

The Liberal Chieftain is Seventy-Three Years Young

The Greatest of Canadians Celebrates Another Birthday in Harness—With Health And Vigor Unimpaired Sir Wilfrid Laurier Receives the World's Congratulations—A Sketch of His Personality and Life Work.

Ottawa, Nov. 20—Seventy-three years ago today at St. Lin, a Quebec hamlet nestling in the shelter of the Laurentians, there was born to Carolus Laurier and his wife, Marcelle Martineau, a son, Wilfrid Laurier. Probably there is no one now living in the village who remembers the event. Probably no one at the time ever imagined that across the span of three score and ten years the steadily growing personality and influence of the obscure land surveyor's son would dominate Canadian political development as no other personality has ever done in the life of the dominion.

Today, Sir Wilfrid Laurier stands recognized throughout the world as the greatest of all Canadians, as the most conspicuous states in Great Britain. For nearly half a century he has stood unsullied and unshamed in the fiercest light of party politics, a pride to all Canadians. After forty years continuous membership in the House of Commons, after twenty-six years as leader of the Liberal party, over fifteen of which were spent as prime minister of his country, he is still erect of bearing, there is still the wonted fire in his words, still the same keen, virile and undisputed leadership. He stands today the most dominant personality, as well as the most picturesque and most influential figure in the dominion. Today, from all parts of Canada, from Great Britain, from all the overseas dominions from scores of his devoted personal

irresistibly appealing alike to both the great races in Canada, English and French, Catholic and Protestant. For seven years he attended L'Assomption College, where at the age of sixteen he was recognized as the leader of his class with a brilliant career predicted for him. In 1860 he began the study of law as a student at McGill. Four years afterwards he was graduated with honors, and gave the valedictory of his class. In that valedictory—his first recorded public utterance—he gave expression to the essential principles which have animated his whole public career.

"The work of the maker and of the student of law," he said, "is to cause justice to reign."

Immediately after graduation, the young lawyer began to take an active interest in public questions, joining a group of progressive young French-Canadians, assisting in the editing of a weekly paper and taking part in debates on public questions of the moment. The young barrister went to Arthabaskaville to practise his profession. In 1868 he married Miss Zoe Lafontaine of Montreal, in whom he found, during all the succeeding years, a true and loyal helpmate. Their married life, though unblest with children, has been an ideally happy one. In 1871 he was elected to the Quebec legislative assembly for Drummond and Arthabaska by a majority of over one thousand. At Quebec he made an immediate impression. Three years later came

"Ministry of all the talents."

THE LAURIER ADMINISTRATION.

With that government was inaugurated a new era of Canadian prosperity and development. Of the fifteen years of the Laurier administration little need be said here. A new Canada came into being. National trade and prosperity grew steadily as never before. Immigration increased tenfold. National revenues outweighed national expenditures and the per capita debt went steadily down. National unity and harmony among the various elements of the Canadian population found expression in a new national pride and a new national spirit. The British preference granted first in 1897 and increased in 1900, created and developed a new imperial sentiment based on mutual advantage and mutual good-will. The construction of the National Transcontinental Railway, built practically out of Liberal surpluses, rolled back the map of Canada four hundred miles. And with the growth of the national self-consciousness and pride, there was a corresponding growth of imperial patriotism, based on local autonomy with common co-operation common needs and common aspirations for the security, welfare and unity of the whole empire. As the London Times expresses it:

"Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the French Roman Catholic premier of a self-governing federation, in which British Protestants are in the majority, has expressed more faithfully and more truly than any statesman who has spoken yet, the temper of the new imperial patriotism fostered into self-consciousness by the South African War."

These are but a few of the outstanding achievements of the Laurier administration. Behind every influence and result of that administration was the controlling and guiding hand of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. None will accord more willing assent to that statement than his late cabinet colleagues and his followers in parliament who know best the difficulties he had to surmount, the divergent influences he had to reconcile, the tactful generalship he had to exercise and the firm and far-sighted leadership he had always to exert.

VINDICATION AFTER DEFEAT.

His government was defeated on September 21st, 1911, on an issue of Sir Wilfrid's own choosing—an issue to which Liberals and Conservatives were alike pledged when he came into power and an issue firm-based on the fundamentals of Liberal policy and on democratic principles of economic justice and equal freedom to all classes of the community in matters of trade as in matters of education, religion and responsible government. Of the "unholy alliance" of the sectional and credal misrepresentations exploited against him, of the organized influence of wealth and the Big Interests which combined to bring about that defeat, and of the moral of the political and economic conditions of the country during the past three years, the people of Canada are now fairly well sized. Vindication of the character and aims and record of a statesman never followed a defeat more quickly.

IN OFFICE OR OUT.

THE GREATEST CANADIAN.

It is no vain boast of Liberals to say that Sir Wilfrid Laurier never stood higher in the estimation of his country and never possessed the confidence of all to a greater extent than he does today. The quivers of party antagonism have emptied all their shafts against him. Time has but proven the high sincerity of his purpose, the consistency of his political principles, the integrity of his public and private life, the far-sighted vision of his statesmanship, the democracy of his Liberalism, the courage and faith of his Canadianism and the sanity of his imperialism. In office or out of it, he is still "the greatest Canadian," increasingly beloved of his political friends and increasingly respected by his opponents.

THE ELIXIR OF YOUTH.

At seventy-three he is still "the greatest fighter of them all." Forty years of strenuous public life have brought no slackening in the vigor of mind or energy, nor any discouragement as to the ultimate triumph of the principles for which he has stood. There is an elixir of perpetual youth in a good cause and in a good fight. That elixir is in the veins of the "Old Chief," who is today leading his

(Continued on page six.)

