

A TRUCE TO PARTY STRIFE

IN the August number of the *Canadian Liberal Monthly*, attention was drawn to the attitude taken by the Liberal Leader, the Rt. Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier in emphasizing, even before the declaration of war between Great Britain and Germany, the necessity, in the presence of the then impending crisis, of calling "a truce to party strife". The patriotic stand taken by Sir Wilfrid Laurier at the outset has been chivalrously maintained by him, and was accepted with hearty unanimity by all of his followers in parliament through the whole of the special Session convened immediately after the declaration of war. In sympathy with this attitude, the *Liberal Monthly* devoted its August issue, not to any discussion of party politics, but to a review of the European war.

This review dealt with the causes, influences and forces, which operated to bring about the war, with the subsequent rise of nation against nation, and the position, as respects the war, of alliances, neutrals and the British Dominions. Owing to the limited space available, it was not possible to devote much attention to Canada, and the manner in which this country had responded to the grave responsibilities placed upon her as the leading Dominion of the British Empire. Nowhere has this responsibility been more clearly stated, or the spirit of the nation, in this time of crisis, better expressed, than in the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister in their addresses to parliament. Believing that the readers of the *Monthly* appreciate its attitude of neutrality as respect party conflict at the present moment, and that they may desire to have a detailed account of Canada's position and action, and the historic utterances of the leaders of the two great political parties, recorded in a form worthy of preservation, a considerable portion of the present issue is devoted to the speeches of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Robert Borden, and the remainder to a brief summary of the measures taken by the Government and the country to meet a situation unparalleled in its entire history. This review, which deals exclusively with Canada, is, at it were, a supplement to the review of the August number which related almost entirely to Europe.

CANADA AND THE WAR

PART I.

THE CALL OF DUTY AND THE RESPONSE

THE formal declaration of war by Austria on Serbia which led so rapidly to the rise of nation against nation throughout Europe was made in the late afternoon of Tuesday, July 28th. How little it was thought, even in Great Britain, that the murder at Sarajevo of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his wife, on the 28th of the preceding month would lead to a war in which the greater part of Europe would be involved and into which the British Empire might be drawn is evidenced by the circumstance that no intimation of any such possibility appears to have been sent by the Home Government to the Government of Canada until after the war between Austria and Serbia had been declared. How little Canadian statesmen dreamed that war affecting British interests was even remotely approaching, may be gathered from the fact that at the beginning of the week which witnessed the mobilization of naval and military forces throughout Europe, His Royal Highness, the Governor-General, with members of the Royal Household were in the distant Province of British Columbia completing a farewell tour of the Dominion, the Deputy Governor, Sir Louis Davies, in Prince Edward Island down by the Atlantic Coast, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden in Muskoka enjoying a brief vacation, the Minister of Militia and Defence attending a banquet at Bracebridge, Ontario, and the members of the Cabinet, almost without exception, absent from the Capital and scattered throughout the Dominion or abroad.

Meeting of the Cabinet

Once the note of warning came from Britain these gentlemen, one and all, hastened to the Capital. The Deputy Governor, the Prime Minister and several members of the Cabinet arrived on Saturday morning August 1st. A Cabinet council was speedily summoned and consideration immediately given to such measures as the crisis appeared to demand. The declaration of war between Germany and Russia followed during the course of that day; on Monday came the declaration of war between France and Germany, and on Tuesday, August 4th, the announcement of a state of war between Germany and Great Britain. His Royal Highness reached Ottawa on the morning of August 4th, and for the first time in the history of the Dominion sat in council with the Prime Minister and his colleagues.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Leader of the Opposition, realizing the gravity of the situation returned to Ottawa on Monday, August 3rd, and though, in the absence of any meeting of Parliament, the presence of the Leader of the Opposition was not in any sense a necessity, this voluntary act on the part of Sir Wilfrid, and the patriotic announcement made by him prior to the declaration of war, that he had cancelled all the meetings of an intended transcontinental tour, and was ready to call a truce to party strife, undoubtedly went very far towards relieving the Government of all embarrassment at a moment of great anxiety. The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden was quick to acknowledge this chivalrous act on the part of the Leader of the Opposition, and to make public recognition of it in the opening remarks of a speech delivered by him in the House of Commons, on the subsequent assembling of Parliament.