

prime minister over his associates in a government was unreservedly confessed.

Mr. Stanton, whose article purports to be historical and technical, which is reprinted by so prominent a Canadian paper as the Montreal Daily Witness, is apparently as well informed with regard to the British system of government as the average American who does not write for the press. He fails to make any distinction between the prime minister of a monarch under prerogative, and a premier of a modern cabinet. The one was simply known as the king's favorite, whose rise and fall depended solely upon his retaining the good will of his royal master, while the other is the acknowledged head of a responsible administration whose tenure of office mainly depends upon his ability to command parliamentary support. The king's prime minister was a person hateful to the English people. One of the greatest prime ministers England ever possessed, Sir Robert Walpole, at one time resented the title of prime minister as an imputation, and yet, it was in his person that as leader of the House of Commons he asserted the authority of parliament against the king. He was the first prime minister who sat in the House of Commons. In 1741 when the king was asked by the House of Lords to dismiss Sir Robert Walpole, a protest was signed by 31 peers who declared their conviction that a sole, or even a chief, minister is an officer unknown to the law of Britain, inconsistent with the constitution of this country, and destructive of the liberty of any government whatsoever', so the fact that a first minister is not recognized by law was asserted in the Journals of the House of Lords over 160 years ago. It was under Pitt, about 1783, that the constitutional relation between the sovereign and his ministers underwent a change, and began gradually to assume their present aspect. Since then, by an easy gradation, the personal authority of the sovereign receded, and was replaced by the supremacy of the premier. Before the close of the reign of George III. this was taken as an accepted maxim. After he left office Mr. Pitt dwelt upon the "absolute necessity there is in

the conduct of the affairs of the country, that there should be an avowed and real minister possessing the chief seat in the council, and the principal place in the confidence of the king. In that respect there can be no rivalry or division of power. That power must rest in the person generally called the first minister, and that minister ought to be the person at the head of the finances." Under our system of government, when we say that the office of prime minister, or premier, is not recognized by law it is a mere quibble, for the constitutional law of England is not written, and men like Pitt, Peel, Palmerston, Gray, Russell, and Gladstone were the men who laid down the law, and the mere fact that the Consolidated Statutes make no reference to this position of premier cuts no figure. The fact that it was once remarked in the British House of Parliament, as late as 1806, that the constitution "abhors the idea of a prime minister," and the further fact that Lord Lansdowne observed that "nothing could be more mischievous or unconstitutional than to recognize in an act of parliament the existence of such an office", make no difference either. Legally and constitutionally one private councillor has no superiority over another.

The fact is that the premier or the first minister, or the prime minister, as he is indifferently called, is the commander-in-chief of the party in power. He alone can give authoritative expression to its views and aims. He disciplines or keeps out heterodox or refractory members of the party. He must, if he can, reconcile all differences, and keep his party in courage, unity, and content. He is not only the adviser of the crown, but he has a general supervision of all the departments of government. Having a predominant voice in council, he must thoroughly understand the subject under deliberation. As leader of the House of Commons, he is responsible for the conduct of public business. He receives most delegations, and looks into all grievances. He must have a thorough knowledge of constitutional and parliamentary law, and of political history. He must have unusual powers of debate and