

## THE PREMIER OF CANADA.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE.

Pope should ratify the settlement and dispose of the money. His Holiness subsequently divided the amount among the Jesuits, the Archbishop and the Bishops of the province, and Laval University, while a balance of \$80,000 was given in aid of Protestant schools. The bill was accepted almost unanimously by the Protestant members of the legislature as a fair settlement of a vexed question. But in Ontario a violent agitation arose demanding the disallowance of the measure by the federal authorities. Sir John Macdonald refused to accede to this demand, and when the question was voted on in the House of Commons only thirteen members favored disallowance. But Toronto was victorious in denunciation of the policy pursued by both parties on this question. Feeling that he was losing his hold on Ontario because he supported the government, Mr. Laurier resolved to go to Toronto and there vindicate his course on the platform. To Liberals acquainted with the feeling in Toronto this proposal seemed a hazardous one, but it was in vain they tried to dissuade their leader from the attempt. He was determined to meet the Orange element in its stronghold and there defend his policy. At first the meeting was hostile. But the speaker was undimmed, and to the task in hand he bent his best efforts. Gradually all opposition was silenced, and in the end he won a notable triumph. This incident exemplified the powers of oratory, the resource and courage of the new leader in trying and difficult circumstances, and convinced the doubting Liberals of Ontario that Mr. Laurier could measure up to the exigencies of a trying situation.

At Mr. Laurier's request it was at first given out that his retention of the leadership would be temporary only. Before long, however, Liberals came to recognize that he was the right man for the place, and all thought of any change passed away. On his part Mr. Laurier gave his best efforts to the duties of his new position. With a view of becoming better acquainted with the people, he travelled extensively throughout every province, delivered many speeches and was everywhere well received. In Parliament he confronted Sir John Macdonald, the veteran Conservative leader, then in the heyday of his power. There it soon became evident that, though Mr. Laurier did not possess the great intellectual force of Mr. Blake, he had the personal magnetism, the dexterity in handling men in which Mr. Blake was deficient and which are so large a factor in making of a successful parliamentary leader.

The first general election after Mr. Laurier's assumption of the leadership was held in 1891, and the result showed that Sir John Macdonald still retained the confidence of the country. He had won by leading the people to believe that the Liberal policy of reciprocity and closer commercial relations with the United States was but "veiled treason." With a loyalty that shamed in his manifesto to the electors that he was born a British subject and that a British subject he would die. But the government's majority was seriously reduced, and Liberal candidates were elected in half the Quebec constituencies, which indicated that Mr. Laurier was undermining Conservative influence in that province, so long a Conservative stronghold.

Sir John Macdonald's death in 1891 was a serious blow to the Conservative party. Mr. Laurier was of the opinion that the Liberals need hardly expect to obtain power while Sir John lived. It is worthy of remark here that the Conservatives now believe they have little chance of attaining power while Sir Wilfrid Laurier leads the Liberals. After Sir John Macdonald's death the Conservatives drifted to certain defeat. The one man who might have saved the situation was Sir John Thompson, who, for a time, was pressed by because a large section of the party were opposed to elevating to the premiership a Catholic, and a convert at that. But he died with tragic suddenness in Windsor Castle in December, 1894, and his death was the signal for quarrels over the premiership among the Conservative leaders. To augment their confusion, the Manitoba school question was pressing for settlement. But this matter, by threatening to cut across party lines, was a cause of anxiety to many Liberals as well.

As Mr. Laurier's method of dealing with this question was severely criticized at the time by many Catholics, it will perhaps be of interest to deal with the matter quite fully and to consider how far was just the charge, made at the time, that his policy was dictated by political expediency only. He is a question of which a great deal may be said on both sides. The policy of each party on this occasion was in accord with its traditions; the Conservatives advocated the right of the federal government to supervise provincial legislation; the Liberals battled as they had often done before, for provincial rights. The judgments of the Privy Council, to which the matter had been referred as court of last resort, tended to confirm rather than to elucidate the question. This court ruled the act abolishing Separate schools to be within the purview of the legislature, and yet, on a second appeal, it declared that, in passing the act, a grievance had been created which the federal government had power to redress. The proper way to redress the grievance would seem to be to re-establish separate schools. And yet Mr. Blake, who pleaded both cases for the minority, has declared that, if a successful issue in the second suit had been understood to entail a restoration of Separate schools, he could not have induced the privy council to entertain the appeal. On the other hand, since it was clearly the intention of the framers of the Manitoba act to guarantee Separate schools, the minority had a strong moral claim for consideration. There can be no doubt that Mr. Laurier sympathized with the

minority, and yet, to interfere with the autonomy of Manitoba would be setting a precedent that might subsequently be used to break down the federal system, which had been adopted largely to protect the peculiar institutions of Quebec. The whole subject so bristled with difficulties that the question is likely to remain a subject of controversy.

