

# REMINISCENCES POLITICAL AND PERSONAL

BY SIR JOHN WILLISON

V.—THE PRESS AND THE PRESS GALLERY



IN 1886, after prorogation of the Legislature, I was sent to Ottawa. But during the few weeks that I was in the Press Gallery towards the close of the Parliamentary session I wrote only occasional letters to *The Globe*, with a few editorials and editorial paragraphs. The immediate object, as Mr. Cameron explained, was that I should have opportunity to study Parliament in session and to establish with the Liberal leaders at Ottawa such a working relation as I had secured with the leaders of the Liberal party in the Legislature. A year later I entered the Press Gallery as *The Globe's* special Parliamentary correspondent. It was an honour to belong to that Gallery, although I would be sorry to suggest a comparison unfavourable to any other group of journalists which have represented or which now represent the press of Canada in the House of Commons. The traditions of the Press Gallery are singularly honourable and have been worthily maintained. No greater distinction comes to a Canadian journalist than to be chosen to represent an influential newspaper at Ottawa. I look back to my years in the Gallery as the most happy and interesting of my life, as desirable and enviable through association with the Gallery itself as through any intimate rela-

tion with political leaders or any necessary identification with the strategy of parties.

There began an instant friendship with Dr. A. H. U. Colquhoun, which for more than thirty years has been firmly rooted and deeply cherished. In that friendship there has been not only enduring pleasure, but continuous advantage. No man has greater knowledge of the sources of Canadian history, the constitutional evolution of the Empire, the complex influences which make this a hard country to govern, the underlying forces which in seasons of crisis restore the balance of sanity and authority. Between Dr. Colquhoun and myself in the consideration of public questions there has been as much of conflict as of concord, as much of difference as of agreement, but we could always so temper ferocity with mercy that personal relations were unaffected. I know that this should not be said until Dr. Colquhoun is dead, but I may not be here, and the word of tribute may be neglected.

Mr. R. S. White, once member of the Commons for Cardwell, for many years Collector of Customs at Montreal, and now again writing for *The Montreal Gazette*, was perhaps the most authoritative and distinguished member of the Gallery in the eighties. If he had less natural genius for a public career than his father, Sir