

separate school system from its own local needs and traditions. By 1890, however, Protestant immigration had reduced the Roman Catholic population to a relatively small minority and the Manitoba government felt justified in establishing a "non-denominational" school system; but the Catholics felt it was a Protestant system in disguise. The Catholics had a good case against the new system on legal and constitutional grounds and the case of *Barrett vs. Winnipeg* went to court. The Supreme Court of Canada in 1892 accepted the Catholic contention, but that decision was thrown out by the Privy Council in London. The political remedies that were applied, as by the British North America Act they could be, brought down the Conservative government of Sir Mackenzie Bowell (1823-1917). Wilfrid Laurier (1841-1919), the Liberal leader, promised to negotiate the question with the Liberal government of Manitoba and, despite a good deal of opposition from the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church, he won the election of 1896 defeating the Conservatives under the leadership of Prime Minister Sir Charles Tupper.

2.4 The 20th century

The Liberal government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier lasted for 15 years. It is customary to say that his régime inaugurated the real beginning of Canada's considerable growth in the 20th century, but the foundation for this growth had already been laid. Canada's industrial revolution had started the trend to the cities although even in 1900 70% of Canadians still lived in communities with a population of less than 500. Telephones came into general use in the 1880s and electric light began to be used about the same time. Typewriters were frequent in offices by the end of the 1890s. Even horseless carriages had begun to appear, although the bicycle was the current rage of the 1890s. Not all of these changes were considered good, however useful they may have been. There were complaints of the ghastly cribbing of wires and poles that had already substantially disfigured the neat-looking streets of the 1860s.

The Laurier years are also celebrated for the considerable immigration into the Canadian west. Factories and the transportation system to sustain such growth were already established, and two more transcontinental railways were added to Canada in those optimistic years before 1914. Canada's population in the 1901 Census was 5.4 million; ten years later it was 7.2 million with the growth heaviest in the west. Canada's wheat production was 56 million bushels in 1901; it leaped to 231 million in 1912.

Alberta and Saskatchewan were created as separate provinces in 1905. Ontario and Manitoba attained their present boundaries in 1912 and Quebec was extended northward to include mainland Ungava.

Laurier's Liberal government fell in 1911, due partly to a vigorous Quebec reaction against Laurier's new Canadian Navy. Even more important was a strong Canadian nationalist reaction to the proposed reciprocity treaty with the United States. This nationalism was taken full advantage of by the Conservatives under Robert Borden (1854-1937), who carried the election with 134 Conservatives to 87 Liberals. The Borden government drew much of its support from Ontario and some from Manitoba. The Maritime Provinces, Quebec and the rest of the western provinces returned a majority of Liberal members supporting Laurier.

The Conservative government's basic strength lay in its persuasive mixture of Imperial glory and Canadian nationalism. At that time it was not easy to separate them, as Laurier had found out on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and during the Boer War, 1899-1902. A Canada independent of Britain was not easy to imagine; but while the kind of truculence the United States exhibited during the Alaskan boundary arbitration of 1903 seemed to recommend continued reliance on the British, the way in which Britain had conceded so many points to the Americans showed the merits of Canadian independence. Laurier was much influenced by the young generation of Canadian nationalists from Quebec, led by Henri Bourassa (1868-1952), grandson of Papineau, whose desire to be free of British entanglement was to reappear as English Canadian nationalism 50 years later. Conservatives were convinced that the Liberals, by backing away from Imperial commitments as Laurier had, were inviting disaster. Cartoons in Conservative papers in the 1911 campaign showed Conservative attitudes: the American tiger getting ready to gobble up Canada the moment it stepped out from British protection.

The naval issue also revolved around these two opposing points of view. Laurier sponsored, and Parliament passed, an Act in 1910 establishing the structure for a Canadian Navy. Conservative naval policy, on the other hand, was Imperial in character. It envisaged a