

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 7, 1886.

THE CHIEFTAIN HATH SPOKEN.

When a statesman like Sir John A. Macdonald visits a city, and gets lionized, roaded after, deluged with addresses, and otherwise bored and annoyed, as he has been of late in Winnipeg, it takes considerable raking among the effervescent nonsense of the visit, to reach anything worthy of note, which has been said or done. Such was the case with the late Winnipeg pow-wow. There was any quantity of gush and enthusiasm on the part of the Right Honorable gentleman's followers, and he condescended to tickle our local vanity, bestow upon us a fair share of political taffy, while at the same time he did not fail to impress upon his hearers the magnitude of the undertakings he and his colleagues had successfully carried through, and in doing this latter, an unbiassed hearer must confess that the Right Honorable gentleman did not indulge in vain glorying, but showed clearly a wondrous work performed.

The gist of Sir John's remarks in his last speech here were directed to what had been accomplished for Canada as a Dominion, and he was careful to gloss over as lightly and smoothly as possible what had been done for Manitoba, and what the province had to bear in order to secure the benefits conferred upon other portions of the Dominion. In the most inoffensive manner possible he made known to his hearers, what is a bitter draught to any independent resident of this province and the Northwest Territories, namely that Canada had bought and owned our country, and from that as an axiom all considerations regarding us and ours must start, even to the denying of rights freely conceded and never withheld from any other portion of the Dominion. Our efforts to secure the construction of a railway to Hudson's Bay he passed over with the empty wish for its success, and without the most indefinite promise of any further effort on the part of himself and his colleagues to push its construction. For promises of direct aid to the Northwest he substituted cheap flattery, and even in the dealing out of that valueless commodity he generally scored one point for the people of the

Northwest and two for the Canadian Pacific Railway and its projectors.

But upon one point Sir John was clear and unmistakable in his utterances, and that was on the question of railway monopoly. This burden, which is by far the heaviest, and the greatest drag upon the progress of the Northwest, he characterized as one of the things we must bear with, and referred us to "the sweet by and by," when this blockade of our commercial progress would be removed. Taken altogether the speech of the Premier of Canada before leaving Manitoba was replete with kind little sayings, but destitute of hope for the Northwest.

Statesmen when successful are the subjects of hero worship, and if success is to be the test, Sir John A. Macdonald commands such worship in Canada. He has accomplished huge undertakings in the interests of its people, and has made a life long and successful effort to consolidate a great Dominion, and link it by rail from ocean to ocean. Like all other statesmen his success has necessitated many an unwilling compromise, many a disregard of the just claims of the weak, in order to secure and retain the support of the strong. Statesmen like he have to become more or less creatures of circumstances at times, and their greatest works are often at best the progeny of expediency and compromise. In this respect Sir John is no exception, if indeed his circumstances have not made his political career an aggravated example. Surrounded by representatives of different provinces, each of which were jealous of any concession made to another, and living in a political atmosphere, about the purity of which the less said the better, to hold confederation together he has been so to speak, throwing food to the wolves, to keep them at bay, and it is only natural that the strongest and most audacious wolf would fare best. The weak ones have had to suffer, and in their suffering they are to be pardoned, if they fail to admire the greatest of Canadian statesmen, from whose policy they are compelled to suffer.

In his great railway policy Sir John has been forced to the same anomalous course, and while the strong members of the family of confederation find scope for glory and profit in it, more than one of the weaker have been made to suffer. It is plain that he is bound hand and foot by the C.P.R. to the policy of monopoly in the Northwest, although this portion of

the Dominion is the struggling and youngest, and least able to bear the pressure of such a monopoly. But even with the will to do so, (and we have no evidence that he is possessed of such), Sir John is powerless to strike off the shackles of monopoly. To maintain the accomplished efforts of his life's work, he must maintain this arrangement, which in any country less patient than Manitoba would cause a revolution. To secure aims that were laudable he has woven a net around himself, to rend which would shiver and scatter the work of a lifetime. In this he has done no more and no worse than abler and greater statesmen than he have been compelled to do, and the fact does not in any way lessen his greatness. Even here he has those who are apologists if not advocates of the policy under which this province totters, for while the principles of old political partyism are dead here, its bigotry and prejudice have still a firm hold upon many, who are willing to be pleased with Sir John's vague and empty advice of wait, which means wait in patience, while the cords of railway monopoly are strengthened, until the only hope of liberation lies in a rebellion. These prejudices are fast dying, and in time, and after Canada's greatest statesman has left this mundane sphere for a brighter one we hope, the patriotism of Manitoban Canadians will reach that sensible level of enlightened self-interest. They will then see that while Canadians generally may revere the very name of Macdonald, in their minds it may wake up very different feelings. Englishmen may honor the memory of Pitt and Castlereagh, while many Irishmen may curse it from their hearts, and not without some reason for so doing. Causes have not been so great, nor is feeling ever likely to be so deep in Manitoba as in Ireland, but it is a mild estimate to say that thousands of Manitobans will in the future regret that the whole career of the greatest statesman Canada has produced, does not furnish one point tending to wake up a feeling even of gratitude in their hearts. This estimate may also be applied to all Canadian statesmen since confederation, for so far as a policy of anything approaching to justice is concerned, the people of the Northwest may say truly, the advocate of that has yet to come. When our deliverer will arise depends very much upon the action of the people here. If unity in a demand for just rights is reached, the politicians will