

## J. P. WHITNEY, K. C., M. P. P.

James Pliny Whitney, K.C., is a man, who, if his rise into notoriety has not been meteoric, yet has been very remarkable. Like the leader of the Government he is a native of the Province, having been born at Williamsburg, near Cornwall, on October 2nd, 1843. He received his early education at the Cornwall Grammar School, and following the tendencies of his natural gifts, he studied law, and was called to the bar in 1876. For the next few years he practised this profession most assiduously and successfully in his native county. He soon became one of the recognized "legal lights," entering upon cases and such duties with a vigor, a perseverance and a determination that reminds us of his doughty political *confrere*, Sir Chas. Tupper. A failure was but an incentive, and had he confined himself exclusively to his chosen calling he would without doubt become one of the great jurists of Canada. But like a few other public personages he resolved to offer his time and services to his country, and so entered public life by contesting successfully the local election in Dundas in 1888. It is from this date that he was brought before the eyes of the electors, and he very soon proved that he was not elected to be a figure-head in his party. He early assumed a commanding position among his political colleagues, and perhaps no other man in provincial politics has had a more rapid advancement. One of his marked characteristics is his individuality, which, combined with those qualities so necessary in a leader, have gained for him the confidence in general of the Conservatives, with the result that he has steadily advanced in their estimation until they crowned his efforts in 1896, with the highest gift in the provincial party's power. If he does not take to innovations readily, this is counterbalanced by the doggedness with which he maintains a principle to which he finally gives his support. Mr. Whitney has full confidence in his own convictions, and is a worthy opponent of the Premier.

After the elections of 1894, our present Chancellor resigned the leadership of the Opposition. He was succeeded by Mr. Marter, who also resigned in a comparatively short time. This was prior to the elections of 1896, and in April of the same year, Mr. Whitney was appointed

as the standard bearer of his party in Ontario. During the campaign which followed hard after, he followed somewhat the plan of the recently defeated presidential candidate in the United States, *i.e.* he made a systematic tour of the province, spoke practically everywhere, making the province aware of the fact that he was going to make the very best of the opportunities offered. It was a politic move to bring himself, hitherto known but as a member, within direct and organic touch with the masses of Ontario. How far he succeeded may be noted in the last election. His keen perceptive faculties, his powers of oratory and his skill in debate, eminently fit him for his position, and his abilities as a leader and organizer were

well illustrated in this campaign against the strong administration which has never changed within the lifetime of most of our undergraduates.

As a legislator his most important measure has been to punish bribery by imprisonment—a measure which he introduced repeatedly and advocated with great persistency until it was finally adopted by the Government.

During the last session he held a consultation with the Attorney General, with what effect is generally known, resulting in an Ontario election law becoming largely his handiwork. Mr. Whitney is a conservative of conservatives, as he belongs to the old school, and it will be interesting to watch his attitude towards matters such as public ownership and municipalization. He was created a Q. C. by the Earl of Derby, in 1890. He has taken a deep interest in the Canadian Militia, having served in the volunteer force during

the Fenian raid, in '66, and is at present a Lieut.-Colonel in the Reserve force.

In religious belief, the subject of our sketch is an Anglican. He has been for some years representative of the Diocese of Ontario in the General Synod of the Church, and is a member of the Council of Trinity University.

Mr. Whitney's parliamentary career is yet in its youth. He is aspiring to place his party and himself on the Government benches, and it will not be his fault if the vicissitudes of political life preclude him from ever enjoying the honors and bearing the responsibilities of the Premiership of Ontario.



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