It was in 1890 that Manitoba passed the act abolishing Separate schools, but five years elapsed before the matter has made its way through the courts and came to the government for settlement. After a period of irresolution which lost for it the confidence of many Catholics, the government resolved to restore Separate schools, and a bill for that purpose was introduced when Parliament was on the verge of dissolution through the lapse of time. While the bill provided for the re-establishment of Separate schools, it contained provisions that combated one another to some extent and which would have seriously impaired its efficiency, especially when it was to be administered by a hostile provincial government. For instance, the government was not obliged to contribute to Separate schools a proportionate share of the school grant, and might on the adverse report of the inspector, close a Separate school. But since the bill embodied the principle of Separate schools, it was accepted by a majority of Catholic Bishops, who counseled their people to support the measure.

What stand Mr. Laurier would take on the question was the subject of much interest. He studied the matter seriously before committing himself. Never before had he found himself in such perplexing circumstances. He felt that the minority in Manitoba had been hardly dealt with; nevertheless, he was leader of a party that had always contended for provincial rights as against federal aggrandizement, and it was upon this ground he had defended the right of the Quebec legislature to pass the Jesuits' Estates Act. Again, he had reason to believe that the government had purposely delayed bringing down the remedial bill that it might fail to pass before dissolution, and thus be made a means of securing Catholic support in the coming election. Besides, he felt that the Manitoba government resisted, largely with a view of embarrassing the federal authorities. With himself Premier of a Liberal government, he believed he would be able to obtain by conciliatory methods greater concessions for the minority. And, finally, and this was the determining consideration, he looked with dismay upon the nefarious work of D'Alton McCarthy, who was then making strenuous and what promised to be successful efforts to establish an anti Catholic coalition, which, were he himself to support the government, might become so strong as to endanger Catholic rights throughout the Dominion. These considerations induced him to oppose the remedial bill. In the elections which followed, the Conservatives were defeated by a decisive majority, and after eighteen years in opposition the Liberals returned to power with Mr. Laurier as Premier and in his hands a mandate to settle the school question by conciliation.

One of his first acts on assuming office was the opening of negotiations with the Manitoba government. Unfortunately for the minority, the provincial government, who believed he would be able to obtain by conciliatory methods greater concessions for the minority, was not disposed to make any substantial concessions. In the settlement which resulted, the principle of Separate schools was not recognized; yet Catholics secured the right to have religious instruction given in Public schools attended by a certain number of Catholic children. When the settlement was announced, Mr. Laurier confessed that he had hoped to obtain more, but that he had done the best he could. The Catholic Church authorities were not disposed to accept these concessions as a final settlement of the question. Shortly after Mr. Merry del Val, now Papal Secretary of State, was sent to Canada to investigate the matter, and the School Question was subsequently made the subject of an Encyclical by Leo XIII., who declared that Catholics were free to choose the method they thought best to secure the rights of the minority. The Holy Father further advised that the concessions obtained from Manitoba be accepted as an instalment of justice till such time as larger rights could be secured. An occasional protest by some militant Protestant, that Separate schools still exist in Manitoba, shows that the concessions obtained have been of advantage to the minority.

In 1897 Mr. Laurier went to England to represent Canada at the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The presence of a descendant of France representing a British colony and proclaiming his loyalty to the throne because of the full civil and religious liberty accorded his race in Canada was a new spectacle in London, and could not fail to captivate the imagination of the British people, nor fail to emphasize the wisdom of a policy that had brought such happy results. The recent enactment of the preferential tariff in favor of British goods had predisposed the British public in his favor; his eloquence, chivalrous bearing and courtly dignity completed the effect and converted his journey into almost a triumphal procession.

While in England Mr. Laurier was knighted by Queen Victoria. Being a thorough democrat, he has little use for titles of any kind, and had he consulted his own desires he would have refused the proffered honor. But he felt that it would be discourteous to do so at a time when he was the guest of the British people.

