



Genial and Alert, at 90, After a Corner-stone Laying in London.



At 92, Receiving Premier Borden at Paddington Station, July 4, 1912.

should occupy a higher post than the Prime Minister, and only one degree lower than that of Governor-General, which he was urged to consider taking, but refused it. When he went from Labrador to the Northwest, he had no idea of such development. He went to become a trader with the Hudson Bay Co.

Because he traded profitably and had a remarkable skill in managing Indians by his physical feats of endurance and great strength of character, he made his way up in the service of the company, which to him was the whole practical genius of civilization. No Jesuit ever slaved harder for his order. Donald A. Smith, tireless, absolutely independent of all except "H. B. C.," his motto, was known wherever "Pro pelle cutem" was the law. He was feared and loved, because he was the uncompromising embodiment of the benevolent despotism of the great company. He had no ambitions bigger than the company which had planted him down in the wilderness to work out his own salvation. Wherever he handled beaver skins, or drove dogs or bunked in his H. B. C. four-point blankets, or talked Cree like a native, or governed his traders and factors from post to post, he subordinated Donald A. Smith to the great despot system that reached from the easternmost peak of Labrador to the nor-westerly edge of Herschell Island at the mouth of the Mackenzie. Trader, chief trader, factor, chief factor—finally Governor with offices at Montreal, he became the head of an empire within an empire, of a territory vaster than civilized Canada. In his own right as head of this empire he was effectively if not officially the equal of any governor of Canada. He had more real power than the representative of royalty in this country. But up till 1867 the power of Donald A. Smith, absolute and personal as it was in Rupert's Land, was recognized by the Government of such Canada as there was before Confederation, only because he was the uncompromising representative of a great benevolent trading and feudal system.

THE end of the great feudalism was coming. Donald A. Smith must have seen it. Canada was outgrowing the feudal stage. The needs of a consolidated chain of provinces and territories as yet unlinked by a railway were greater than the system of Rupert's Land.

The British North America Act provided for the union of all the provinces and the purchase of Rupert's Land from the company of which Donald A. Smith was the head. It brought to a close his active life as the uncrowned king of Rupert's Land, when no one as yet dreamed what its rugged, dominating genius would yet achieve as a Canadian.

One photograph at the head of this article shows Donald A. Smith just about as he was when Confederation took away his governorship of Rupert's Land. But the Canadian Government found a need for this unconquerable genius almost the moment he was removed from his post. Donald A. Smith had come to the end of one great epoch in his career, when the newspaper editors knew as much about him as they did about Santa Claus or the great god Thor. He began another career, almost radically different; a career much more spectacular, though far less mysterious, than his service in the great feudal system. The domain of which he had been the over-lord had its troubles assimilating with the new Dominion of Canada. The half-breeds, never the absolute fiefs of the company, but part freeholders and part hunters, were disturbed in their land-holdings. Louis Riel, the agitator, was



Getting Into His Hansom at the High Commissioner's Offices to Drive to Buckingham Palace.

among them. It was necessary to find a strong man who knew. Donald A. Smith was the man. In 1869 he was made Dominion Commissioner to inquire into the causes and conditions of the first half-breed Rebellion, which broke out in 1870. Here is the Commissioner's first letter:

Hudson's Bay Company's Office,
Montreal, 24th Nov., 1869.
The Honourable the Secretary of
State for Canada.

Sir,—I have to-day received, from the Hudson's Bay House, London, an extract of a letter from Governor Mactavish, dated Fort Garry, 12th October, and have now the honour of transmitting it to you. In doing so, I am directed by the Governor and committee to state that the company are anxious to afford all the assistance in their power in inducing the Red River people to allow the surveys to be proceeded with, and to use their influence in any other manner, with the view of assisting the authorities of Red River to make their arrangements for the government of the country.

And in view of the more serious aspect which affairs at Red River have recently assumed, I beg further, on behalf of the company, to offer the assurance that their Governor, factors and officers generally, will use their influence and best efforts to restore and maintain order throughout the territory.

I have, etc., etc.,

DONALD A. SMITH.

During the Rebellion Donald A. Smith was a prisoner of Riel for two months. When it was over he made his first entry into politics, member for

Winnipeg and St. John in the First Manitoba Legislature. In 1876 he entered the House of Commons at Ottawa. He remained in Parliament until the end of the Conservative administration, member for West Montreal.

Meanwhile the third epoch in his life was magnificently enacted—his dramatic connection with the building of the C. P. R., associated with his cousin, George Stephen. He was then a wealthy man; not by fur trading or politics, but by a grand, spectacular speculation in the St. Paul and Pacific, which, with James J. Hill, George Stephen and R. B. Angus, he got for a song and left with \$8,000,000 to the good. That fortune, associated with George Stephen's own clean-up from the St. Paul and Pacific, was pledged by the syndicate which finally built the C. P. R. The last spike was driven at Craigellachie, in 1885, by Donald A. Smith, then 65 years of age.

FROM the end of the C.P.R. construction until 1896 Sir Donald Smith remained in Parliament. In 1896 he was made High Commissioner for Canada, succeeding Sir Charles Tupper, who returned to oppose Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the elections of 1896.

In 1897, at the Diamond Jubilee, he was created Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal. He had already been ten years president of the Bank of Montreal through his connection with the building of the C. P. R. In 1905, at the age of 85, he became honorary president. He was now not the accumulator of fortunes and of political honours, but the munificent spender of monies for the good of the public. He was made Chancellor of McGill University and the University of Aberdeen. He was no scholar, though he had mastered the art of the King's English in public speaking, and was able to attend to his opponents on the floor of the House as well as ever he did dogs and Indians in Rupert's Land. He was a multi-millionaire who had spent a large fortune in the cause of education, a million of it for McGill in his own home city. His capacity of making money after he got well swung away to it must have astounded the directors of the Hudson Bay Company. His munificence in spending it was equally remarkable. His six or seven palatial homes might well have been the envy of kings. His patriotic venture in sending at his own expense the Strathcona Horse to the Boer War, in 1900, was a splendid coup possible only to a patriot of big ideas, much money and some imagination. His High Commissionership in London was part of the great spectacle of Empire, for he knew the Nascoptes and the Crees and the Lochieux even better than he knew the etiquette of the House of Lords, of which he was a most picturesque and magnificent member. His regime in that office was largely personal. He had no particular system. He was—Strathcona. Eighty and over, ninety and more, going and coming in his hansom from office to palace and the House of Lords; to clubs and banquets and corner-stone-layings; receiving lords and ladies and entertaining over-seas representatives in Grosvenor Square; every little while crossing the Atlantic to Canada, no more afraid of sea-sickness than ever he had been of a trail—he was always the tremendous, unconquerable Donald A. Smith, who never knew how to let go. He died almost at his desk. A few months ago he was in Canada with Lord Haldane. He probably expected to come again.

And this country will never have another such a Canadian as Donald A. Smith, because there is now no longer any need for that kind of man.