

Biographical Foreword

3

The campaign proved an unusually exciting one, as Howe, his opponent, enjoyed the prestige of being a great orator. It was a battle royal, and the province awakened to the fact that the Liberal leader had met a worthy foe, who asked and gave no quarter.

The result, however, was a sweeping victory for the Liberals, redeemed only by Dr. Tupper's defeat of Howe. On returning to Halifax, Howe told his friends that he had been beaten by the future leader of the Conservative party. At a later date Howe unsuccessfully sought an alliance with Dr. Tupper.

At the first caucus after the election the Hon. W. J. Johnstone, the Opposition leader, whose long career had been no less brilliant than that of Howe, expressed a desire for only nominal leadership, leaving the actual work to his young colleague. Before this arrangement became effective Dr. Tupper, with the assurance of a veteran statesman, declared that his party must reverse its hostile attitude towards the Roman Catholics; that the true policy was equal rights to all, without regard to race or creed; and that all hostility to the railway policy of the Government must be abandoned. His counsel proved sound, for a month after the opening of the House the Opposition had increased its voting strength from fifteen to twenty-two, as compared with twenty-eight for the Government. The Conservatives attained power in the following year, but were, however, defeated by a small margin in 1859.

Four years later the Conservatives swept the province, and again Dr. Tupper refused the lead,