

OTTAWA NOTES.

THE week now almost closed has been one of the most exciting known in the Parliament Buildings since Confederation. For some time the fate of the Government hung in the balance. The preponderating influence of the French Canadian members was withdrawn, and all waited with breathless interest to see into which scale it would be thrown.

Just for the sake of making a complete story, and not with a view to imparting information, it may be worth while to go over the facts of the case. The trouble culminated on Tuesday evening last. The Government's resolutions in favour of loaning the Canadian Pacific Railway Company twenty-two and one-half millions, and making other modifications in the contract with that corporation, had been before the House of Commons for two weeks. On the Friday previous the House had declared by resolution that the discussion upon the question should have precedence from that time. This was generally taken to mean that the difficulties in the Ministerial ranks had been settled, and that a majority for the Ministry was assured. These difficulties had arisen through demands of the French Canadian Conservatives of Quebec for large grants to that Province. One of these grants being toward paying something to the construction of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa & Occidental Railway, which it is contended is as much a part of the great through-line as is the Canada Central, which was subsidized by the Mackenzie Government, a settlement of the whole question would naturally be pressed for before the Canadian Pacific was allowed to handle more millions of the public money. Monday evening the French Canadians held a caucus in Room No 8, at the western end of a long corridor leading from the main lobby. Hour after hour passed and still no definite result was arrived at. At two o'clock, shortly after the adjournment of the House, the meeting broke.

Next morning the air was full of rumours. It was said that the claims of Langevin and Chapleau had been discussed with a good deal of acrimony, and that on a vote being taken Sir Hector's supporters were found to number only four, while Mr. Chapleau could claim forty-two. The demands to be formulated to the Government were said to be in some respects most reasonable, and in some respects nothing short of attempted public robbery. The question was whether the Government would accept or reject. Three o'clock, the time for the meeting of the House, came and passed. The fact that the Speaker did not take his seat then excited no comment, for the Ministers are not generally in their places ready for the Speaker's entrance until twenty minutes past the hour. Quarter past three, half past, and even a quarter to four came, and the bells which announce the Speaker's entrance remained silent. A few minutes later, however, the mace was borne down the corridor, the Speaker followed and and took his place. The galleries were soon thrown open and were quickly crowded, for Sir John had vowed a vow, and had it recorded in the Hansard, that early or late, for or against the resolutions, the question had to be decided that day, and it was expected that the session would be a lively one. On the opening of the sitting the most conspicuous people were the French Canadian Conservatives, for, except for the Ministers, they were all absent. It was known that they were again in caucus, deliberating upon the results of an interview of their spokesmen with the leading men in the Ministry. Rumours were current that the great majority of their number had resolved not to be satisfied with the vague promises they had received, but to hold out until a definite proposition was made. Failing a definite proposition—well, they didn't like to do anything unpleasant, but they feared Sir John would have to go.

Looking down at the House from the gallery, there was little to indicate that a crisis had come up with the suddenness of a tropical storm. The Ministers, except two, looked unconcerned. The two were Sir Charles Tupper and the "Chieftain." Sir John looked paler than usual, and less satisfied. Mr. Blake spoke rather angrily about the waste of time in the late opening of the House, and resumed the look and attitude customary to him—of a man who needs rest. The only anxious looking man on the Liberal side was Mr. Trow, the chief whip and organizer-general of the party. The Liberals refrained from speaking; they would have compelled the Government either to trust a vote with their difficulties still unsettled, or to put up speakers to talk against time, while they made peace with the Quebec contingent. Some Liberals thought this good policy, and would have been glad to see it acted upon. The difficulty was, that the men whose turn it was to speak could not be induced to retain their seats. Thinking that he was entitled to speak, Mr. Charlton gravely proceeded until a few minutes to six, when he asked that it be called six and recess taken, as he had yet an important point to deal with. Meantime the Quebec Conservatives had remained away, whispered conversations had taken place between Sir John and Sir Hector, Sir John and Mr. Caron,

Sir John and Mr. Chapleau. There had been a busy time in the lobbies, and at six o'clock the situation was at least no more unfavourable for the Government than at the opening of the House.

