

with great tact and ability, and his speeches in the Senate are among the ablest and most valuable published in the Canadian Hansard.

Upon the death in 1891 of Sir John Macdonald, who was for about twenty years Premier of Canada, the choice of a successor was practically confined to two of his lieutenants, — Sir John Thompson and Hon. Mr. Abbott. The name of Sir Charles Tupper was mentioned in connection with the vacant post, and it is believed that he was not averse to assuming the functions of leadership. But Sir Charles had been absent from Canada for several years, and the conditions had in the mean time so vastly changed that he was scarcely in the race at all. The great provinces of Quebec and Ontario were opposed to his leadership, and in the maritime provinces he probably could not secure a following except perhaps in New Brunswick. The question, therefore, was whether Sir John Thompson or Mr. Abbott would be chosen.

Under the British constitutional practice, which prevails in Canada as well as in the mother country, when the leader of a government dies in office his administration comes to an end, and the viceroy is free to choose whomsoever he will in the dominant party to form an administration. Shortly after Sir John Macdonald's death, the Governor-General summoned Sir John Thompson, and requested him to form a government. The latter had been the late Premier's right-hand man since 1885, but he was only forty-seven years of age, and had been only six years in the House. During those six years he was undoubtedly the principal spokesman of the party, both in the house and on the platform; yet with becoming modesty and generosity, he expressed a preference to remain in the ranks, and recommended Mr. Abbott to the Governor-General. Hon. Mr. Abbott responded to the summons, and formed an administration. This step was a great sacrifice for him. His health was not good;

and he had reached an age when quiet and retirement are most coveted. He, however, obeyed the call of duty, and discharged the arduous duties of first minister until November, 1892, when, unfortunately, his health obliged him to retire. In May, 1892, he was created a Knight Commander of the order of St. Michael and St. George.

When his death was announced a few weeks ago, the press of Canada, without distinction of party, united in extolling the ability and integrity of her great son. We will cull one flower from the wreath of merited panegyric. The "Toronto Empire" said: —

"Mother earth never took to her comforting breast a kindlier man than the late Sir John Abbott. They who had knowledge of his simplicity of manner, the purity of his mind, the geniality of his spirit, the wisdom of his words, will not soon forget him, and the memory will be forever associated with the rugged old face, seamed with many a line of care, and furrowed deep by Time's unrespecting finger. But there was n't a wrinkle on that brave old face that was n't a beauty, that did not make it stronger and more impressive. It was a lion face, and it expressed the lion will which made a grand but unavailing struggle against death."

While Sir John Abbott did not occupy the high office of Prime Minister of Canada for so long a period as his illustrious predecessor, and while he had not displayed the wonderful all-round ability of his gifted successor, his place on the roll of Canada's statesmen will always be an honorable one. He had not Sir John Macdonald's *bonhomie* and knowledge of human nature, but he was a better speaker and a more thorough administrator. He was a singularly methodical man of business; measures committed to his care received his best attention to the smallest detail; and the result of his public labors will continue to be of enduring value to his country.

L.F.X.