

Laurierism

and the Empire

The heavy responsibility for Canada's unreadiness to aid Great Britain on the sea rests upon one man. That responsibility cannot be obliterated by tardy professions of patriotism at a time when professions count for little and preparedness counts for much. The Laurier, who, when the enemy stands knocking at the gate, runs to cover under a declaration of devotion to the Motherland, is the Laurier, who, during the whole of his long public career, preached and practiced inaction, neutrality, desertion; who, time after time, refused the aid which the Canadian people stood ready to give, who held the Dominion back from any form of participation in naval defence, who held out to the enemies of England the promise that Canadian ships would never be found in the Empire's fleet.

In the first sea fight of the war the dreadnought battleship of the little Dominion of New Zealand was found on the firing line, splendidly aiding in the Empire's defence.

No ship from Canada was there. Why?

Remember that the killing of the Borden Naval Aid Bill by Laurier was no isolated act, but the shameful climax of a long series of anti-British and anti-Imperial deeds and declarations extending over a period of nearly fifty years.

During all that period the Laurier influence was ever found on the side of separation and against co-operation by the British dominions in either commerce or defence. At times he yielded to the overwhelming force of public sentiment, but he yielded unwillingly, grudgingly, protesting. He will base his defence today upon these few instances of compliance with a force that he could not stay.