

when they took charge of the administration of the country, but they measured up to the task.

A Strong Cabinet.

The first and most wise step was the selection by Sir Wilfrid Laurier of the strongest possible colleagues to form his Cabinet. No other body of men ever presided over the destinies of Canada — a fact admitted even by opponents. It was truly a great combination which instilled much needed confidence in the people. To form it Sir Wilfrid had to go outside the ranks of the men who had fought the battles of the party in Opposition in the Dominion House, and who no doubt expected pre-eminence. But the wisdom of his choice has never been questioned, and the record of his Government is the most ample justification of it.

Tariff Reform.

The Customs tariff was properly the first problem to be tackled, as it is the hub of the wheels of industry and commerce. The Liberal party had taken office upon a declared policy, to substitute for the Conservative tariff, a sound, fiscal policy, which while not doing injustice to any class would promote domestic and foreign trade and hasten the return of prosperity. They had also declared that the tariff should be reduced to the needs of honest, economical and efficient Government, that it should be so adjusted as to make free or bear as lightly as possible upon the necessities of life and should be so arranged as to permit freer trade with the whole world, particularly with Great Britain and the United States.

The first step taken by the Government was the eminently practical one of appointing a committee of its members to ascertain with exactitude the precise situation of all classes and sections of the country and their actual needs. No hole and corner methods were adopted by the committee, and there were no private meetings between

Ministers and manufacturers in the Windsor Hotel at Montreal. Everybody was invited to give expression to his views. To meet the convenience of the public, meetings were held in most of the principal cities and towns. Parenthetically we might here observe that different methods prevailed here. The Conservative Government noted important and radical changes in the Customs tariff on the advice, almost solely, of a man who for years was the paid tariff expert of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. They evidently did not need to consult the people.

The result of the labours of the committee, and subsequent daily meetings of the Cabinet for months, was the promulgation of a tariff, which judged by the best possible test, actual results, created a revolution in the industrial life and activities of the country. Briefly stated the new tariff.

1. Materially reduced the duties on many necessities and staple commodities used by consumers generally.
2. Placed on the free list certain articles of prime necessity to the farmer, the miner, fisherman and manufacturer.
3. Reduced the duties on iron and steel which constitute the staple raw materials for many industries; duties on other raw materials were also lowered.
4. Simplified the classification of articles for duty purposes and thereby assured more uniform administration.
5. Last but by no means least, gave a substantial preference to the products and manufactures of Great Britain over the rest of the world.

First Serious Attempt on Tariff Revision.

This Liberal tariff was the first serious attempt made in Canada towards equality of treatment and reconciliation of conflicting interests. No class or interest was singled out for undue favoritism. The needs of all were considered. Evident lies the difference between the Conservative and Liberal