

THE LATE HON. GEORGE BROWN.

It is with unfeigned regret that we record the death of the Hon. George Brown after several weeks of lingering suffering. The outrage which led to his death lends a tragic interest to the melancholy event. It is a sad reflection that he was brought to his end by the pistol of a miserable fellow to whom he had given no cause of offence.

We can scarcely realize at a glance how great a void in Canadian politics the death of Mr. Brown creates, a void which probably no other man can exactly fill. Apart from the *Globe* newspaper and the great influence which the deceased senator wielded through its columns, hundreds to-day little know the important part he has played in the political history of Canada for a generation past. Few can fully estimate the state of things which prevailed when the *Globe* was first started, or the need of such a vigorous and outspoken assailant of vested rights, as Mr. Brown proved himself to be. He was for many years the leader of the Reform party in Upper Canada, and he took part in every great political event during his active and busy life, and he may in some sort be regarded as the promoter and framer of the present system of Confederation under which we live. He was something of a statesman and his name will stand associated with many important public measures and changes in the history of Canada. He was a vigorous political writer and a powerful public speaker, and his prominence in the politics of Canada early pointed to him as a candidate for Parliamentary honours, and after an unsuccessful attempt he was returned as member for Kent and Lambton in 1851, from which date to the day on which he received the wound which has proved fatal, he was an active politician, and his history becomes a portion of the history of Canada.

Although a sort of Warwick, as a maker and un-maker of ministries, he was himself not very successful in office. In 1858 he was called upon by Sir Edmund Head to form a ministry, which Mr. Brown undertook in conjunction with Hon. (now Sir) A. A. Dorion, the affair was very short-lived and Mr. Brown resigned, checkmated by what may be called the obstinacy of the Governor, but it cannot be questioned that Mr. Brown's course through the trial was strictly honourable and constitutional. Subsequently in 1864 he joined the Ministry of the day, but resigned in consequence of a disagreement with his colleagues on the question of a Reciprocity Treaty with the United States.

Mr. Brown had no prestige to start with, no hold upon the country to which he came almost a stranger; in short, no adventitious advantages whatever. A Scotchman by birth and training, he became a patriotic, loyal Canadian. He had a firm faith in the future of the country, and toiled hard to promote its best interests. He looked upon annexationism with contempt. He had no untimely independence bearings, and was not to be caught by the advocacy of a Zollverein or Commercial Union. He was in fact a thoroughly robust Canadian of wholesome sentiment in regard to his country. When his mind was not warped by party prejudices, he took broad and comprehensive views of public matters generally, being for the most part free from whims and hobbies.

Whether in or out of Parliament Mr. Brown was always active and his influence was felt everywhere. He was exceptionally gifted with a sound mind and body, and an indomitable will and perseverance. When he put his hand to the plough his heart never failed him nor did he look back. He was from first to last the very embodiment of conviction and duty. Clear-headed, clear-sighted and resolute, he was a giant among his fellows. He was an unsparing enemy to what he deemed to be intolerance and wrong, and the vigilant exponent and champion of what he deemed to be right.

He had certainly strong prejudices but that, if a fault at all, was the fault of a sterling character. He was decidedly aggressive in disposition and true to his convictions. This in public made him at times unpopular, but he outlived all that, and now that he is removed, no more sincere mourners over his sad fate can be found than amongst the ranks of old-time antagonists. Canada can ill afford to lose such a man; more faithful servant she never had. He served his country with great singleness of purpose, and success. He has left a mark perhaps more distinctly than any public man during the past thirty years, and Canadians of all nationalities may well be proud of him. The political party with whom he acted for so many years will especially miss his counsel and guidance, and his loss happening so soon after the death of his old friend and colleague, Mr. Holton, is well-nigh irreparable.

Outside of his public and newspaper life, Mr. Brown was a sociable and pleasant man. Agriculture was the amusement of his few leisure hours, and his Bow Park farm was especially famous for its cattle; in everything which he undertook, he was earnest and thorough, and in this branch he also served the country well, taking the utmost interest in every effort to improve and advance its agricultural status.

Whatever Senator Brown's failings, whatever his mistakes, he will for ever occupy an honoured place in the annals of Canada, as a man who, in the main, deserved well of his country by strenuous and often successful labour in her behalf, for his life has been a long struggle in the interest of honest government, of popular freedom and Colonial development.

GOVERNMENT TRADE LEGISLATION AND ITS EFFECTS.

