

were there outside of law making any great questions to be considered and dealt with during these years. But in a growing country like Canada such a peaceful state of affairs could not last long. Its requirements were every day increasing and calling for greater displays of practical statesmanship. Thus in 1870 and the few following years the Premier found himself face to face with such matters as the acquisition and troubles of the North-West, the British Columbia Terms, the New Brunswick School Question, and the Washington Treaty. Besides these there was a host of minor ones which taxed his ingenuity to the utmost extent. The manner in which the settlement of these questions was conducted estranged from the Government the support of a large and influential independent party in the country that had previously acted with it. Sir John Macdonald's solutions for the problems that came before him were not at all popular. He was fast losing that undivided support which up to this time his tact and skill had retained. Even in the House of Commons, constituted as it was, he was sessionally losing ground. In 1868 his majority ranged from 55 to 65; in 1869 from 50 to 60; and in 1870 from 40 to 50; and sometimes the vote was much closer. In Ontario particularly the British Columbia Terms and the Washington Treaty were looked upon with great disfavor. Besides this, since the death of Mr. Blair, there had been no prominent