

and we venture to affirm that the great body of Canadians of both parties have hitherto been of the same opinion, that the office of High Commissioner was one in many respects analagous to that of an ambassador, and that in order to the proper discharge of its duties it was very desirable that the person holding the office should maintain a position independent of and above partisan considerations. If such is not the case the fact is, we submit, one to be deplored. The title of "Canadian High Commissioner" is surely a rather imposing one by which to designate a mere confidential agent of the Government, bound to hold himself in readiness to do, if required, strictly partisan work for it, either at home or abroad. The knowledge that such is his position must seriously impair his usefulness, so far as members of the Opposition, that is almost a moiety of the people of Canada, are concerned. No political opponent of the Government could ask his services in case of need with the confidence with which he would apply to a non-partisan officer. An officer to be competent for the position, says Sir John Thompson, and to render efficient service, "must have his political sympathies, and enjoy the very closest alliance with the Government which he is serving." We thought it an unfair advantage to be taken by a Government under the party system, to utilize the services of the High Commissioner, paid from the public funds contributed by both parties alike, as a party canvasser for even a few weeks. According to the view now presented by Sir John Thompson it is right for the Government to use the public funds for the support of a confidential partisan agent all the year round! Why may it not keep another or several more confidential agents at work in the constituencies all the time? They might make the victory much easier when the general elections come on.

THE introduction in the British Commons of the Bill empowering the Queen by Order-in-Council to prohibit the catching of seals by British ships within a specified period in Behring's Sea, marks another stage in the slow diplomatic progress towards a settlement of the seal-fishery dispute. For aught that appears this is a just and necessary action on the part of the British Government, though very much depends on the extent to which it is reciprocated by the United States. The action is, it may be assumed, based upon a conviction that the allegations concerning the danger of the extermination of the seals by the processes now in vogue are to a greater or less extent correct. On that assumption, and on condition that the United States enforce a similar prohibition upon its subjects, the Bill can scarcely be seriously objected to, though it must press heavily on those who may have gone to much expense in fitting out vessels for the season. The chief ground for wonder or reproach is that the conclusion was not reached a few weeks or months ago, before the preparations for the season's work had been begun. It will certainly be hard on those who have fitted out vessels at heavy expense, as well as on the officers and crews of the vessels so fitted out, to be peremptorily stopped just as they have commenced their summer's work. One is naturally curious to know how the Washington Government propose to get over the difficulty with the Sealing Company to whom even a year's prohibition could not fail to be well-nigh ruinous. That however is our neighbours' matter. Should it appear that an exception has been made in favour of the Company, under which it is to be allowed to go on with its operations on the Islands, the prohibited Canadian sealers will have ground for complaint. Judging from the firmness hitherto shown by Lord Salisbury, it is probable that the interests of Canadian fishermen are pretty safe in his hands. It is reasonable to assume, also, that the consent of the Canadian Government, which Government has hitherto been understood to be the chief obstacle in the way of the close-season arrangements heretofore suggested, must have been obtained before the course now indicated was resolved on.

THE resolution to form a third political party, which was hailed with loud acclaim at the National Union Conference held in Cincinnati a week or two since, may or may not prove to be a matter of great political importance in the United States. The name "National" as applied to the convention which adopted this bold resolution was evidently a misnomer, seeing that of fourteen hundred delegates four hundred were from Kansas alone, and much the larger number of those who came from a distance were from four or five Northwestern States.

