

service of the Crown, he is therefore, in a literal and absolute sense, in the service of Canada. In other words, aloof though he may be from the actual executive responsibility, his attitude must be that of a ceaseless and watchful readiness to take part, by whatever opportunities may be afforded him, in the fostering of every influence that will sweeten and elevate public life, to observe, study and join in the making known the resources and development of the country, to vindicate, if required, the rights of the people and the ordinances and Constitution, and lastly to promote by all means in his power, without reference to class or creed, every institution calculated to forward the social, moral and religious welfare of all the inhabitants of the Dominion.

In this conception, both Lord Aberdeen and Lady Aberdeen contributed a great personal share to the social and cultural life of Canada, and gave what assistance they could to the Laurier administration.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself spoke of this contribution when he said: "The Canadian Governor General long ago ceased to determine policy, but he is by no means, or need not be, the mere figurehead the public imagine. He has the privilege of advising his advisers and if he is a man of sense and experience his advice is often taken." (1)

In several cases, moreover, the Governor General, while generally leaving policy-making to his responsible government, undertook to give what assistance he could by undertaking the role of active diplomacy himself on behalf of the Dominion where he was serving. In particular, Governors General in Canada took a considerable if unobtrusive part in the relations with the United States. This was especially important when Canada did not have diplomatic representation separate from Great Britain and could not formulate its own policy without the approval and cooperation of the British Government. The Governor General was

(1) Skelton: Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. II. p.85.