



Street scene in Liverpool during the recent strike which threatened a fresh outbreak after the settlement of the railway crisis.

THE MAN WHO IS IN EARNEST

A Character Sketch of Robert Laird Borden

By NORMAN PATTERSON

THERE are various styles of political leaders, and Robert Laird Borden is moulded in a style peculiarly his own. It is customary to say that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in personal qualities and as a political leader, is the successor of Sir John A. Macdonald. A parallel of similar kind would be to say that R. L. Borden in personal qualities and as a political leader is the natural successor of Edward Blake. Nevertheless the parallel would be indeed forced, and perhaps would not be satisfactory to either Blake or Borden. But it is curious that the present Liberal leader should be likened to the former Conservative chieftain, while the present Conservative leader approximates to the type of the former Liberal leader.

One must hear a statesman on many platforms, in the House, in the committee-room and in the banquet hall, before daring to portray him in words. I have heard Mr. Borden on many occasions. In the House of Commons he is like a lawyer handling a brief. That remark has the disadvantage of having been made before. Nevertheless, it is true. But in the banquet hall and at a political meeting, he is much more than that. I heard him address the Canadian Club of Toronto on some phases of citizenship and found him inspiring. He was tense, eager, logical and magnetic. I heard him last week at Massey Hall, Toronto, and he was tense, eager, logical, but not magnetic. He was hoarse and tired, and none of us appear our best, even in drawing-rooms, under such circumstances. But he impressed me as the man who is in earnest.

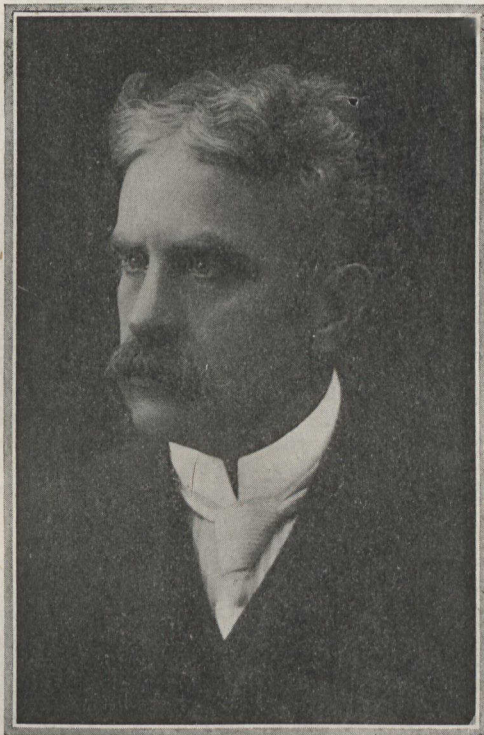
And after all, isn't earnestness a great quality? The object of all political speaking is to convince. No matter how grand and how beautiful may be the oratory, it falls on stony ground if it is not convincing. Mr. Foster is a greater orator, but I doubt if he is as convincing. There are others who are greater orators, both Conservatives and Liberals, but there are few of them who equal Robert Laird Borden in leaving upon an audience the assurance that they are in earnest, that they mean what they say and say what they mean.

In this respect, Mr. Borden and Sir James Whitney have much in common. I have never heard a man say that Borden was "bluffing." Nor have I ever heard anyone make such an accusation against Sir James Whitney. Whether they are right or wrong, inspired by truth or misled by false views, they are credited with being honestly in earnest. They are what they are through the force of conviction. Earnestness and sincerity carried Sir James Whitney to power and popularity in Ontario. If Mr. Borden has an equal chance with fate, he will score a like success.

My friend, who accompanied me to Massey Hall, paid Mr. Borden only one compliment. "Fine looking chap, isn't he?" I granted an assent, but I also took the remark home to think it over. He is a splendid type of manhood, and when he told the audience what he has told other audiences, that he comes of a family which has never lived under any other flag but the British flag, he looked worthy of his ancestry. His head, ordinarily bent forward, went back upon his massive shoulders; his great arms fell quietly to his side; his figure stiffened to its fullest height, and he was almost, if not quite, the typical Anglo-Saxon. Physically, morally, intellectually, he looked equal to the task which every great Britisher has set for himself. He displayed

this at several points in his address, chiefly when, speaking of the blockade by his followers in the House, he rolled out in hoarse, deep tones, "We have done our duty, it is for you to do yours."

