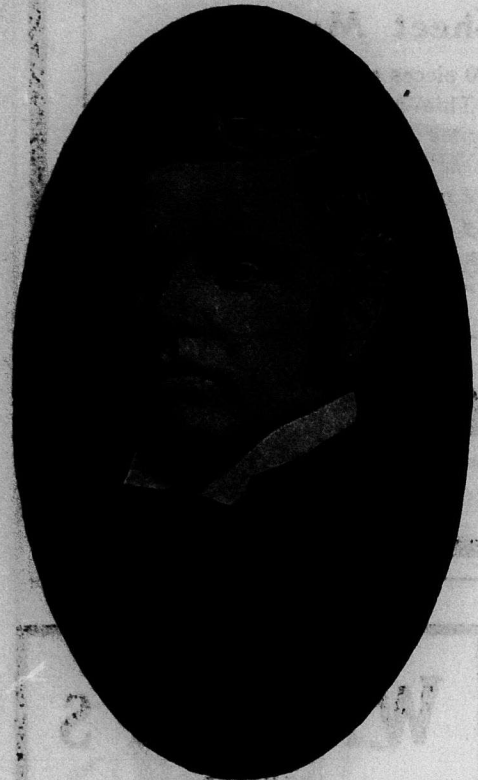


ion, but there was a widespread sentiment that the larger Provinces would overshadow the smaller ones in the councils of the nation. The opposition was strengthened by the action of Joseph Howe, the greatest figure of his time in the political history of Nova Scotia, who opposed the union with all the force that his magnetic and powerful personality could command. In spite of his lengthy campaign his cause was lost, and then he had the good grace to submit to the inevitable.



THE LATE SIR JOHN THOMPSON.
Premier Dec. 5, 1892, to Dec. 15, 1894.

"What's the use of keeping up the cry," he said in one of those quaint observations which gave him a hold on the common people like unto that of Abraham Lincoln. "We shall be like a goose hissing at a stage coach. We may hiss, but the coach will run over us."

Another cause contributing to the ultimate passage of the union was the abrogation of the reciprocity treaty with the United States the year preceding Confederation. The union having been accomplished it then remained for the people of Canada under a generous measure of respon-



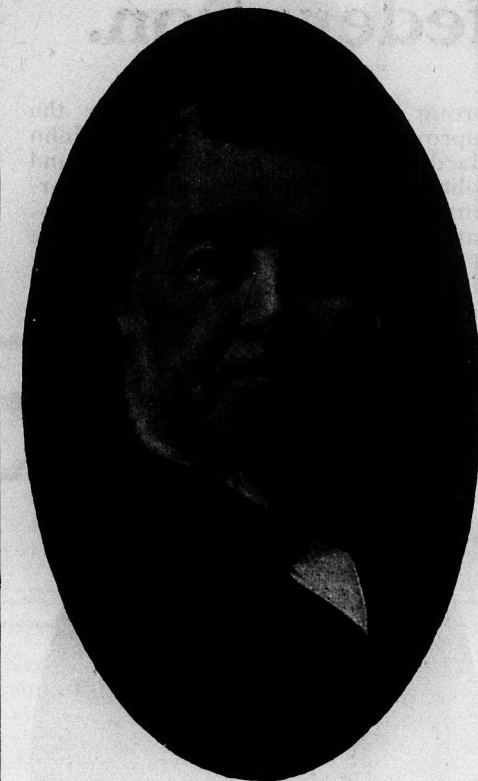
SIR MACKENZIE BOWELL.
Premier Dec. 24, 1894, to April 27, 1896.

sible government to develop their resources and populate their vast areas as they best could.

Seven Premiers have headed the administration of Canadian affairs since Confederation, but two of these stand out as the greatest figures in Canadian history. When Confederation was accomplished the reins of office were assumed by Sir John Mac-

donald, and, except for the Premiership of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie from 1873 to 1878, Sir John held office continuously until his death in 1891. Sagacious, adroit, masterful, full of human qualities, he was a born leader of men, and, though many of his acts will never be forgiven by at least his political opponents, no one but will grant him the title to greatness in the formative period of Canadian history. The character of Mr. Mackenzie may, perhaps, best be gauged by his famous expression picturing himself seated on the public chest armed with a shotgun. An honest, conscientious public servant, he lacked some of the qualities which contributed to Sir John Macdonald's popularity, but his character made him the idol of the best-thinking people of the Liberal party, and of patriots in all parties in Canada.

The death of Sir John Macdonald in 1891 was followed by short reigns by four Conservatives until the overthrow of the party in 1896. The prophecy of the old Conservative chieftain, "After me, the deluge," was fulfilled more literally than the party could ever have anticipated. Sir John Abbott, the first to succeed Sir John Macdonald was already an old man, honest, but of little political ability, and he died in office towards the end of the following year. Sir John Thompson, who followed for the next two years was admittedly one of the greatest lawyers that Canada has produced, but his religion was un-



SIR CHARLES TUPPER
Premier April 27, 1896, to July 8, 1896.

popular among the intolerant members of his party. Sir Mackenzie Bowell, who then held office until the spring of 1896, and had a disintegrated party on his hands without the capacity to manage it. He was the victim of a shameless revolt, and his denunciation of the nest of traitors has hung like a cloud over some of his associates to this day. Of Sir Mackenzie personally, nothing but good can be said, but he was not a born Premier, and, if he had been, the conditions of his period of office would have made his task a most difficult one.

With a general election at no great distance away in the summer of 1896, Sir Mackenzie Bowell laid down the reins of office at the close of the month of April, and Sir Charles Tupper, then High Commissioner in London gave up that exalted post to take the Premiership of Canada.

The fact that Sir Charles had been one of the chief advocates of Confederation as far back as 1860 indicates the length of service of this venerable and forceful figure in Canadian politics. Many of Sir Charles' political actions are regarded by liberals as crimes in the political calendar of Canada, but, on the whole, he is one of the greatest figures in our history. He is now eighty-seven years old, and still takes an active

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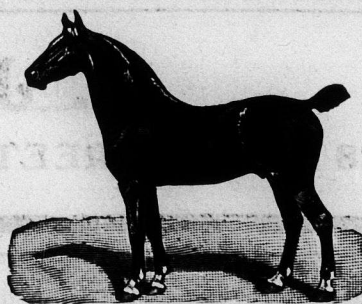
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