



The house at St. Antoine-on-the-Richelieu in which George Etienne Cartier was born

the Council of Public Instruction. He detected weaknesses, and, perhaps, injustices in the Criminal Law as it existed and under his supervision it was materially modified, for the better. The municipal law so important to the well-being of the community was also made more comprehensive. But his field of action was much wider. The encouragement of ocean navigation, without which Canadian commerce was shackled, canalizations, the dredging of the St. Lawrence, the ultimate acquisition of the Northwest, and the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, the construction of the Intercolonial Railway and the establishment of our military system all bear the stamp of Sir George Cartier's efforts and add to the debt Canadians owe him. The abolition of the system of Seigneurial Tenure was also a great reform in which he bore a leading part.

But his greatest work was what he accomplished in connection with Confederation. The main features of that event belong to the history of the

country and are familiar to all, but the immensity of the work and the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which stood in the way of its accomplishment at the time cannot be fully imagined by those of the present generation. The records of the period, indeed, scarcely convey a clear idea of the vastness and complexity of the scheme as it presented itself at the critical period when it assumed practicable form and ceased to be an academic question only. But Confederation was accomplished and Canadians have, in great degree, to thank Sir George Cartier for the accomplishment. Political friend and opponent alike concede that without the efforts and hearty co-operation of the great Quebec leader of his people there would have been no Confederation and without Confederation there would be no Dominion of Canada, at least as we have it to-day. "I have no hesitation in saying that without Cartier there could have been no Confederation and therefore Canada owes him a debt which can never be re-