Borden is no actor. Give him a rapier to handle against an opponent and you would expect him to ask for a broad sword. He has no lightness of touch. He is almost entirely lacking in that feminine quality of gracefulness. He is neither lithe, nor active. He has little platform pageantry. He seldom tells his audience when to cheer. He does not appear to look for applause, and its only usefulness,



MR. R. L. BORDEN.

so far as he himself is concerned, is to give him time to brush back his eyebrows and hair and to gather force for another blow. He has little use for sarcasm and almost less for playful allusion. He has no anecdotes and seldom calls the simile to his aid. If he has any of these, he would not be Borden—the man who is in earnest.

Some one has said that Mr. Borden has written his name indelibly on the pages of Canadian history, and I am inclined to agree with the remark. His qualities of statesmanship are undoubted. Whether of not, he ever crosses to the treasury benches he has made an impression upon national life which the future historian must record. In his fight against reciprocity he has aroused a large portion of the Canadian people to think more of nationality, its causes, its responsibilities and its effects. He has trimmed anew a lamp which Sir John A. Macdonald kept burning. And after all, is this not success? Is there another man among the Conservative leaders of to-day who has done

as much as this. Whatever the future may hold in store for him, he has the satisfaction of knowing that the public generally esteem him as one who plays the game earnestly and fairly, and as one to whom, if opportunity offered, they would not refuse the greatest honour which it is in their power to bestow.

Occasions sometimes produce a leader—such as Bryan, who sprang into eminence at the Democrat convention of 1896. Hereditary or, at least, personal genius, has made some men leaders; of whom the arch-example is the late Napoleon, creator of circumstances and dynasties. Circumstances themselves have contributed to the making of other leaders; and of these R. L. Borden is a conspicuous instance. It has been said of Sir Wilfrid Laurier

that when he became leader of the Liberal party in 1887, the party regarded him as an interregnumist who might be retired when the real leader should arise. But no Liberal of to-day doubts that Laurier was the born leader, whom no other man in his day and generation could have replaced.

Mr. Borden, also, when he took up the reins after the chaos following upon the death of Sir John Macdonald, was not acclaimed as the Moses who would eventually lead his party to victory at the polls. Unlike Laurier, whom even a casual visitor to the House of Commons could distinguish as the most remarkable figure in the House, Mr. Borden was regarded as a good, safe man, of more than mediocre ability, but of no overwhelmingly distinctive character. The qualities which have since been developed in him, and which stamp him to-day as the most representative, constitutional figure in the van of Conservative leadership, have been the product of circumstances working on a man who had the capabilities for learning from the signs of the times. Mr. Borden has grown up with the party and the country. He has been developed by Opposition more than any other Conservative in Parliament. He has been under a constant handicap, not of talents or of personal equipment, but of comparisons odious. Liberals and Conservatives have compared him with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whom he resembles not at all; with Mr. Foster, who has frequently overshadowed him in the House, but whom the party could never accept as a leader; with Sir John Thompson, who wore so creditably the mantle of Sir John Macdonald; and with the great John A. himself, who, admitting that Canada was almost impossible to govern in his day, bequeathed to his successors in Opposition the still more difficult task of overturning a government solidly entrenched in a great, growing era, mainly of good times and always of amazing progress.

In spite of this handicap of comparisons that would have discouraged an ordinary man, R. L. Borden, sensitive, chivalrous, plain and sincere, a perfect gentleman and a constructive statesman always in earnest, has kept his place. That development alone entitles him to exert a still stronger influence upon Canadian public life as head of a government than he has already done as leader of an opposition.

Why Germany Wants Morocco.

THE iron supply of the world is rapidly dwindling, says the *Literary Digest*. A statistician writing in the organ of the German iron industry, calculates that in ten years England's iron ore will be exhausted. Even the United States, which yields a third of the 100,000,000 tons mined throughout the world annually, can not keep up her yield for more than thirty years. Germany has a supply, we are told, for fifty years, France for seven hundred years. Far-sighted Germany, according to the *Continental Correspondence* (Berlin), is therefore turning her attention to other foreign deposits. It has been discovered that there are large beds of iron ore in southern Morocco. Hence the obstinacy with which the Kaiser's Government hangs on to Agadir, the hinterland of which abounds in ferruginous deposits. This writer concludes his calculations as follows:—

"We presume that the situation is not quite as bad as represented by this specialist. In any case, however, Germany and Great Britain have an urgent interest to preserve their own layers of iron ore for an emergency and get as much as possible from abroad. It is easily explainable that the open door in Morocco, the free access to the iron-ore mines to be found there, is of vital importance for the future of German industry."

Canadians must take notice of these international complications. We also have iron ore.