions in Canada; the war is now scantily reported, and no interest is taken in the settlement. This is partly parochialism—

I draw the attention of my hon. colleagues to the following words:

—but partly also due to a certain lack of courage that runs through all Canadian politics. As in the States, so in Canada; politics are much dominated by electioneering. Perhaps we ought not to preach, but there is in English politics a tradition handed down from men like Bright and Cobden, and sometimes dimly followed, that principle is more important than party or place. Canada still wants that tradition of political martyrdom.

I will end these quotations by the following remarks on the subject of Imperialism as viewed in Ontario. They were written from Toronto after the elections:

The majority of business men know that peace is the most important asset to Canada, and many look askance on the whole Imperialist movement as dangerous to the progress of the country. 'How do we know,' said one to me to-day, 'that we may not be drawn into trouble any day? One never feels safe.'

This is an expression of opinion with regard to Canada; and the other day the statement was published that the New Zealand government were urging the British government to use their influence in the Asiatic sea to acquire a couple of islands in the neighbourhood of New Zealand, because of that swelling sentiment of aggrandizement which is now seizing the whole British world. New Zealand also wants to form its little confederation; it wants to enlarge and expand. Suppose the British government acceded to that request, and suppose on its way to realize it, it came into conflict with the interests of some other European power, and war were declared, we Canadians, in pursuance of this new policy which has been entered upon, might be called upon to expend money and send soldiers to help New Zealand in her schemes of extension and aggrandizement.

I have dealt with military Imperialism at some greater length than I wished to do. But, I felt bound to set myself right, at the opening of this parliament on that vital

question of the relations between Great Britain and her colonies. In spite of the efforts of scared politicians to shift the issue or to convince themselves that the question is not at stake, this is to be the great political and national problem of the near future throughout the empire. The so-called statesmen and their followers who scorn the idea and pretend to believe that this is only a temporary movement of opinion, are simply imitating the ostrich in the desert, when being chased by the hunter, it conceals its head under its wing and thinks it is safe because it does not see the danger. I thought it my duty also to tell the truth—not the political truth, not the party truth, but the plain truth—about the real feelings of the French Canadians on that question. The eccentricity of my position in this House allows me that freedom of speech. I did not do it with the purpose of arousing racial feelings; on the contrary. The best way to avoid national frictions is not by imagining that all sections of this country entertain the same opinion, should even that opinion be the best; but by looking thoroughly through the minds and hearts of all the racial groups which form the nation in order to prepare a sound public opinion based on mutual respect and conciliation. My utterances have not been inspired either by a sentiment of animosity or indifference towards the British flag and British connection; on the contrary again. It is because I prize highly the advantages of British institutions which we have made ours—in spite even of British authorities—that I believe it is an imperative duty to us all to prevent any danger that might threaten them in the future. Should we leave the British government and the British people under misapprehensions as to what they can expect from Canada—not in a time of enthusiastic ferment, but when the popular mind will set again on its normal basis—the moment might come when they thought they could rely upon us for more than what we would be ready to give. A mistake of that kind would be the cause of serious complications which for my part I wish to be avoided.

I go further. This war and its bearing on British and colonial concerns have led me to a new and deeper study of British history, of British institutions, of British politics, of British character. And the more I have analysed the vital parts and the solid limbs of that splendid body politic, its strong nerves and its rich blood, the wider has grown my admiration for Great Britain. I used to be a contented British subject, as most of my countrymen are; I feel now the full pride of British citizenship. But the Britain that I love and admire is that noble, progressive, industrious, peace-loving nation which has done so much for the development and the welfare of humanity; that mother of true liberalism who, from the time of Simon de Montfort