Three legislative measures distinguish the present Government, and demonstrate it the most oblivious to its proper functions which this Dominion has ever enjoyed. These three acts are, the attempt to produce prosperity by decreasing liberty of action, liberty of choice of commodities, freedom of trade; the effort to produce solvency by enacting insolvency a legal impossibility; and last, but by no means least, the attempt to force a loan by weakening its own claims to credit.

It was deemed safe to send forth the first two in the naked simplicity of their intrinsic ugliness, without even a cloak to cover them, because they appeal so directly to the blind selfishness of the individual; but the third it is attempted to render "sweeter than honey" to that same selfishness by deft allusions to the safety secured to the currency by an indirect government guarantee, which, it is insinuated, is "better than gold." The one query which demands answer is: if so, why not issue gold and let Government retain in its vaults that precious paper currency of whose extraordinary value and usefulness its party organs are so fully convinced?

We seem approaching rapidly that acme of civilization,—a "paternal government." By the "N. P." it says what and where we shall buy. Native manufactured goods, it says, are the best for us. Poor, dear little children, we don't know ourselves what is good for us; but our papa government does, and if we don't do as he says we shall be punished with a fine varying from 20 to 45 per cent. according to the nature and enormity of the offence. The best of the joke is that the more we transgress this law the more money our paternal government obtains wherewith to make ducks and drakes on Pacific Railway nonsense. It all goes into the paternal pocket, and thus emerges "all for our good." And, cruelest joke of all, when we have thus paid away all our pocket money either on fines for buying things we do want, or in the purchase of articles we have little use for, the second paternal law meets us with a sarcastic smile and forbids—forbids us absolutely—to become insolvent, says we must pay our debts. We must make bricks without straw. Defrauded (it is not too strong a word) of our just and natural liberty to make money in whatever honest way we can without restriction, we are yet supposed by a legal fiction to be fully able to pay our debts.

There is a very real kind of suffering experienced by honest traders at present. The agony of anxiety is almost greater than they can bear. Suppose an honest trader has fully one hundred cents on the dollar, but not much more, that he finds trade dull, especially if he must sell for cash, and his indebtedness to those who supply him is getting somewhat overdue. Under the present law the creditor who first "pushes" him, sues and gets judgment, can seize all his assets, sell them at the greatest possible disadvantage, and still get clear himself, but nearly all his other creditors will thus be left out in the cold. The more honest the trader is the more this knowledge tortures him; and, if pressed, ten chances to one he is easily convinced by the threatening creditor that it is wisest and best in the interests of all to give said creditor a chattel mortgage upon his stock for the amount of his claim and pay him off gradually. The existence of such chattel mortgages soon becomes known to the wholesale trade generally, who have their regular methods of obtaining such information, and it kills his credit everywhere. He cannot do what he promised and hoped to perform. The chattel-mortgage is foreclosed; the stock sold at a frightful sacrifice. He is ruined; others lose their whole amount, and still the trader is harassed with a burden of debt from which there is no escape, though he give up all but the clothing he wears. His sense of justice is outraged. Instead of sharing his assets equally with all to the last dollar he possesses, as he could do under the Insolvent Act, he has been the means of defrauding his more considerate creditors and best friends for the benefit of his most inconsiderate and least forbearing creditor. Is it any wonder that where trade is not free, the market both for buying and selling naturally so very limited, and the alternative of failure so harsh, unjust and wholly destructive, that there should be an exodus of those who are traders by profession and training. "Let them go," say some, "they are not producers of great value." Are they not? The profit on every article a trader buys or sells, if it be an article of use to the community, is a clear product, an absolute gain in wealth to the land he lives in. Throw open the commodities and the markets of the world to the trader and he becomes one, at least, of the most useful men a nation can have, because he disposes of its products and brings in others in exchange. If he can do this on foreign credit and foreign capital, greatly accreting the power of his own, he performs a very great service to any country whose capital is still slight, and he will always use native capital and native credit if it can be obtained at equal or less cost than foreign, while the more cheaply the capital which he uses as his tool can be had, the greater the gain, the more effective the service he can perform. As a young country we can ill afford to lose our traders or our trade.

It would not be difficult to demonstrate that the three Acts named, viz. the "N. P." the abrogation of the Insolvent Act, and the currency inflation scheme, are steps in the downward path which succeed each other, as end, cause, and effect. The N. P. is an attempt to shut out foreign capital and