

year more than that of Sir John Macdonald as Premier and Minister of Justice from Confederation until within a short time of his retirement in 1873.

Mr. Blake, and others who, like him, set themselves up as political exemplars and leaders, should remember that as the strength of the strongest chain is limited to that of its weakest link, so the character of each individual man for pureness and nobleness does not rise above the level of the basest, meanest propensity that he permits to exercise a preponderating influence over his conduct.

To return to the House of Commons, does Mr. Blake know of an instance in which an important Government measure, when first introduced, received the cordial approval of all those who finally voted for it?

During the times when he himself was only a supporter of Mr. Mackenzie's Administration, as a private member, did he always approve unqualifiedly, when they were first submitted, of Government measures that he ultimately supported? He should remember how frequently and cruelly he played the part of "candid friend," to the great embarrassment of Mr. Mackenzie.

It would not have been surprising if, before they had time to make themselves masters of the contract, some members of the Commons had supposed that it must have contained very objectionable features, when it provoked an oration of six hours from Mr. Blake, and speeches extending over weeks from his lieutenants.

But, when each of his verbose objections to the Contract was in its turn subjected to exhaustive discussion, its hollowness was demonstrated, and Parliament became convinced and the country became satisfied that his great oratorical effort had been only as sounding brass and those of his followers as mere tinkling cymbals.

Early in the debate it seemed as if Mr. Blake's opposition were not so much against the contract as against the Government, and as if he cared little how serious the consequence to the country might be, provided he could score a political triumph for himself. His anticipations were no doubt most sanguine, his labors, measured by time, were prodigious, his failure must have been galling to him, for it was complete and ignominious.

In his Banquet Speech, at Montreal, he dwelt at great length upon the second or political Syndicate, and treated its offer as *bonâ fide*. Mr. Blake should in kindness to the members of that Syndicate drop a veil over it. I am sure that those whose names gave it whatever semblance of respectability it possessed already wish it to be forgotten.

If they were in earnest in desiring to secure a contract, if their movement were not a paltry political manoeuvre, why did they not tender under Mr. Mackenzie's tempting advertisement, which stood for many months unanswered, notwithstanding that it suggested to the contractor far more favorable terms than those granted to the Syndicate? They knew for a long time that the present Government had invited tenders, and was negotiating a contract; why did