

The Legal News.

VOL. XIV. JUNE 13, 1891. No. 24.

The Solicitor-General's speech in the bacarat scandal case may, by tricks of voice and gesture, have been impressive, but it was weak in point of logic. He wished apparently to make the jury believe that his client had been in doubtful company, and that the statements of these people were not to be accepted without some reserve. But he could not disparage the defendants without equally discrediting his own client, their associate, and thus making it less surprising that he should have been detected in cheating at cards. The strong point of the evidence against the plaintiff was his own signature to the paper by which, in consideration not of being publicly dishonored, he pledged himself never to touch cards again, and afterwards left the house without confronting his accusers. This reminds us of the famous case of Henry Ward Beecher, who irretrievably committed himself by his own letters. Solicitor-General Clarke could only pretend that his client signed to save the Prince of Wales from annoyance. This explanation is not consistent with the statements of the witnesses, and it is still more opposed to the course pursued by the plaintiff and his counsel during the trial.

Time dealt gently last year with the bench of this Province, there being no change by death either in the Court of Queen's Bench or Superior Court. The year 1891 is more tragic. First the sudden death of the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench. This has been followed, a few days later (June 9), by the sudden death of Sir Andrew Stuart, ex-Chief Justice of the Superior Court. The deceased was born in the city of Quebec in 1813. His father, the late Andrew Stuart, was at one time Solicitor-General of Lower Canada. The ex-Chief Justice studied law with the late Sir James Stuart, Bart., and was called to the bar in 1834. In 1854 he was appointed Q. C. Five years later he was

appointed an assistant judge of the Superior Court, and on the 6th June, 1860, a puisne judge of the same Court. In 1885, on the retirement of Chief Justice Meredith from the bench, Judge Stuart was appointed Chief Justice, a position which he resigned towards the close of 1889, when he was succeeded by the present Chief Justice, Sir F. G. Johnson. Chief Justice Stuart was knighted in 1887.

So much has been said, and well said, in Parliament, in the columns of the daily press, and elsewhere, with regard to the life and character of the late Sir John A. Macdonald, that any further reference to the subject at present would be superfluous. The chorus of laudation may seem a trifle exaggerated a generation hence, and time must be left to do its part in sifting the false from the true. The late Premier, however, was indisputably the most remarkable figure that has appeared in Canada since the cession. Part of this prominence may be due, as in the case of Gladstone and Bismarck, to the great length of his public service. Forty-seven years in Parliament, almost always in office taking the leading part in founding the Confederation, a quarter of a century ago; premier ever since with one intermission of less than five years; dying in office after having been premier for the last thirteen years continuously; these are facts almost without precedent in any country as applicable to a single individual. Sir John's early practice at the bar was somewhat more important than that of William Pitt, but it sinks into equal insignificance in the light of his splendid after career. As an authority on constitutional questions he was perhaps excelled by one at least of his contemporaries. His strong point was his adroitness in the management of men, and it may fairly be added, his devotion to the best interests of his country.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT.

On the second reading (June 2) of the Bill to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, 1890, which was printed in a previous issue, Mr Abbott said:—

This is a Bill partly to remedy two or three verbal defects in the former bill, and partly