

was complete. It was in every sense a personal triumph. There was no great issue before the country. The personality of Sir Wilfrid Laurier dominated the foreground of the political scene. The pot-and-kettle accusations of graft and counter-graft passed harmless over the heads of an electorate happy in the cornfield and the counting-house.

Nor is it to be doubted that had the recent contest been fought over the same issues, or lack of issues, the result would have been the same. It is true that the cause of the Conservatives, even apart from Reciprocity, was good. The lavish expenditures of the late Government, its willingness to build canals without water, wharves without ships, and post-offices without letters, the serious scandals which attached to more than one public department, the gyrations of its little navy, whose *role* in a British war was screened behind a curtain of official ambiguity—all of this contained within it enough to ruin (if poetic justice reigned over politics) any Government that ever sat. But the electorate was over-busy and would not be disturbed. 'You can't beat Laurier,' it said, and that was the end of it. The sunshine vote, which is large in Canada, lay basking on the Liberal side of the fence.

"Whom the gods wish to destroy," so ran the Roman adage, "they first make mad." This is what happened to the Laurier Government. The docility of the electorate had led them to believe that there was no public opinion in Canada other than the creed dictated from the departments at Ottawa. In an evil hour they listened to the fowler's pipe of President Taft, luring them to Washington and Reciprocity.

The proposals of the Reciprocity Compact, now gone to its long home, originated not out of any need or desire of the Canadian people, not from any decline of our commerce or disturbance of our markets, but simply and solely out of the revolving issues of American politics. In the past, of course, as everybody knows, reciprocity of trade with the United States, partial or complete, has more than once figured as the chief issue of Canadian politics. From 1855 to 1866, before yet Confederation had come, reciprocity in natural products was actually in force. Twenty years after Confederation the Conservative Party of