

speaks thus is a liberal rationalist. He formulates a doctrine entirely opposed to Catholic doctrine: a Catholic is not held to be Catholic in his public life...

"In good conscience I believe myself compelled to give you this warning: Under the circumstances, a Catholic would not be capable, under penalty of sinning in a grave matter, of voting for a party leader who has so publicly formulated such an error...The first direction that I have to give to the Catholics of this diocese, for the next elections, is only to give their votes to candidates who engage themselves to vote in favour of a remedial bill accepted by the Bishops...My second direction is to require you to put aside all spirit of party and to judge men and things in the light of Catholic principles and teaching..."

This was stiff stuff to be handed out to faithful parishioners and it was not allayed by the collective mandement of the Bishops, of May 16 1896. "All Catholics shall give their votes only to candidates who will support legislation giving back to the Catholics of Manitoba their school rights...You will be justified neither before your spiritual guides nor before God if you do not keep this obligation".

And then the miracle happened. In the general election of June 23, 1896, the province of Quebec returned 49 supporters of the 'Liberal Rationalist' Laurier and 16 faithful to their bishops' injunctions. This figure decided the election, the numbers of Liberals and Conservatives throughout the rest of the country being just equal.

The campaign of 1896 turned the course of Canadian history. No longer would it be possible for ultramontanes to represent Catholic Liberals as ipso facto traitors to their church. Never again would clericals be able to give the law in political situations. Quebec itself, in its support of Laurier had once and for all, repudiated the political control of the hierarchy. And far more than all that, the personal victory of Laurier - and it was a personal victory - represented the triumph of the principles for which he stood: conciliation, rather than coercion; moderation, rather than extremism; tolerance, rather than bigotry; freedom for all "to speak the thing they will", not the dictation of a few; understanding between the two races, not strife.

All else in Laurier's life-time is really a footnote to this high peak of his career. It is true that he was to have fifteen years of rule, that he fought many fights and met many dangerous issues. Nevertheless, it seems to me that all this is just the embroidery upon the cloth begun in 1877 and fully woven in 1896. It was lucky for Canada that she was to have this man spared, to implement the promise of his victory -- and she was far more a nation when he died than when he triumphed -- but as far as the man himself is concerned, his full self, his mission, all this was complete on the morrow of the election.

Laurier's gift to us, it seems to me, was this mission of freedom and tolerance, without which, let me repeat, our national community could not exist. I can think of no greater heritage - if we Canadians of both languages are capable of measuring up to it.

A logical extension of Laurier's work for internal unity took him into the external field. In American relations he will be remembered mainly in connection with the Alaska Boundary dispute. It was probably impossible at the time to get any more favourable settlement of the boundary than we obtained but had Laurier not consented to a "Judicial Tribunal", a little more might possibly have been gained later on. He has been criticized for accepting the arrangement and some criticism seems justifiable. However, the indignation resulting from the settlement directed against both Great Britain and the United States was a powerful factor in increasing our Canadian national consciousness.

During his term of office, Laurier encountered the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, the Boer War, Joseph Chamberlain, the Imperial Conferences, the