The powerful "Farmers' Alliance" was, however, largely represented, and was probably the controlling force in the convention. Both the American Federation of Labour and the Knights of Labour were influentially represented. It is undeniable that the meeting represented some very powerful elements and sentiments of disgust with the old parties and methods. The two chief sources of weakness in the movement seem to be the want of able leaders, and the jumbled character of the platform adopted. This platform does not distinctly repudiate the high tariff, though it approves a progressive income tax and makes an indirect but keen thrust at the protective system, by declaring that one interest ought not to be taxed for the benefit of another. It declares for Government control, and, if found necessary, ownership of railroads. It demands the free coinage of silver, and the issue of treasury notes in large quantities. These and other planks represent, as has been said by one writer in reference to the membership of the convention, "a curious combination of strength and weakness," and are mercilessly ridiculed by some of the old party papers. Nevertheless the Convention represents, it is clear, an immense aggregate of political unrest and discontent. Should some of its leaders develop unexpected strength, and should the new organization enter the next great contest, as it proposes to do, with a Presidential ticket of its own, though it would have no chance for success, it would import a most disturbing element into the contest, and seriously interfere with party calculations and the operations of the machine.

#### OTTAWA LETTER.

PERHAPS one of the most terrible states of tension that human feelings are capable of experiencing, results from the waiting for evil tidings. "Joy seldom kills," and to a few fortunate beings is granted the luxury of anticipation of a certain good. But to how many more, comes sooner or later in their lives a time when the spectre of sorrow looms before them, drawing ever nearer and nearer a sorrow that cannot be withstood, that must be met face to face.

And if this has been the attitude of our Dominion at large, how much more intensified must all feeling necessarily be in the Capital where the great hero and champion of the political life and rights of Canada has been mortally stricken after his latest victory. Truly it would be difficult to over-estimate the depth and sincerity of the grief that pervades the whole community. "All sorts and conditions of men" of every shade of opinion—some who perhaps one short week ago were saying hard things of him are now united with their opponents in one of the most sacred of all bonds—that of a common sorrow. There are occasions when all party differences must be in abeyance, and this is distinctly one of them. So it has been, that every day since Friday evening, when the tidings were brought to the House of Commons that the Premier was *in extremis*, the streets have been filled with anxious-faced men and women, hearing or telling the latest news from Earncliffe, and looking eagerly for a more hopeful bulletin.

And but a little space apart—yet how infinitely far from all the toils and cares in which he had so lately mingled—lay the object of all their thought, all their solicitude. How short a time before, at the commencement of the session, had the brave old Chieftain spoken of the triumph of the "Old Flag, the Old Policy," and, proudly confident for the future, repudiated the idea of a "disastrous victory." He had led the campaign, giving himself no rest, and the strain of his exertions was swiftly and surely making itself felt. Yet he was resolute to the end, and though he did not fulfil his expressed wish, to die in his seat in the House, he fulfilled his onerous duties up to the last possible moment.

Perhaps one of the most touching and beautiful things to remember, especially to the subject of it, is that Sir John Macdonald's very last speech in the House was in defence of his absent colleague. It was given in a sportive, almost jocular, tone but there was the ring of true friendship and appreciation. And in a remark made later in the same debate, he emphatically acknowledged that it was at his desire the High Commissioner had come out from England. Shortly after this he left the House, and that night of May 22nd will be treasured in the memories of all who were fortunate to be there.

Some lines of a great contemporary are worthy to be his epitaph:—

For what wert thou? Some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour.

Large elements in order brought  
And tracts of calm from tempest made  
And world-wide fluctuation swayed  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

All engagements and festivities are of course suspended; business goes on as usual, but otherwise there is but one absorbing thought, one topic of conversation. And indeed it would be strange if it were not so, in this

city, now that the man who has been its centre of interest ever since it became the Capital of the Dominion, will no more be seen in our midst.

