

PREFACE

BY common consent Sir John Alexander Macdonald has been assigned the foremost place among the statesmen whom the public life of Canada has hitherto produced. Popular opinion on this point has been ratified by the stricter and measured judgment of the ablest men among his Canadian contemporaries with whom he was brought into close personal and official contact. It was equally ratified, even during his lifetime, by opinion in Britain, where those who best knew his work recognized in him one of the foremost statesmen of the empire. At his death the creation of a peerage for his widow put a special stamp of national recognition upon the singular services which he had rendered to Canada and the nation. A memorial tablet in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral—his statue adorning the squares of most of the larger Canadian cities—indicate the general desire to perpetuate his memory.

If special honour is due to those who by wise constructive statesmanship lay broad and deep the foundations of a great state, then to such honour Sir John Macdonald is fairly entitled.

No public man has ever in Canada won in an equal degree the sustained admiration of his fellow-citizens, and at the same time their affection, as

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