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THE FATHER OF PARLIAMENT.

"OUR great purpose should not be mere winning, but seeing to it that we have the best cause. I am not indifferent to success, but still success is not the main object. Our obligation is to fight for truth and justice as God gives us to see truth and justice. And truth and justice will prevail."

Such was Sir Wilfrid Laurier's characteristic and meaningful message to Liberalism given in the Commons chamber on May 28th. The happy occasion was the tangible recognition by his followers in Parliament of his completion of forty years of continuous membership in the Commons. It is just two score years since Sir Wilfrid entered the Commons and just fifty years since he graduated from the Law Faculty of McGill and made his first public address. His first speech in the House was made on March 30th, 1874, in seconding the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the new Parliament. To-day in point of length of service, as in point of experience and ripeness of judgment and statecraft, he stands alone not only as the man who was Canada's Premier for fifteen years, and is now the Leader of Canada's Loyal Opposition but as the Father of Canada's Parliament.

A half century ago in delivering the Convocation address of his class at McGill—his first recorded public utterance—he gave expression to the essential principles which have animated his whole public career. The work of the maker and of the student of law, he said, is "to cause justice to reign". Seven years afterwards, in 1871, as a rising young barrister of Arthabaskaville, he was elected to the Quebec Legislature by a majority of one thousand. Three years later, he entered the higher arena of Federal politics. Twenty-six years ago, or sixteen years after entering Parliament, he was chosen leader of the Liberal party when Hon. Edward Blake laid down the mantle and recommended the brilliant young lieutenant from Quebec as his successor.

It was fitting that in commemoration of such a record

another mark of the esteem and affection of Liberals should be given to the Nestor of Parliament, to the greatest of Canadians, to the Grand Old Man, still leading in the age-long fight "to cause justice to reign". To Sir Wilfrid was presented a gold watch and chain—"the best that science could devise or money buy"—while to Lady Laurier, his helpmeet through forty-six years of happy wedded life, was presented a purse of gold.

The noble record of the forty years of Sir Wilfrid's career in the Commons is, alike with the high-minded message contained in his moving acknowledgement of "this new act of kindness and mark of affection," an inspiration and a pride to Liberalism. Here are forty years of consistent and unwavering battle for the rights of Democracy, for constitutional liberty, for equal rights and for economic justice for all classes; forty years of steady advocacy of all the rights of autonomous government, of self-reliant Canadianism and the upholding of British traditions, and forty years of the precept and practice of the best ideals and principles of Liberalism—and at the end, the same high note of courage and optimism. "I have endeavoured" he said, "to meet success without elation, and reverse without discouragement".

Of Sir Wilfrid it may be truly said, that the grace and vigor of his oratory, the integrity of his personal character, his rare combination of tact and sagacity, the kindness and chivalry of his nature, the courage and strength of his leadership have through all the years commanded in steadily increasing measure the esteem and the affection not only of his followers but of all Canadians and of the whole British people.

"Whether it be twenty years, or ten, or five" he said, in concluding his acknowledgment of the gifts of his followers to himself and to Lady Laurier, "whatever may be the length of my time is in the hands of God. But so long as God spares me, I shall continue to give my best, however poor that may be, to the service of these principles which we all hold so dear."

Liberalism has a leader to be proud of, and to follow gladly, with sure confidence and unwavering loyalty—a leader to fight for and a leader to win for.

DOUBLING THE NATIONAL DEBT.

The Canadian Northern aid legislation was introduced in the Commons by Premier Borden on May 13th. It passed its third reading in the Senate just four weeks afterwards on the eve of prorogation. Brought down in the Commons at the fag end of the session it was put through Parliament by the strongest, most insistent and boldest lobby in the history of Canadian politics. The people of Canada without being given a chance to pronounce upon or to adequately realize the importance of the question, have been irrevocably committed to a junior partnership with Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Mann. Canada has been made morally and legally responsible for obligations aggregating practically \$400,000,000, or an amount larger than the present national debt. Canada has been made responsible for all the affairs of a complicated and insolvent transcontinental railway system, owned and controlled by two men, who have built the system through public aid, who are given at least \$60,000,000 of watered stock made valuable by the deliberate action of Parliament, and who have refused to pledge a single dollar of their own great personal fortunes to help their own enterprise out of the difficulties of their own creation.