

sympathies which are not usually found united in one person, his position as a man apart from the mass of politicians is easily understood. The future of such a character is largely a question of opportunities. Should he discover originally or through others some truth in economic science which commends itself to his judgment and his heart, as one by which great practical problems are solved, he will do much to make Canada an exponent of that truth. On the other hand, should the position of Canada be threatened by measures which seem to him likely to lower her position, he may be found the leader on the Imperialist side. At present he classes himself as a believer in the protective principle, as a temporary expedient, but not necessarily in the whole of the present protective system. His sympathies are with the Imperial Federationists, but he awaits the proposal of what seems a practical plan of fusion before doing more than expressing sympathy. He favours the Free Trade principle, but will not follow it into what seems to him an abandonment of the rights and interests of the people. Richard Chapman Weldon is a Saul among his people. Those who have followed the political history of Saul's country and time, know that he remained in obscurity until there arose a great national crisis, followed by such a call to leadership as he could not doubt and dared not disobey. A like result, when the opportunity comes, may be looked for from the subject of this brief sketch.

#### ROBERT THOMSON,

*Hamilton, Ont.*

THE success of the gentleman whose name appears at the head of this sketch is the success of a man of resources. Combined with that characteristic is that of thorough business ability in the highest sense of the term. Robert Thomson's name is one of the best known and most honourably regarded in the business circles with which he is connected, not only in the city of Hamilton, but in the country immediately surrounding it, where for many years he has carried on extensive operations in his line. Mr. Thomson is of Scottish birth, having been born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, May 21, 1833. His parents were William and Jean Charteris Thomson, the latter being a member of the Charteris family of Amisfield, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. They had thirteen children: six died in childhood and lie buried in the old churchyard of Kirkconnel by the Kirtle Water. The second son came to America in 1849, and in 1852 the father, mother, three daughters and the subject of this sketch followed, leaving the eldest son in England, where he died in 1885,

and the third son, who shortly after went to Australia and died there in 1866. The emigrating section of the family sailed from the foot of Annan Water in the "Devonshire," crossing the Atlantic in six weeks and three days to New York, then up the Hudson to Albany, by train to Rochester, and then by steamer to Wellington Square (now Burlington). From that place they went direct to Puslinch, county of Wellington, where their son had settled, and there began their new life in the New World, farming and lumbering. Two years later, the father died; his widow died in Hamilton three years since, at the advanced age of 88. In 1856, Robert went to Cumminsville, county of Halton, where he entered upon a career in the lumbering business, which he conducted successfully for a period of eighteen years. In 1874, having purchased the insolvent estate of J. C. McCarthy, lumber merchant, Hamilton, he went to reside in Burlington, where he had landed a little more than twenty years before with empty pockets, but a heart full of courage and a determination to succeed. Mr. Thomson's great forte was the lumbering business, a statement the truth of which has been amply established since the period when he left Halton county. The trade which he then took up has, under his shrewd and skilful management, grown to immense proportions. For a long time he has been largely interested in timber limits and saw-mill manufacturing business in Muskoka, Parry Sound and Rainey River districts, and his connections in these regions form a very important part in what is undoubtedly the largest wholesale lumber trade in Western Ontario. Mr. Thomson has a branch at Windsor, with a fleet of boats carrying lumber from the north shore of the Georgian Bay to the former point, whence it is distributed inland; and he has also agencies at Glasgow and Leith, Scotland, and at Belfast, Ireland. In public matters Mr. Thomson has always exercised a strong influence, though invariably refusing to allow himself to be put forward as a prominent figure. For the past three years he has been a director of the Traders Bank. In politics he has always been a Reformer and a firm supporter of his party. In religion he is a Presbyterian, and in Hamilton, where he now resides, he is a member of the congregation worshipping in McNab-street church (Rev. Dr. Fletcher's), one of the most influential and largely attended churches in the city. Mr. Thomson was married in the year 1863, and has issue one son, an upright and intelligent young gentleman, who is engaged in business with his father. Personally, Mr. Thomson is a gentleman whose generous disposition and genial qualities secure for him the respect and esteem of the whole community.