

THE BATTLE-CRY OF LIBERALISM.

The Message of Liberal Leaders at the Hamilton Meeting.

"FIGHT on—I call you to fight with me, to fight the battle of public service."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's ringing words to the young Liberals of Ontario gathered at Hamilton on November 27th, his clear-cut enunciation of Liberal policy based on the fundamental principles of Liberalism, are renewed inspiration to every Canadian Liberal, young and old. It was the message of the greatest Canadian speaking with the authority of thirty-two years of continuous service as leader of his party, speaking with the strength of positive conviction in the justice and ultimate triumph of the principles for which without faltering he has fought, for half a century.

It was the message of a statesman of courage, imagination and clear-vision, who has fought and won through a generation the battles of Canadian democracy for responsible government, for social justice, for equality of opportunity, for freedom for the common people, in the age-long fight between entrenched and aggressive self-interest and altruistic common-interest—between Toryism and Liberalism.

"Political life is often punctuated by reverses" said Sir Wilfrid. But a good cause knows no defeat. Reverses in a good cause but try the metal and fire the courage. So it has been with the "Old Chief" and with his lieutenants and with the rank and file of Liberalism. The party is stronger, more united and in better fighting spirit today in Canada than it was even in the days when it held office. The election of September 21st, 1911, was a temporary reverse for Liberalism, but it was not a defeat for the principles for which Liberalism stands. Those principles are firm-based, world-wide and undying. The response all over Canada to the rallying-cry which Sir Wilfrid has given anew to his followers is spontaneous and whole-hearted. There was at the Hamilton meeting only the note of optimism and confidence. There was no hint of despair or discouragement.

Liberalism was never prouder of

its leader than it is today, never prouder of its history and of its task. The review of the whole political situation with the statement of the issues, National and Imperial, economic and social, which Sir Wilfrid and Mr. N. W. Rowell, the Ontario provincial Liberal Leader, presented to the 700 representatives of young Liberalism at the Hamilton banquet were

"Stand to your ideals. Stand fast, stand true. Fulfill the great duties that belong to British citizenship. Keep your ideal before you like the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, which guided the people of God from the tribulation of bondage. Let all together, young and old, join hands. Gird our loins, buckle on our armour, unfurl our standard and go forward together in service in earnest, whole-hearted, unselfish, service for Canada first, Canada last and Canada for ever."—Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

"When others were in doubt Sir Wilfrid Laurier saw clearly that there could be no permanent unity among the free peoples of the Empire except upon the basis of an equality in status of all the free and self-governing portions of the Empire. He realized that the status of Canada must be changed from that of a colony to a free nation within the Empire; that this change should be brought about, not by legislative enactment, but by the demand on our part for a new status, persisted in until the people of Canada were convinced of its necessity, and persisted in until the people of Great Britain were convinced that it was right. His steady pursuit of this policy until the new status was recognized and accepted constitutes one of his greatest achievements."—Mr. N. W. Rowell, K.C., M.P.P.

"Let us not forget Liberalism is the creed of the democracy, and the democracy has not yet come to its own. It is the party of progress."—Mr. N. W. Rowell, K.C., M.P.P.

compelling in their logic and in their call for support.

"While we proclaim our allegiance to the British Crown and our love of the British race, we are Canadians and as Canadians we have rights as well as duties" said Sir Wilfrid in giving the key-note to his declaration of policy in regard to naval defence and Canada's Imperial relationship. Self-government he reasserted, was a fundamental principle of Liberalism and

local autonomy was a fundamental principle of Imperial unity. "The Empire rests on that principle. If any man wants to rupture the Empire, let him lay rash hands on that principle and bring us back to the old days of concentration in London. The love and allegiance of the Canadian people have grown apace with the growth of self-government." And summing up the record of the long development of British constitutional freedom wherever free British men dwell, he applied the moral to the concrete issues of naval defence. "I pin my faith to this; that any money raised out of the pockets of the Canadian people must be expended by representatives of those people duly elected by them". The battle has been won by Liberalism in the past. The fight is now to maintain the field against the subtle attack of re-actionary Toryism.

But an even greater issue holds the first place in regard to present issues of national concern; that is the problem of economic justice to the common people. Sir Wilfrid launched at Hamilton, a new crusade against monopoly and restriction.

To-day the problem of the cost of living for the average man has become the vital issue of Canadian political life. Sir Wilfrid proposed at Hamilton the first great step towards the solution of that problem. The enthusiasm with which his Hamilton audience greeted his declaration of policy has been followed by a truly remarkable demonstration of popular acclaim from Canadians in every part of the Dominion.

"Stand to your ideals", declared Sir Wilfrid in concluding one of the greatest speeches of his career. "Liberalism must turn with the same invariable courage to the new problems of social reconstruction and social reform as our fathers applied to the large and pressing problems of constitutional reform" declared Mr. Rowell.

With such leaders and with such inspiring key-notes to political faith, Liberalism confidently continues the fight for constitutional liberty and economic justice.