

# Ottawa's Social Leaders

By EMILY P. WEAVER



Mrs. J. D. HAZEN  
Wife of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries



Mrs. GEO. E. FOSTER  
Wife of the Minister of Trade and Commerce



Mrs. T. W. CROTHERS  
Wife of the Minister of Labor



Mrs. BRUNO NANTEL  
Wife of the Minister of Inland Revenue

In Ottawa the queens of society reign not, as in some cities, by virtue of the possession of great wealth, but by right of political leadership of their husbands or fathers, and perhaps this acts to some extent as a check upon the inclination (so generally prevalent) toward display in dress, household management and the exercise of hospitality. If ambitious, either for herself or for her husband, the Ottawa woman has other outlets for her energy than mere efforts to outshine her neighbors in the gorgeousness of her apparel or the splendor of her entertainments; and behind the gaieties which keep society at the capital in a whirl for the first few months of each year there is often much of a serious purpose. It is the nature of women, even in this age when in unprecedented numbers they are engaging in independent enterprises, to be intensely interested in the interests of those dear to them, and in political circles the women most averse to entering what they regard as the "province of man" cannot hold entirely aloof from the keen and exciting and unceasing context of politics. It is impossible that they should not take sides, but, if it is done tactfully and without bitterness, even an opponent likes, I believe, to see a wife standing staunchly by her husband, unceasingly caring for the interests he has at heart, and helping him, in ways old or new, as a woman can. Whatever idea one may hold on the question of "woman's sphere" in general, one is bound from the nature of the case to take what may be called an old-fashioned view of the leading women at Ottawa. To the outside world

they are, first and foremost, the wives or daughters of the Honorable Minister of this or that department; and as their parts are largely played within the sanctity of home it is less easy to write of them than it would be of their husbands—public men whose public work is not in the least injured by the at most possible amount of limelight.

One thing is clear, however. In proportion to the importance of the husband's position, that of the wife is usually arduous and difficult. Mr. Willison, in paying a fine and well-deserved tribute to "the good sense, good taste and excellent social tact" of the lady who, throughout his political life, has been the efficient helpmeet of the "Old Chief," Sir Wilfrid Laurier, says: "It

is the fact, however, that the wife of a party leader bears a load only less heavy than that her husband must carry, and can know few of the consolations of the statesman who finds his recompense in useful and honorable public service. Official life means for women an intolerable social strain, and often an intolerable domestic isolation." But, alike in the early days at little Arthabaskaville and throughout the stress of years of responsibility at Ottawa, Lady Laurier has proved herself equal to the demands made upon her. Like many women of her race, she is endowed with the happy gift of gracious and charming manners, joined, in her case at least, to unaffected and simple kindness.

Even a glimpse into the lives led by the government ladies whilst at Ottawa suggests that for part, if not all, of the year they must be very busy women. For instance, take the matter of receptions alone. During the season the wives of the Cabinet Ministers receive on Monday

afternoons; and the number of their callers mounts far into the hundreds. It is not obligatory to return these calls, but I was told that this year they had resolved to do so. When, however, one lady had nine hundred callers and another sixteen hundred (with several reception days still to come) it became manifest that to return in person the visits of all these was impossible. And of course, there are in addition a multiplicity of other social functions, such as dinners and luncheons, at-homes and bridges, to take the time and strength of the social leaders, whether as guests or hostesses.

If there were only time to "taste" it, as the Scotch say of a sermon, I imagine that the ladies of a social turn of mind and those who have a special interest in the study of human nature would rejoice in the variety offered by the political society. Even the fact that they themselves and the members' wives represent all parts of Canada and have had necessarily widely differing experiences must lend zest, one would think, to those smaller social gatherings, when a little real conversation is possible and it is not merely a case of "How do you do?" and "Good-bye."

Many of the ladies belong by birth and education to the two old provinces which were the first to bear the name of

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Mrs. R. L. BORDEN  
Wife of the Prime Minister



Mrs. MARTIN BURRELL  
Wife of the Minister of Agriculture



Mrs. SAM HUGHES  
Wife of the Minister of Militia



Mrs. J. D. REID  
Wife of the Minister of Customs



Miss MONK  
Daughter of the Minister of Public Works



LADY LAURIER  
Wife of the Leader of the Opposition



Mrs. LOUGHEED  
Wife of Hon. Jas. Lougheed