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III.

Fate invisibly seems to have taken care to train this man for the leading position in government. The moment he was freed of his eight years of bureaucratic routine, the government sent him on a world trip to India, China and Japan for the purpose of controlling emigration from those countries to Canada. In China he also served as a member of an international Commission on the Opium traffic. On his return, King was taken, by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, into his government as Minister of Labour.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier early recognized King's abilities. Over thirty years King's senior, they became devoted friends. Through all party victories and defeats, King remained constant at his side. Their friendship ended only with Laurier's death. Subsequently Lady Lauriere bequeathed to him their house in Ottawa. It was known that Laurier regarded him as his political heir.

The secret of this friendship was the difference of their characters and descent and the similarity of their outlook and convictions. Laurier, a French Canadian, had in physique and character, what King appropriately expressed: "The chivalry of his race". King, coming from Scotch descent, was less a man of the world, more reticent, but perhaps more thorough. Very different in appearance and manners; both dignified and courteous, both were real Liberals of the old school.