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PAS LISIBLE

PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
F. CYRIL JAMES



McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL

Destiny gives to few men the opportunity to embody within themselves all that is best in the age in which they live. To fewer still does it give the added opportunity to lead mankind towards the goal of their ideals. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was of the elect.

Proud of his French-Canadian birth, he wished to supplement the knowledge acquired at the schools of Saint-Lin and the College of the Assumption by learning from his fellow English-Canadians all that they could teach him at New Glasgow and McGill University. Friend and confidant of many statesmen, he added to the experience he acquired from them by continuous reading of books and articles describing the ways of peoples and nations.

Insatiable curiosity was inherent in his nature, where it was wedded to an abiding sympathy. He was interested in men because he loved them. Like Solomon of old, he desired an understanding heart, and was rewarded with power and dominion.

The prosperity which Canada enjoyed during the years when Laurier was Prime Minister may be attributed to factors over which he had no control. The western world was surging forward under the impetus of the industrial revolution and growing gold reserves. It was Laurier's task to develop the soul of Canada, to foster the spiritual development of her people in order that they might use their riches wisely. In that endeavor he succeeded magnificently.

Envisaging clearly the ideal of the Statute of Westminster, he realized that the future of the British Commonwealth of Nations depended upon the willing partnership of self-governing Dominions. It was no selfish nationalism, because Laurier fought for the rights of South Africa as earnestly as he fought for those of Canada. It was no narrow patriotism, since he insisted that Canada should assume her full responsibilities, military and civil, in the affairs of the Empire.

No man could have expressed better the ideals for which Canada and her allies are fighting today. A united national effort in which each individual voluntarily submerges his own interests because he knows that the democracy which inspires the nation will restore his liberties when victory has been attained. Unflinching courage to speak the truth, in season and out of season, and unremitting devotion to the public service of Canada — these are the qualities of a man who will be long remembered. It were well for the future of this Dominion that the tradition of Sir Wilfrid Laurier should remain always in our thoughts.

November 18th, 1941.