

own political destiny? And, if, in thus working his way, he should have refused to follow a leader in whom he had ceased to repose his confidence, and declined to be counted a cypher in a row of cyphers, smothering the voice of his conscience, we must applaud his honesty, leaving others to deplore his lack of that quality of pliability by which some men, not so highly endowed, achieve that measure of success of which they are capable.

Sir Richard entered parliament a young man. He was but twenty-seven years of age when, in 1865, he took his seat for Lennox in the legislative assembly of Canada. For these thirty years,—except in 1883, when Centre-Huron, the riding he represented, was wiped out of existence by the “redistribution act”—he has devoted all his time, a large part of his private means and all his brilliant abilities to public affairs. More than any man in this country, he resembles those statesmen of Great-Britain who, possessing all the means and opportunities for selfish enjoyment, yet prefer to spend their days in the exacting and often thankless labours of public life. It is well for the nation that has sons thus devoted to its service; and a sufficient answer to the heated partisans who assail them, in the fury of the fight, with insult and detraction, is to be found in the fact that they do thus devote themselves to a service so exacting and perilous. As an expression of Sir Richard's views on this subject, I may quote a passage from his speech in reply to the speech on the Budget, in 1882: “I have no objection whatever,” he said, “to any man accumulating as large a fortune as he can by any honest and legitimate means. I do not mean to say that I regard it as the highest aim and object in life; and I may say this, that if that be regarded as the highest end and object of life, we would not be engaged in politics, for my experience in politics is this, that, although many men have entered office rich and left it poor, no honest and honourable man ever entered office poor and left it rich.”

Those who now admire Sir Richard's wonderful command of language would hardly believe that, when he first essayed the role of public speaker, he was slow and hesitating, while what some considered an affectation of pronunciation imparted an unpleasing mannerism to his utterances. But he rapidly overcame these defects, and it may be said that there is no man in Canada to-day who possesses in a more eminent degree the power of thinking on his feet and of