

for ever in the game of Canadian politics. The Nationalist wedge has been driven deep into the tree. The advantage of the enormous prestige of Sir Wilfrid Laurier as a leader is also gone. Whether his present position as leader of the Opposition be long or short, he can never regain the position in Canada from which he has fallen. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, it may be said, with all the gentleness of speech which is becoming in speaking of such a man on such an occasion, touched in this election upon the one point on which he never fully enjoyed the confidence of the Canadian people—our relations to the British Empire. It has been his fortunate lot to represent us on great occasions. He has ridden for us in coaches of State, to the plaudits of a London multitude. He has coined phrases for us, of summoning us to Imperial councils and the like, grandiloquent in the utterance, but meaning less and less as they recede into retrospect. That he ever really understood the feelings of his English-speaking fellow citizens of Canada towards their Mother Country, that he ever really designed to advance the cause of permanent Imperial unity—these things may well be doubted, even by those who are most ready to pay tribute to the long career of disinterested public service which he has written upon the annals of Canada.

It is this very question, that of our permanent Imperial union, on which the chief bearing of the Canadian election falls. We are, in Great Britain and throughout the Empire, groping for something which we desire but still seek in vain. The great problem of our common future is to find an organic basis of lasting union. That it will be found those of us who have faith in the Empire cannot for a moment doubt. Meantime the voice of the Canadian electorate comes as a plebiscite of the eight million people of this half of the continent in expression of their earnest wish for an enduring union with the Empire. How far and by what steps the new Canadian Government will be able to aid in cementing the bonds of Empire, time and circumstance alone can show. Meantime it counts for much that the greatest of all the Dominions beyond the seas should have borne such witness to its faith.

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