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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

SIR JOHN MACDONALD is no more. For a week past, and more especially since the eventful hour on Saturday night, which brought the last scene in the tragedy, a thousand pens and tens of thousands of tongues have been busy in framing estimates, which in most cases are eulogies, in many perhaps extravagant eulogies, of the character and work of him who for at least twenty years past has been the most influential man in Canadian public life. It is an amiable trait of human nature which prompts it in the presence of death to remember only the virtues of the departed, though it would no doubt be far more conducive to all the higher interests of life, were the broader charity which puts the best construction upon the words and deeds of public men not so often reserved for the hour of their decease. It is yet all too soon for either political friends or opponents to measure fairly the merits or the faults of the departed Premier. The stage on which he played so conspicuous a part is too near the eye of the observer for its characters to be seen in proper perspective. The emotions and passions called into play are still too fresh and dominant for the cool judgment which is essential to the work of the historian or the critic. The writer who should at this moment, sacred to sorrow and overcharged with the sense of bereavement, attempt to anticipate the unimpassioned verdict of the future would show himself so devoid of sympathy, so out of harmony with the universal mood, as to be unworthy of attention, or worthy only of censure for his heartlessness. On certain points, however, touching the character of Sir John Macdonald all are happily agreed. All may not be ready to accord to him the merit of great magnanimity of spirit, but all will bear testimony to his genuine and sympathetic kindness of heart. Even those who are unable to recognize in him the broadest and loftiest statesmanship, will readily grant his rare and almost matchless power for harmonizing discordant elements and concentrating divergent forces for the accomplishment of ends which he deemed patriotic. While some lament that he appealed less frequently and less powerfully than could have been desired to the highest motives, and failed to set the noblest political ideals before the thousands of young Canadian admirers who paid him such homage as is vouchsafed to few, none can deny that in that profound knowledge of human nature and that keen insight into the subtle play of mental and moral idiosyncracies which are the constituent elements of what we call tact, he was a Canadian without a rival. If he was not a great orator he was a wonderfully effective public speaker. He may not always have convinced the intellect, or touched the conscience, but few men ever lived who knew so well how to lead the will captive. His claim to the title, "Father of his Country," in which he himself probably most delighted, and which is so generally ascribed to him by his admirers at home and abroad, may perhaps scarcely be sustained by the verdict of history. But if other minds first conceived and advocated the great ideas of confederating the five original Provinces, and of extending the empire of a United Canada to the great prairies and the Pacific coast, Sir John Macdonald undoubtedly had more than any other one man to do with giving the name of action to those grand conceptions. Other questions of still greater importance, from the highest point of view, press themselves upon the mind—such questions as that of the general moral trend of the political methods so steadily and successfully pursued by Sir John Macdonald, and the predominant result of those methods as manifested to-day in Canadian public life and national character. While we hope never to disregard, or rather always to deem it a journalistic duty to give prominence to the moral aspect of public questions as that which after all constitutes by far their most important characteristic, we do not feel called upon now to express an opinion upon this particular point. It has been a subject of the keenest controversy in the past. That controversy will, we have no doubt, be revived in the future. But all true Canadians will unite in desiring to put the best construction upon the mistakes or even the misdeeds of the great man who was but yesterday laid in the Kingston tomb. All will remember that if Sir John Macdonald was personally ambitious, his ruling passion was closely identified with the progress and aggrandizement of his country, that he never sought to enrich himself at the expense of his fellow citizens, and that he devoted the energies of a long life and of powers of intellect such as are given to very few to the service of Canada.

