

opportunity that Canadian history has afforded to redeem the pledges of tariff reform and reduction of customs duties, and to reduce the nation's indebtedness.

Coming into power after eighteen years of Opposition, with a Cabinet composed of men most of whom had never before held office in a Federal Government, Sir Wilfrid Laurier was in a singularly happy position for effecting such legislative and administrative reforms as he and his colleagues desired to establish. The Ministers of Finance and Customs, the heads of the large spending departments of Railways and Public Works, the Minister of the Interior, with the great west under his charge, the Minister of Militia, the Postmaster-General, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries and the Minister of Agriculture, were all new to official life at Ottawa. They had all demanded reforms and pointed out the various extravagances and other evils in the system of Government. Hampered by no traditions, restricted by no precedents, they were free to deal with any evils and weaknesses that might have been developed in a long period of administration by one party, and were in a position to introduce such reform in law and custom as they deemed good.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had the greatest chance since Confederation of simplifying the machinery of Government, reducing its cost, and giving effect to the numerous pledges which he and his comrades had made during the previous years, and particularly those set forth in that somewhat obsolete document the Ottawa Liberal Convention platform. The following pages cover only in a small part the career of the Government, but they will assist to a fair understanding of the way in which the Ministers have not made use of these opportunities.

It
of Gov
issue h
Premie
or free
name t
someti
someti
but alv
have fo
forget
the ack
adopted
moved
tion:

"
now, u
service.

Th
accused

"
"
"
"
"

As
this ob
"that th
efficient
lightly
to prom

Pr
parties

"
to the r
changes
the trou

He