

with the force which always attends the utterances of a man of ability and firm conviction. The protective policy put forward by the Conservative leader, found a strong and able advocate in the member for North Renfrew, whose acknowledged business success could not but give force and point to the expression of his views upon a subject having a purely commercial bearing. When the Conservatives returned to power in 1878, Mr. White was put in training for a position of importance by having given him the chairmanship of the committee on agriculture and immigration. Under Mr. White's direction, this committee did much to promote a knowledge of the resources of Canada, not only among Canadians, but among those classes in England and elsewhere in Europe who might be possible immigrants. Its investigations into the ravages of insect pests, and other matters affecting agriculture, have been the means of saving thousands and, perhaps, millions of dollars to the farmers of the Dominion, besides promoting improvements in methods whose adoption meant an immense financial and economic gain to the country. In the House, Mr. White continued to devote himself mainly to work affecting the general business of the country. Not only was he one of the ablest defenders of the National Policy, but he also largely assisted in the vast mass of private bill legislation which, considering the varied interests affected, was hardly less important than those directly affecting the general progress and well-being of the country. An instance of the value to the country of a man of Mr. White's practical knowledge, was given in the discussion of the bill respecting cheques, notes, and bills of exchange in the sessions of 1889 and 1890. Prominent among those upon whom the Minister of Justice relied for guidance as to the practical effect of the many clauses of the bill was Mr. White. Though he spoke seldom, and never without having something important to say, few men in the House have had more attention paid them by both friends and opponents alike, for the reason that his speeches were always worth listening to. Nor, although a strong Conservative, has he been reckoned in any sense a violent partizan, as is proved by the terms in which he has always been referred to by the press of both sides. On several occasions he has expressed his dissent from the policy of the Government, and has even voted in the minority against them. On more than one occasion, when changes in the cabinet were impending, Mr. White's name has been freely mentioned as that of a prospective minister. There was undoubtedly good ground for these rumors, for the need of a man, practical, able, fluent, and absolutely trustworthy, to strengthen Ontario's rep-

resentation in the Government was keenly felt. Prior to the assembling of Parliament for the session of 1891, it was looked upon as settled that Mr. White would receive a portfolio. But the unfortunate sectionalism which makes class as well as personal merit a matter to be considered, intervened between the member for North Renfrew and the wishes of his friends. He was, however, selected for the position of Speaker, and it is but reasonable to suppose this deserved honour is but the first step in a promotion which will bring with it the honourable responsibilities of head of a department. From this brief summary of Mr. White's career, it will be seen that he is exceptionally well fitted for the Speakership, a position which requires first, a well-founded reputation for independence and impartiality, and secondly, a long parliamentary experience, or knowledge equivalent to that which experience brings. To quote the words of ally and opponent will, perhaps, best convey a proper impression of the regard and esteem in which Mr. White is held. On the occasion of proposing Mr. White for Speaker, the late Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald said :

"To those hon. members who have sat in previous Parliaments I need not say one single word as to the merits of Mr. White, or as to his fitness to perform the duties of this office, this high and important office, with due dignity, and not only with dignity of manner but with impartiality and ability. Mr. White has been in Parliament for fourteen or fifteen years, and from the time he first entered it he took a very considerable position, even when a very young man; and we all know the assiduity and ability with which he performed his part and his duties as a member of the House of Commons of Canada. He was always in his place, always ready for his work, enjoying and earning at a very early period the respect and esteem, and, I may say, the friendship of his associates in Parliament, whether sitting on the right or left of the speaker; and he vindicated the judgment of his constituents in electing him as their representative, for we all know how well he performed his duties as a member of this House. I do not know on either side of the House any hon. member who would prove, from his demeanour, conduct and ability, more acceptable, without reference to political questions, than my friend the member for the North Riding of Renfrew. Without further remark, I move the resolution, seconded by Sir Hector Langevin."

In accepting the proposal, Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, leader of the Opposition, paid Mr. White this graceful and well-deserved compliment :

"I am disposed to agree with everything that has been said by my right hon. friend in reference to the hon. member for North Renfrew (Mr. White), the nominee for the office of Speaker. From past experience of the hon. gentleman (Mr. White), I am sure that he is endowed with a thorough knowledge of the practice and business of this House, and we know from experience that he is also endowed with a sound judgment, a firm spirit, and, I should say, a great independence of character. My hon. friend will pardon me, I hope, if I remind him that perfection is not of this world. He would not be of