THE adjournment of Parliament for more than a week without any announcement as to the man who will be summoned by the Governor-General to take the place of the fallen Chieftain will be generally, and may perhaps be pretty safely, taken to indicate that there is serious difficulty in making the selection. This is not surprising. "What shall the man do that cometh after the King?" is a hard question, when the king is one who has long reigned by dint of sheer force of character. It is often the case in institutions of all kinds which require special strength or sagacity in their rulers that the advantages which accrue for a time from having at the head one man who is *facile princeps*—head and shoulders above all around him—are largely counterbalanced by the troubles which are sure to arise when he passes from the stage. Even in a town council, or a university board, it not infrequently happens that the withdrawal of one towering personality whose autocracy has been endured for the sake of the prosperity and prestige it has brought, is the signal for either an interregnum of chaos or a feeble reign of mediocrity. So often is this the case in the larger as in the smaller spheres that it sometimes seems questionable whether the rule of a Cabinet of able but not extraordinary statesmen may not in the end prove better for the nation than the more brilliant *regime* of a political genius. Why it is that the leader of extraordinary powers, alike in smaller organizations and in the nation, so seldom surrounds himself with associates of the highest ability is difficult to understand. It can hardly be that such men fear comparison with colleagues of the largest calibre, or dread rivals near the throne. It may be that, in accordance with the purport of a saying ascribed to Sir John Macdonald, though very probably never uttered by him, such leaders find men of ordinary ability more ready and pliant instruments for the carrying out of their plans. Or it may be that men of independent strength and high ambition find it disagreeable to be constantly overshadowed and reduced to the position of mere satellites, revolving around a planet of the first magnitude. Whatever the cause, the fact is only too patent. One would have supposed that Sir John Macdonald, after having ruled Canada as Premier for so many consecutive years, would have surrounded himself with a little galaxy of the most brilliant statesmen the soil of the Dominion, by no means niggardly in its crop of native talent, was capable of producing. So far is that from being the case that in the whole row of the lieutenants who now lament the loss of their captain—we say it with all respect to those who were the colleagues of the deceased—the political quidnuncs are utterly unable to mention the names of more than two or three who could by any stretch of imagination be regarded as possible premiers. Sir Charles Tupper is not, of course, a member of the Cabinet, and if he were, he has shown himself conspicuously lacking in some of the qualities that are indispensable to successful leadership. There remain, therefore, barely two possible successors out of the dozen or more of Cabinet Ministers, Hon. Mr. Abbott and Sir John Thompson, while the delay of His Excellency in calling one of these to the front shows that there are serious difficulties connected with the selection of either. It is likely enough that the political suspense may be ended by the time that these words meet the eye of the reader. Should that be so, the practical difficulties in the way of forming and managing a new administration will have been but begun. Where they will end time alone can tell.

TWO enterprises in which the future interests of the city of Toronto are deeply involved are now before the Council for decision and action. We refer, of course, to the Street Railway and the Ashbridge's Bay reclamation scheme. Both involve the handling of large sums of money, and the use and control of very valuable properties. The question of civic economy involved in the two cases respectively is whether the city shall carry on the work of reconstructing and operating the railway, and of reclaiming the marsh lands directly by means of its own officials, or shall hand both over to private companies for a term of years. To anyone considering the question on its merits, without reference to the alleged teachings of civic history and experience, the answer would seem to be easy. It is evident that no company would undertake the one work or the other, save with the confident expectation of being able to reap a good profit immediately, or with a strong hope of a very large return in the future. Nor is it reasonable to expect that any company would take upon itself such an obligation without binding the city to respect its monopoly for a long time to come, say twenty-five or thirty years at least. But twenty-five or thirty years is a long period in the history of a young and growing city. It is evident, therefore, that in such a case the citizens would not only be paying, in addition to all the actual cost of the respective undertakings, another very considerable sum for the enrichment of a firm of contractors, but would also be in very great danger of putting out of their own reach, for at least a generation, very valuable properties or franchises, the loss of which they or their children would have cause to regret. Hence the query naturally presents itself: Why should not the city carry on the business for itself, in each case, and derive for its citizens all the benefits which would have otherwise accrued to the contracting firm? One of the first acts of such contracting firm in either case, on being assured of the contract, would be to put the actual management of the business into the hands of expert and trustworthy overseers and accountants. By these the actual work would be carried on. But why should not the Council elected by the citizens to conduct their public affairs do the same thing? The services of the same managers or of others as capable would be equally available to them, and by retaining the properties and management under their own control they might not only save for the citizens the large profits of the contracting middlemen, but also keep it in the city's power at any time to correct mistakes, change plans, enlarge or contract operations, and keep for those to whom it rightfully belongs, that is, for the whole community, the "unearned increment," be it large or