

ment of Sir John Abbott in November 1892, he became Premier of Canada, thus assuming the outward symbols of the power he had secretly exercised since the death of Sir John Macdonald. In February 1892, he proceeded to Washington as one of a delegation to negotiate a Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, and to settle the fisheries question. In the spring and summer of 1893, he sat as joint arbitrator for the British Government with Lord Hannen on the Behring Sea tribunal in Paris, and there rendered noble service to Canada and Great Britain, as an acknowledgment of which he was called by Her Majesty to Her Privy Council, and in October last crossed the Atlantic to be formally sworn in a member of that honourable body.

Great events call for great men, and it seems as though by some special providence, the man is sure to respond. But for the North-West Rebellion in 1885, Canada might not now be plunged in grief for her illustrious son. At that time, Edward Blake was the ablest debater, and the cleverest lawyer in the House of Commons. Fierce discussions were anticipated. To cope with that giant of debate, Sir John Macdonald was advised by Sir Charles Tupper to secure the aid of Judge Thompson. It was thus he entered Parliament. He was soon recognized as the peer of its ablest men, and years only increased his claim to that distinction. Session after session he evidenced a reserve force of mental power that surprised his most ardent followers. His masterly speech on the Riel question established his reputation, and Mr. Blake then declared him to be the best debater that had ever entered the House. He exhibited wonderful talent also in his reply to Mr. Dalton McCarthy, in defence of the government for not disallowing the Jesuits' Estates Act. His speech on that occasion was pronounced the most scholarly and eloquent ever delivered within the walls of parliament.

It happens to some men to finish their life's work; to do what they had hoped to do; to set the keystone in the arch of their intention. This holds good in statesmanship as in that other sphere where men dig ditches and build walls. The rapid rise of Sir John Thompson was unique

and unparalleled. We cannot even compare it with the success of that wonderful man, Sir John Macdonald; for, while at an early age the latter was the recognized leader of old Canada, it was not until after many years of service, that he secured the affection of British hearts. Sir John Thompson was but fifty years of age; he had trod the treacherous field of Dominion politics but nine years, yet in that short period he not only won the highest prize within the reach of Canadians, but had taken worthy rank among British and Colonial statesmen. His career during those nine years is without parallel in Canadian or European history, and his sudden death while the guest of the Queen, was consistent with that career. True, he was fortunate as a politician, but it was his ability at critical moments that procured for him his high position, and made him at length tower above every other man of his party. Every lesser light paled before his light, "quenched by that orb of intellect supreme."

Only a person possessed of parts of the very highest order could achieve such phenomenal success. Experienced parliamentarians and jurists declare that his mental equipment was something marvellous. And this opinion is not confined to Canada. His greatness as lawyer, statesman and diplomat, were more appreciated in the bureaucratic circles of France and England, than in his own country. Alongside the first men of Great Britain, the United States and Europe, at the Behring Sea arbitration, he displayed a wonderful penetration, that pierced the heart of a complex question at once, and an irresistible logic and power of argument. Well might a great legal opponent say of him: "Sir John is the clearest thinker and most merciless critic that the House has ever seen." The *London Times*, the great exponent of British thought, paid the Canadian leader the most flattering compliment it could bestow, when it urged his appointment to the highest court in the Empire, the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council.

But why this unbounded respect and confidence? Mental powers alone could not give it. No. The secret lay in the grandeur and power of his personal