The immediate effect upon the political world is much like that of an impending earthquake. In the streets, lobbies of Parliament, the hotels and clubs, groups of politicians are to be seen discussing the situation with anxious faces, and trying to discount the future. That the fortune of the Conservative party is at stake, goes without saying, and it is generally admitted that the all important first step is the choice of a new leader. Constitutionally, Lord Stanley may send for anybody he pleases to select to form a new Cabinet, the present Ministers meanwhile retaining the management of their respective departments, and such of them as may be selected by the new Premier as his colleagues not having to undergo the ordeal of selection. Three names are mentioned, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir John Thompson, and the Honourable Mr. Abbott. It is rumoured that the first would meet with great opposition from some of the Ontario Conservatives, and his attitude towards the Grand Trunk Railway is also an obstacle. Sir John Thompson has the advantage over both the others of being in the prime of life, and his great ability and coolness of head are universally admitted; the difficulties in his case would be rather owing to such personal characteristics as his retiring disposition and want of practice in the art of managing men, though he is very popular among those who know him personally, than to political reasons, although he would have some trouble in dealing with the Equal Righters. Mr. Abbott seems to be looked upon as the man to meet the emergency, at least until the party can be steadied and some idea formed as to its future policy and the possible combinations which are sure to follow this political upheaval, for such Sir John's death will be. Mr. Abbott has long experience of public life, great tact, and the governing faculty, besides his lifelong intimacy with Sir John and knowledge of his views. But opinion is much divided on this question of succession. Some people think Mr. Dalton McCarthy will be a factor in its determination. Sir Hector Langevin, it is conceded, is out of the running until the Tarte charges have been disposed of.

There will probably be an adjournment of Parliament for ten days or a fortnight to enable the formation of a Ministry. After that, it is generally supposed, the session will be shortened as much as possible, the estimates will be passed, and all else, save the small amount of legislation necessary to carry on the business of the country, will be dropped. It is thought that the Opposition will not object to this course, and will only insist upon the speedy determination of the McGreevy-Langevin affair.

The committee upon the last mentioned matter has held several sittings and is now approaching the crisis of the investigation. So far nothing has been brought out to connect Sir Hector Langevin with the proceedings alleged to have been engaged in by Mr. McGreevy. The only sensational evidence has been that of Mr. Robert McGreevy, who was cynically frank in his statements as to the use his firm intended to make of his brother's influence and as to the way in which it was to be remunerated. But the illness of Sir John Macdonald and the death of Sir A. A. Dorion, who was father-in-law to Mr. Geoffrion, Mr. Tarte's counsel, stopped the proceedings at a very interesting point. The committee also had some trouble with the *non mi ricordo* answers of Mr. Connolly, whose forgetfulness of his business, ignorance of the whereabouts of certain of his employees, notably of his bookkeeper, and "judicious reticence" in the absence of his counsel, was at least remarkable, as was also the non-appearance of certain witnesses in obedience to the summonses served on them. Sir Hector Langevin is very ably represented by Mr. Hugh Henry, Q.C., of Halifax, N.S., whose retainer in this important matter brings prominently before the public a counsel already well-known in the courts of his own Province and in the Supreme Court of Canada as both an eminently clever advocate and a sound lawyer. The proceedings of the committee have so far been remarkably free from manifestations of party bias, and there is an unmistakable determination to get to the bottom of this peculiar business in the straightest way.

The few debates that have taken place during the week have been of little general interest, nor have they called forth any speeches of special ability, except that of Sir John Thompson, who in reply to Mr. Laurier's attack on the High Commissioner supported the action and policy of his absent colleague in measured and impressive terms: "*Les absents ont toujours tort*"; and it is well that the Minister of Justice should be the one to balance the scales evenly, and to vindicate, as did his chief, the honour of their friend. The very obvious distinction between the position of a foreign Ambassador and that held by Sir Charles Tupper as High Commissioner in England was ably pointed out, and also that the fact of Mr. Laurier's having omitted to place on the Table any evidence in support of his allegations, was hardly in accordance with his assumed reverence for British precedents and British fair play.

Mr. Davin brought off on Monday his attack upon Mr. Dewdney under guise of his motion to restore to settlers in the North-West the interrupted right to a second home-stead, and in the course thereof administered some hard thrusts. At any other time the epigrammatic brilliancy of the Member for Assiniboia would have delighted the House, whether or not he found sympathy with his view