His utterances in England did not please public opinion in Paris, and when, later, he visited that city he was but coldly received at first. Knowing that these feelings were due to misconception of political conditions in Canada, he seized the earliest opportunity to explain his position. His presence in that city and the delivery of one or two speeches wherein he showed unusual skill in touching a responsive

chord in a strange and critical audience won for him the hearts of the fastidious Parisians.

On his return to Canada the Premier was given a most enthusiastic reception. Canadians, irrespective of party, were delighted with the able manner in which he had represented Canada at the jubilee ceremonies.

Though whilst leader of the opposition, Mr. Laurier found himself in many difficult situations, it is chiefly since he became Premier that he has demonstrated his skill as a safe pilot in days of stress and storm. Canada, on account of its cleavage along racial and religious lines, is a hard country to govern; and the animosities and recriminations arising by a clash over racial and religious issues are generally most unreasonable and very perplexing to the government. One third of the people of Canada are French, speak the French language, read their French newspapers, and in most concerns of life live apart from the rest of Canadians, a nation within a nation, as it were. As very few English-speaking Canadians understand the French language, they have no adequate conception of the aims and ideals of their French fellow-citizens. Besides, there is amongst English Canadians a certain feeling of arrogant superiority that finds impatient utterance when some cherished policy of theirs is thwarted or modified by the influence of the French Canadians. The latter, on their part, are determined to preserve their racial identity, and, being a compact and powerful minority, are able to make their influence felt in the councils of the nation. These divergent aims become apparent only when some racial or religious issue arises, and they are accentuated by newspapers and politicians selfishly interested in exploiting such issues. On such occasions a person unacquainted with Canadian affairs might be led to believe that the confederation was on the verge of disruption. But the common sense of the majority of both races is equal to the exigencies of these occasions and always succeeds in arranging a reasonable compromise. Then the storm subsides as quickly as it arises, leaving most people wondering what the fuss was all about.

Since he became Premier Sir Wilfrid Laurier has had to deal with two such situations. The one arose at the outbreak of the Boer war; the other a year ago when the government determined to guarantee Separate schools in the new provinces of the West. Throughout both these crises the Premier conducted himself with patience, moderation, tact and firmness, and in both cases he frustrated the designs of his opponents. When President Kruger sent his ultimatum to the British government, there came from Ontario an insistent demand that the Canadian government aid the mother country in the coming struggle by sending a contingent to South Africa. This proposal was but coldly received in Quebec, where the majority, if not actually sympathetic with the Boers, wished at least that Canada should remain neutral. At first Sir Wilfrid Laurier pointed out that the Militia Act did not empower the government to use the militia for a purpose other than the defense of Canada; that if it did, money for that purpose had not been voted by Parliament, and that to accede to Ontario's request would be illegal and unconstitutional. Besides, Great Britain had not asked for assistance, nor was there any intimation at that time that aid from Canada was needed or would be acceptable. Sir John Macdonald had refused to send Canadian aid to Great Britain in the Egyptian war, and on his refusal the agitation at once subsided. But whether the imperial sentiment of Canada had grown stronger in the mean time, or whether a large fraction of the race was due to a desire to perplex a French Canadian Premier, Ontario was in no mood to listen to cold argument. When the Premier saw that his stand was being interpreted as disloyalty and being exploited as such by the Conservative press, and when, moreover, no moral principle being involved, the people had the right to rise superior to self-imposed limitations, he readily acquiesced to the wish of the majority and sent several contingents. Quebec was placated by the announcement that the dispatch of contingents should not constitute a precedent, nor that aid from Canada was being interpreted as disloyalty and being exploited as such by the Conservative press, and when, moreover, no moral principle being involved, the people had the right to rise superior to self-imposed limitations, he readily acquiesced to the wish of the majority and sent several contingents. Quebec was placated by the announcement that the dispatch of contingents should not constitute a precedent, nor that aid from Canada was being interpreted as disloyalty and being exploited as such by the Conservative press, and when, moreover, no moral principle being involved, the people had the right to rise superior to self-imposed limitations, he readily acquiesced to the wish of the majority and sent several contingents.

