

SIR JOHN THOMPSON

No other man out of all that have set their names high in the roll of Canadian public men has ever made his way to the front in so few years, after his entry into the field of Dominion politics, as Sir John Thompson.

When he was called to Ottawa by Sir John Macdonald, towards the end of the year 1885, and made Minister of Justice and Attorney-General for the Dominion, he was all but unknown outside of his own province. Whatever reputation he had won did not go far beyond the bounds of Nova-Scotia. Honours have crowded thick upon him since then, and his progress to the eminence on which he now stands should compel the serious consideration of those who point out that conviction are superfluous nowadays and principles at a discount, and that men go fast and far in politics without either.

He came to Ottawa in a grave crisis of the public affairs of Canada, and was soon recognized in Parliament as possessing a force of mind and character which fitted him pre-eminently to cope with great crises and great matters of policy. It was not long before the country came to know that he was a man who would not submit to be merely as one of the cards shuffled by an astute hand and dealt out on the crimson baize of the table in the Privy Council chamber. Neither his friends nor his opponents in politics would dream now of so misconceiving him. At times, however, since his coming to Ottawa, sections of the people of the Dominion have been greatly at fault in their estimate of the new power in the Government. His ability was recognized, perhaps, before his disinterestedness was understood.

He is a man upon whom Nature has laid her hand to form a thoroughly genuine and independent character. Incapable of compromising with his conscience, he never spares himself labour to be