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first German naval scare, the English Canadian imperialism growing out of it and the French Canadian counter-imperialism. In all these passages of his life, Laurier was to undergo severe tests. Virtually no one in English Canada realized the fine line he had to walk if he were not to forfeit the support of his own people and thus see Canadian unity disappear, as later it did under Sir Robert Borden. One example will suffice: When the first German naval scare blew up in 1908-09, a large party in French Canada, under Henri Bourassa, was for doing nothing, and a large party in English Canada was for making heavy contributions to the British navy. Laurier followed the unwelcome middle course of deciding to build a navy of our own. For this offense he was assailed by a combination of Quebec nationalists and English Canadian Tories that resembled nothing so much as the improbable combination of Joe Stalin and General MacArthur against President Truman. Laurier, it is now evident, took the only sensible course. For this constructive piece of nationalism, a Canadian navy, he was, the next year, sent into political exile.

It is evident from these brief references that Sir Wilfrid acted on the same principles in the days of office as in the days of opposition. A country could be built only on moderation, on tolerance, on freedom. Unwelcome as it was to two peoples such as ours, the middle way was the only way to be pursued. As the Canadian nation slowly emerged, its foundations were not to be heady and dramatic action, but the exasperations of compromise. Those prime ministers who departed from compromise came to shipwreck.

Sir Wilfrid's life closes, alas, in the anti-climax of the conscription disruption. It barely lasts beyond those sad days when English and French-speaking Canadians came near to forgetting the foe overseas and spilling each others' blood. To Laurier those days must have been bitter beyond words. When in the city of Winnipeg after a long debate, the time came for him to take leave of his former followers and the separation was to take place which did honour to them both, eye-witnesses aver that there was hardly a dry eye. Anyone who will give himself to study of this man will believe it, for none can study him without coming under his spell.

Union government, conscription, these were the tragic denouement of Laurier's life drama. He had given his career to bettering the understanding between the races, and now all the old wounds had been opened up again and it seemed as if the torrents of mutual hatred would never cease to roar. Virtually in the midst of it, his life ended. To him, it was not to be given to see that rebuilding of conciliation which was to be the work of the generation who succeeded him.