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We see how perfectly Our Lord responded to the claims of His condition of life in being subject to those placed over Him. He sought no immunity on the score of being an Infant Prodigy who had astonished the doctors of the law by His wisdom. His lot was not the one to choose from a worldly point of view. It was His Eternal Father's will that He should bring to this humble family; that He should share

majority. So no more was heard of the Quebec bogy and "French domination" till two years ago, when the government resolved to guarantee a Separate school system in the new provinces. Though he opposed the proposal to force Manitoba to restore Separate schools, it was evident at the time that Mr. Laurier had no sympathy with the means by which, through a technicality, the intention of the framers of the Manitoba act had been frustrated and the minority deprived of its rights. He opposed the remedial bill because he thought it imprudent for the federal government to enforce a defiant province. But this stand was interpreted by many Protestant Liberals to mean that he was opposed to the principle of Separate schools. To these the announcement of his intention to guarantee Separate schools in the new provinces came as a surprise, and, comparing his policy of 1896 with that of 1905, they were disposed to charge him with inconsistency and to feel that they had been betrayed. An additional difficulty lay in the fact that many Liberals, owing to extreme views expressed in 1896, found it very difficult to support Separate school legislation in 1905. What was in the Premier's case a seeming inconsistency was for them a real one; and it was largely a feeling of personal loyalty to their leader which constrained them to accept his policy. With a quiet determination he held his ground and stood ready to efface himself, if by so doing he could advance the cause he had at heart. Thinking that a Protestant Premier advocating Separate schools, legislation might meet with less opposition, he offered to resign in favor of Mr. Fielding if the latter would agree to take up the school bills. But Mr. Fielding refused office in these circumstances. It is true the rebellious Liberals forced a modification of the measure, but the change was not a radical one and was chiefly useful in enabling many a Liberal member "to save his face" when called upon to defend his vote. Thus, by constancy in a critical time, Sir Wilfrid Laurier preserved to the Catholics of the new provinces the inestimable boon of Separate schools. There is amongst the Catholics of Canada a belief that justice is easier obtained from a Protestant Premier than from a Premier of their own faith. The reason for this belief is obvious. A Protestant Premier dispensing justice to a Catholic minority does not arouse so much suspicion among the Protestant majority. Hence called upon to defend his vote, they are constantly in a critical time, Sir Wilfrid Laurier preserved to the Catholics of the new provinces the inestimable boon of Separate schools. There is amongst the Catholics of Canada a belief that justice is easier obtained from a Protestant Premier than from a Premier of their own faith. The reason for this belief is obvious. A Protestant Premier dispensing justice to a Catholic minority does not arouse so much suspicion among the Protestant majority. Hence called upon to defend his vote, they are constantly in a critical time, Sir Wilfrid Laurier preserved to the Catholics of the new provinces the inestimable boon of Separate schools.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE.

## FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

OUR TWO DUTIES.

"How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

This was the reply of our Divine Lord when, finding Him in the temple, His Mother said, "Why hast Thou done so to us?" No one can question His perfect filial piety. As surely as every act of His was the highest realization of the counsels given in the sermon on the Mount, as surely as no other heart approached the love and adoration of the Sacred Heart for God the Father—so surely did He love His Mother with a love worthy of such a Son and such a Mother.

The surpassing excellence of this love was mutual. We feel how her heart poured itself out in Bethlehem when she first saw Him: we read it in the prophecy of Simeon which makes her love a sword to pierce her heart; we hear it in the cry from the feet of the cross, "See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." It would dishonor Him to say He did not return such a love as this.

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in their troubles, anxieties, and privations; that, like them, He should meet with scorn or rebuke from employers; that He should be cheated or put off, like all the poor of the world, by the dishonest or the insolent when asking for what was due to Him, and then He took His place to teach us by His example.

His place was not there through necessity. It was for us He took it, and for us the Father imposed it on Him.

We see all this folded up in the gospel of the day. We see how important it is to observe the duty we owe to God on the one hand and the duty of our state of life on the other. In this way His Mother understood His answer; in this way we must understand it too, and, like our Divine Lord, realizing in practice the obligation of both classes of duties, we may hope in God's good time to reap the reward promised to those that serve Him.

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During the Colonial Conference held in London at King Edward's coronation, Mr. Chamberlain did his best to persuade the colonial Premiers to accept his policy and aid him in its realization. Some time before I had been told the benefits accruing to Great Britain from Canada's preferential tariff, but, with characteristic sudden-

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