

# The Canadian Courier

A National Weekly

NEWS CO. EDITION

Subscription: \$2.50 a Year.

Vol. I

Toronto, April 27th, 1907

No. 22

## Topics of the Day

**S**IR WILFRID LAURIER has for a few weeks doffed the garments of the political leader and now stands in the Council of the Empire as Canada's leading citizen. For a few weeks the people need not remember whether he is Conservative or Liberal and may watch his actions as those of her chief representative.

It was quite proper, and in this all classes will agree, that he should state to a British audience "I have given Canada the best of my heart and the best of my soul, and I intend to do so so long as God gives me health and strength." Whatever Sir Wilfrid has been, whatever he may have done, he has been loyal to what he deemed to be his country's best interests. Sir John Macdonald, Hon. Alexander MacKenzie, Sir John Thompson, Sir J. J. C. Abbott, Sir MacKenzie Bowell and Sir Charles Tupper were British in descent and speech. Of this list of Canadian Premiers, Macdonald and MacKenzie were born in Scotland, Bowell was born in England, Abbott was the son of an Anglican clergyman and was born in Quebec, Thompson and Tupper were born in Nova Scotia. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is the only French-Canadian Premier since Confederation. He is the only French-Canadian to fill that office since Sir George Etienne Cartier tendered his resignation on May 21st 1862.

There never was a Canadian more loyal to British institutions in Canada than Sir George Cartier. He was mainly responsible for ranging the Roman Catholic Church on the side of Confederation. Even after Confederation, in the Legislature of the Province of Quebec, he was looked upon as a leader of the British section.

Sir Wilfrid has combined within himself the representation of both races in even a greater degree than did Cartier. In the end, the people of Lower Canada withdrew their support from Cartier and he was forced from his high estate as leader in the then Canadian parliament. It is questionable if this will be Sir Wilfrid's fate. He has retained the undivided affections of his own people, while gaining a great measure of respect among the people of British descent. Neither his diverging attitude on the question of separate schools, his reluctant but full support of the South African contingents nor his leadership in the drawing together of the Empire, has caused him loss of support in either section of the Canadian public.

The secret of it all is, perhaps, that Sir Wilfrid, like his predecessors in the highest office in the gift of the people, has stood first and last for Canada. If on one occasion he faltered and seemed to lean toward the United States, he has amply atoned for that weak moment. In his speech to the Nineteen Hundred Club in London, he declared with great emphasis that it was Canada's desire and intention to make trade flow, not north and south, but east and west between Britain and Canada. He asserted with equal emphasis that, whether or not Great Britain granted a preference to colonial products, Canada would never seek the markets of the United States. Could even Mr. Chamberlain ask more than that of Canada's spokesman?

The historian, John Charles Dent, in his short biography of Cartier, says that he was wont to describe himself as "an Englishman speaking French." He also states that on St. George's Day he would wear the flower of England on his breast, because it was the festival of his Patron Saint. Sir Wilfrid might almost do the same this week.

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Among Canada's unique characters, Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P., holds a leading place. He is the eldest son of a man who has been described as "the father of Protection" and was born to active journalism. Since he established the Toronto "World" in 1880 as an independent Conservative journal, he has played a leading part in politics. He has supported protection, advocated preferential trade, and has stood out as champion of economical and progressive government. His leadership, however, is of a peculiar type. He prefers to fight alone. He never ranges himself beside any particular party or section in a combat. He prefers to scout in advance. When the fighting line comes up to him, he runs ahead and takes up a more advanced position. The more dangerous and more extreme that position is the better he seems to like it.

Mr. Maclean's second political contest was in East York against the Hon. Alexander MacKenzie in 1891 and he was defeated. When the ex-Premier died in the following year, he was the successful candidate and has ever since represented that constituency. It is said that he was willing to become leader of the Conservative party when Sir Charles Tupper retired and again when Mr. Borden was defeated in Halifax, but the party did not recognise in him the qualities of permanent leadership. His policy of "the lone hand" is not likely to commend itself to any political organisation.

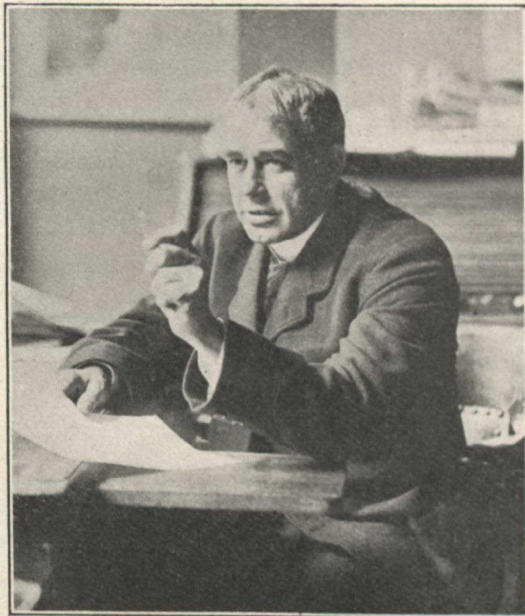
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Premier McBride of British Columbia sailed from St. John on the 19th for London. He will ask the British Government to make British Columbia's increased subsidy one million instead of one hundred thousand dollars.

There would be much fun for the observer if the Colonial Secretary, after hearing what Mr. McBride has to say, should call in Sir Wilfrid Laurier and ask him why he did not treat Mr. McBride's province more fairly. He would probably answer in his most frigid tones that if Mr. McBride was not satisfied with his allotment he should appeal to the Parliament and People of Canada who were the real owners of the Dominion Treasury.

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Sympathy for the newly arrived immigrant should be the watchword of all fair-minded and intelligent citizens. In Toronto they have founded a Welcome League to the expense of which public-spirited citizens are contributing. This is an idea which might be followed in all the larger Canadian cities and towns to which immigrants are coming in considerable numbers. Halifax, St. John, Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina and Edmonton especially could afford to have institutions of this kind. The new citizen does not need money; he needs sympathy and advice. A cheery, well-informed, hustling secretary of a Welcome League could smooth many a pathway and cheer many a sad and lonely heart.



Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P.