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THE LATE HON. SIR JOHN ABBOTT, K. C. M. G.

ON the 30th of October, 1893, Sir John Abbott, the successor of Sir John Macdonald in the Premiership of Canada, died after a lingering illness at his home in Montreal. Thus, within the short space of two years and a half, Canada has lost three of her most eminent public men. In 1891 Sir John Macdonald, her first Premier, and probably the most renowned of colonial statesmen, passed away; and he was soon followed by his great Liberal opponent, Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, who had been the Premier from 1873 to 1878.

John Joseph Caldwell Abbott was the eldest son of the late Rev. Joseph Abbott, the first Anglican incumbent of St. Andrews in the county of Argenteuil, Quebec, and was born at St. Andrews on the 12th day of March, 1821. He received his primary education in his native town, after completing which he entered McGill University, Montreal. In 1847 Mr. Abbott was called to the Bar of Quebec, then Lower Canada, and began the practice of his profession in Montreal, where in a short time he became a leading advocate. He began his political career as a Liberal, and it is well known that his name was signed to the famous annexation manifesto of 1849. That manifesto he himself afterwards described as "the outgrowth of an outburst of petulance in a small portion of the population of the province of Quebec, which is among the most loyal of the provinces of Canada." He was first returned to the Canadian Assembly by his native county in the general elections of 1857, and he continued to hold the seat until 1867. For a short time during this period he occupied the portfolio of Solicitor-General for Lower Canada.

Throughout his whole public career Mr. Abbott paid special attention to questions of commercial law, and he was regarded as one of the best commercial lawyers in Canada. While he was in the Canadian Assembly, he prepared the Insolvent Act of 1864, which he afterwards published in book form with copious and useful notes. He also prepared a Jury Law Consolidation Act for Lower Canada, besides a number of other useful statutes. In 1862 Mr. Abbott was made a Q. C., and the degree of D. C. L. was conferred upon him in 1867 by McGill University.

When the union of the Provinces was consummated in 1867, it was but natural that a public man who had distinguished himself so much in the old assembly should aspire to a seat in the new Parliament of Canada. He accordingly placed himself once more in the hands of his old constituents, and was elected to the House of Commons in 1867. He was re-elected for the same constituency in 1872 and 1874, but was unseated shortly after the latter election, and was not again successful in carrying the county until 1880. He was again elected in 1882. During his later years in the House of Commons he made few speeches. He was chairman for many years of the Committee of Banking and Commerce, — a position as responsible as a seat in the Cabinet, inasmuch as many of the most important matters coming before Parliament are referred to this committee for close investigation.

In May, 1887, Hon. Mr. Abbott was appointed a member of the Privy Council of Canada, and was translated to the Senate, where he became Government leader. He discharged the functions of that position