When the House resumed its session Mr. Charlton resumed his speech, and the Ministers and their go-betweens and helpers resumed their negotiations. Sir John's face was even paler than ever, and its lines expressed weariness and determination. Mr. Blake leaned forward on his desk with his head on his arms and his characteristic "slouch" hat pushed back upon his neck. This is his usual attitude at the night-sittings, and he has an undoubted right to indulge in it, even during a crisis. But, wonder of wonders, early in the evening Sir John himself leaned forward in much the same way, and there were the leaders both apparently asleep, Mr. Charlton still talking, the Bleus still in caucus, and the trouble coming nearer every moment.

It was strange to notice how the name by which the Premier was spoken of changed in the mouths of many who spoke about him. Usually he is called "Sir John." That night the man who talked about him and what he ought to do, spoke about him more frequently as "the old man." As the vote came nearer that was to decide the fate of his Government, even his opponents seemed to feel more kindly toward him. It soon became known that a final answer was awaited from the discontented ones at nine o'clock. By this time Mr. Charlton had given place to Mr. Dawson and the Liberals had Mr. Paterson in reserve, many of them praying devoutly that he would not speak at all. Shortly after nine the rumours were to the effect that a truce had been patched up and that all would be well.

But this was discredited, for a new influence had made itself felt. Learning of the troubles in the Government ranks, a prominent official of the Grand Trunk, and the burly French Canadian known as "King" Senecal, had come up by special train and were ready to do what they could to influence the Bleus against the Canadian Pacific interests. As the French Conservatives swarmed out they were "lobbied" in the most approved style. They kept to the front lobby and, crowded as it was with tired and excited men, the scene was one not soon to be forgotten.

In the House, Mr. Dawson had taken his seat and Mr. Paterson had the floor. After him came Mr. Ross, of Manitoba, elected by the Liberals but regarded by them always with suspicion. He came out square in support of the resolutions, and his speech was greeted with cheers by the Government supporters. Then came Mr. Mulock with the shortest speech of the debate, then Mr. Laurie, and at one o'clock the division.

As the bells in corridors and rooms vibrated clamorously the French members filed in. They were not enthusiastic, but rather sullen. They voted to a man against the amendment of Mr. Cameron, which had to be decided before the main motion came on. Then the House adjourned, and thus ended a memorable night.

ED. RUTHVEN.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F.—Your communication is unavoidably carried over until next week.
W. H. STEVENS.—The subject is exhausted.
Geo. T. DENISON.—Next week.
S. A. C.—Next week.
H.—"Luminous Skies" next week.

CO-EDUCATION.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—In the last number of THE WEEK a writer takes "A Bystander" to task for what he is pleased to call his "somewhat stereotyped warnings against the evils of co-education," and with an air of infallibility worthy of the Vatican, he pronounces the opinion that the time is close at hand when every one who opposes his dictum "will be regarded as a fossil anachronism."

Now it is somewhat odd, in view of this sweeping verdict of "fossil anachronism," that not only Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and other ancient seats of learning and science, but Owen's College, Manchester,—the youngest and, as one might fancy, the most radical of all,—has, after mature deliberation, decided against co-education. The writer refers to 120 Universities and Colleges in the United States in which co-education is practised. How many of them will compare with a second or even third-rate Ontario High school? Even at Oberlin the actual students, as compared with those pursuing mere rudimentary studies, or engaged in music and other "accomplishments," are a mere handful. There, however, the blessings of co-education are enjoyed to the full. Its president describes love-making as the normal condition of things and matrimony as the M.A., which precedes and supersedes the time-honoured bit of "fossil anachronism" styled Bachelor of Arts.

But Canada we are assured has its own examples. Is there not the Normal School where young men and women study together? And we would ask, did not Dr. Ryerson recognize the exceptional character of such co-education by the rule that the young gentlemen and ladies were