

exemplary perspicuity, which was consistent with rich classical and poetical allusion, apt illustration, and philosophic periods, distinguish their style. To mere verbosity, or inane rhapsody which so many nowadays mistake for fine speaking, he never condescended. And he had the faculty of dealing with facts and figures in an interesting happy manner, which laid the foundation of his reputation as an able debater, and a skilled and practised orator.

The ministry at length fell on the 20th of May, 1862, and in the Sandfield-Macdonald-Sicotte Government which succeeded, Mr. McGee accepted the Presidency of the Council, filling also for a short time, the office of Secretary of State. The man's industry is illustrated by the fact that during this time he published his *History of Ireland*, a work which received much commendation, and which still ranks among the best works of its class. But the Government of which he was a member was of short duration, and in 1863, Sandfield Macdonald finding himself in a minority of five, was forced to reconstruct his cabinet, and Mr. McGee was not invited to become a member of the new or reconstructed Government. Mr. McGee disapproved of the action of his chief, and, it may be actuated to some extent by pique, but impelled probably strongly by an affinity which he had, it seems, felt to exist for some time between him and the then opposition, finally crossed the house, and in 1864 joined the Government of Sir E. P. Taché, as Minister of Agriculture, continuing in that position until the final confederation of Canada, in 1867.

In the portentous discussions which the settlement of the scheme of confederation gave rise to, Mr. McGee played well his part, and his eloquent voice was often heard valiantly promoting the cause of the union. The debates which took place within, as well as without the Legislature during the consideration of those great questions are creditable in the extreme to Canadian oratory, and the views of all parties were presented with exceptional eloquence and force. Perhaps it might have been that the subject was, in itself, one calculated to call forth whatever of force, whatever of ardour, whatever of patriotism, there was in the statesmen of the period. The settlement of the future constitution of a young country of immense potentiality is indeed a theme worthy the most generous oratorical gifts; and the patriots of that day created a body of oratory of which their descendants can be proud.

Amidst the giants of that time—for there were giants then, and I am afraid our public life to-day does not present the same galaxy of intellect and culture that those old anti-confederation days did—McGee took a prominent position, and his speeches are among the most powerful.

III.

In 1865, and again in 1867, Mr. McGee visited the old country in official positions, and on both occasions delivered public addresses. In these speeches he did not fail to exhort the statesmen of Britain to do