

ture, and a no mean authority described him then as "the most remarkable Parliamentary orator now possessed by Lower Canada." In 1877 he was appointed Minister of Inland Revenue in the Mackenzie administration, and on seeking re-election as a Minister he was defeated in Drummond and Arthabaska. Quebec East was then opened and he was elected for that constituency, which he has continued to represent ever since. In 1878 when the Mackenzie government was defeated Mr. Laurier had won the position of Liberal leader in Quebec, and in the intervening years gradually gained ground until with the disappearance of his great opponent the Hon. J. A. Chapleau from the stage of active politics his ascendancy was complete. On the retirement of the Hon. Edward Blake from the leadership of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons in 1887, Mr. Laurier succeeded him and visited the various provinces in the interests of his party. He made friends rapidly and in a few years established himself firmly as leader. His political model was Gladstone, and his policy on the tariff question was "Free trade, as it is in England." As leader of the Opposition he was supported by able lieutenants, such as Sir Richard Cartwright, David Mills, John Charlton, L. H. Davies, William Mulock, William Paterson and other aggressive and active politicians. The chief questions agitating the country were those arising from the Jesuits' Estates Act, the commercial union movement, the Manitoba school question and the official use of the dual language in the North-West Territories. On these questions public feeling was deeply stirred and Mr. Laurier showed great political skill in his management of them. The process of disintegration of the Conservative party began shortly after the removal by death of the great leader Sir John A. Macdonald, and the sudden death of Sir John D. Thompson brought victory within the reach of the Liberals. In the general election of 1896 the Liberals were returned to power by a large majority and Mr. Laurier was entrusted with the task of forming an administration. He gathered around him an exceptionally strong cabinet, among his colleagues being Sir Oliver Mowat, W. S. Fielding and A. G. Blair, three provincial premiers. As Prime Minister he exercised from the commencement of his régime complete authority over the affairs of the Dominion. The genial, courteous gentleman, the suave politician, the man of "sunny ways," has