



As I write, there is a great fuss in Ottawa. The Parliament Buildings have all been swept and garnished. Preparations have been going on for weeks. The Departments have been busy over their Reports. Members have been writing for their "Rooms." Shops have been brightening and laying in supplies for a brisk trade. The hotels are all "remodelled," as they say, and "newly-furnished," as they say too, and everything is in readiness for the meeting of Parliament. The soldiers who are to be "on guard" have drilled and polished up their steels. Flags are shaken out. Everybody has on his best coat.

About twenty years ago, perhaps a few years before you were born, a very great event took place in Canada. All the Provinces became united into one country, and we called it the Dominion of Canada. A Capital was chosen for each Province, and it was arranged that each Province should have its own Parliaments, and manage its own affairs. Then a Capital was chosen for the whole country. Many thought that Montreal should be the Capital. Many thought that Toronto was better. Opinions were so different that at length the question was sent home to our own Queen, "Where is the Capital to be?" Her Majesty looked at Montreal on the map, and then at Toronto, but she found it hard to decide. So she thought it best to choose a place half-way between each, and that place was Ottawa. Of course we all accepted Her Majesty's decision, and Ottawa was made the Capital, with a Parliament to meet there to discuss questions about the whole country, and to decide in cases in which the various Provinces could not agree.

We began at once. Buildings were required for the Parliament, and for the work of the Government. By and by I shall tell you of the work of the Government, for you must not think it is all done by sitting in comfortable chairs in Parliament, or by standing making fine speeches. So the Buildings were commenced, and now they are completed, and for these twenty odd years have been used for the government of the country. They stand on a hill, overlooking the Ottawa River, and make a most handsome and imposing pile. The grounds around them are kept beautiful with flower beds and green sward, and the approaches are handsome and attractive. On the whole, we ought to be proud of our Ottawa Buildings. Some people say they are the finest in the world, next to those in London.

Every Province elects a certain number of members for the Parliament in Ottawa, and they all come up for the Session to learn what is being done, and to vote

when it is difficult to say what ought to be done. These gentlemen are called The House of Commons. They are two hundred and fifteen in number, and as they leave their homes and their business to attend to their duties in Parliament, the country gives them an allowance for travelling expenses, and an annual salary of one thousand dollars each.

For fear The House of Commons should at any time be led to decide to do something that may not be best, or not to do something that the country requires, another body of men, called the Senate, has been created, as a check upon the Commons. The Senate is composed of seventy-eight gentlemen. They are not elected by the people as the Commons are. They are simply appointed. The difference between a Member of the Commons and a Senator in this respect is that the Member gets the votes of the people, and the number of votes decides who is to be Member; while the Senator gets no votes at all, but is simply told by the Government that he is to be a Senator, and a Senator he is. The Member, too, is Member only for the Parliament for which he has had the votes. When a new Parliament is coming he has to go back and get the votes all over again, and if he does not get them he cannot be Member any longer. The Senator, however, is a Senator for life, and his annual salary is the same as the member's, namely, one thousand dollars a year.

Now this gives us a great many men to govern us; too many indeed, and so the Parliament says, "Let us choose one man to be our head, or our leader. He will learn about the country better than we can, and he will suggest to us what is best to be done. When he has thought it over well, and has suggested to us what he thinks, we will all come up to Ottawa once a year to talk it over and decide. We will talk and decide, and talk and decide, until everything is arranged, even if it takes weeks or months." So they do. They all come

up once a year, and sometimes it takes several months before everything is done.

But the head man, or leader who has been chosen, finds a great deal to do. He cannot do it all. He cannot even think of it all. He looks about, among the members who have been elected, for the men most likely to help him. He chooses a few of these, who come with the Leader and work with him. They meet a great deal oftener than the Parliament of course. Indeed they give their whole time to the country, and take charge of all

the different departments. They are called the Cabinet, and sometimes the Ministers, or the Ministry, or the Queen's Privy Council for Canada. There are fourteen or fifteen of them. They meet very often to plan and carry out their work, and sometimes they have to travel around a good deal so that they may know better what is going on in the department under their charge. Each member of the Cabinet has a salary of seven thousand dollars.

We have now got, you see, the Leader, who is called the Premier, or First man in the country; his Cabinet, or Privy Council; the Senate; and the House of Com-



WHERE THEY MEET IN OTTAWA.