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London, Nov. 17.—A Pretoria despatch to Reuters' Telegram Company states that Gen. Christian De Wet, who headed the recent rebellion in the Orange Free State and the western Transvaal, has been wounded in the head.

De Wet's followers are reported much dejected. It is said that they are poorly armed and lack ammunition.

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All citizens are requested to attend a Patriotic Meeting to be held in the Opera House on Wednesday Eve'g, Nov. 18th.

The chair will be taken by His Worship the Mayor at eight o'clock. There will be addresses by Bishop Richardson and others on

The Responsibilities of the Colonies to the Empire

in the present great crisis. The Fredericton Brass Band will be in attendance.

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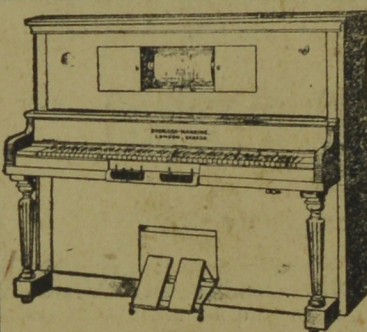
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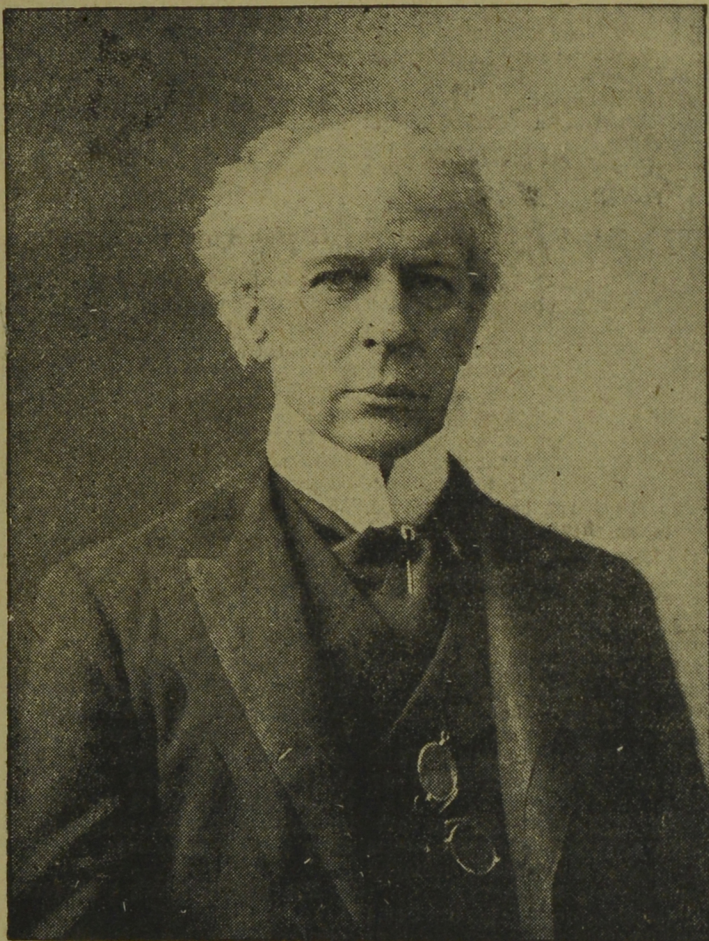
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SIR WILFRID LAURIER

friends, from his political supporters and from his political opponents, came a flood of congratulatory messages, coupled with the prayer that he may long be spared to the public service of the country and empire. And with health and strength, still apparently unimpaired with the passage of the years, with the eye undimmed, with the hand still steady, with courage, faith and optimism undiminished, there is every indication that this hope will be realized. As long as his strength remains, Sir Wilfrid will carry the burden of leadership which his party has imposed upon him, both in victory and defeat.

"Whether it be twenty years or ten or five," he said, to his followers in the Commons last May, "whatever may be the length of my time in the hands of God; but so long as God spares me, I shall continue to give my best, however poor that may be, to the service of those principles which we all hold so dear."

THE BOY AND THE YOUNG MAN.

Sir Wilfrid's mother died when he was but six years old. His father sent the young lad to be educated at a school in a neighboring Scotch settlement, where he boarded for a time with Store-Keeper Murray, a good Scotch Presbyterian. There the coming premier of Canada first learned the English language and religious tolerance, two endowments which have helped to give to the man of French descent and Roman Catholic faith, the grace and facility of expression and the breadth of vision

promotion to the federal arena. He was elected to the Commons in 1874, and seconded the address in reply to the speech from the throne at the opening of the new parliament. The Commons of that day at once recognized that a new star had arisen on the horizon. In October, 1877, he was called to the government in the Mackenzie administration, and was sworn in as minister of inland revenue. Thus for thirty-seven years Sir Wilfrid has been a member of the King's Privy Council. In 1878 he was returned to the Commons for Quebec East and since then he has continuously represented that riding in the House.

LIBERAL LEADER FOR 37 YEARS.

In 1887, sixteen years after entering parliament, he was chosen leader of the Liberal party when Hon. Edward Blake laid down the mantle and recommended the brilliant young lieutenant from Quebec as his successor. The new leader took up the burden with some misgivings on the part of many Liberals as to the wisdom of choosing a party leader from the Province of Quebec. Those misgivings were speedily allayed. The wisdom of the choice was vindicated from the first and for the ensuing twenty-seven years it has been unquestioned. As leader of the party he issued the call for the Dominion Liberal Convention which met at Ottawa in 1893 and laid down the fundamental principles of Liberal policy on which the Liberal victory of June 23rd, 1896, was won. On July 13th, 1896, Premier Laurier formed the