

men. And I guess that picturesque bay on Lake Ontario, with the bunt little village stuck on a jut of land out from the river, looked pretty fair to the Bowells. Once they got to it they never left it. Bowell senior started a joiner and cabinet shop. Young Mackenzie, minus most of his natural schooling at that time, got down to business at turning table-legs with a foot-lathe. He was only knee-high; but he knew how to like work. At the age of twelve he went into the office of the *Intelligencer*. Printer's devil, apprentice, journeyman printer—still for a while he stuck to his father's cabinet shop in the evenings.

It was a queer little town, with Indians on the edges, a swamp in the foreground of the main street, a river rushing under the hill, and toggly old limestone walls, many of which still stand along the bay front. Sir Mackenzie knows it so well that it doesn't even seem queer to him. He never intended to be a newspaper man. He had no intention to go into politics.

The Rebellion of 1837 was the first thing that gave him a look-in at the peculiar political conditions of Canada. He was then fourteen; a gingery, stocky lad, with vim enough for a whole tribe of Stalky and Co. And he was in the Rebellion. He remembers that in the streets of Belleville Lord Elgin was burned in effigy. He remembers the gathering of rebels; how they tore down the wooden fence round the jail to whang the heads of the Compacters; how he himself stood by when a citizen got a bat on the head from a jail board in the hands of a rebel and went rolling down the hill; the rebel took to his heels and left young Bowell as the suspect who had whacked a head. He remembers an Irishman who drove to town with a cart-load of shillelahs cut from the swamp, much disgusted that the war was over.

"Och!" said he, "what's the good of peace when ye can have war that costs so little?"

And he dumped his load of swamp shillelahs on the market place.

The lad went to the Methodist Church. He has always been a Methodist. But he never allowed it to interfere with his optimism. The Bowells knew what it was to grub along with a heap of work and small profits. Young Mackenzie stuck to the *Intelligencer*. He had a strange tenacity and a sort of local cheerfulness that kept him from wanting to rove. Ships came and went in the harbour. He grew up and stuck to the paper. He had the faculty of being content with what he had and at the same time making it worth while. The old village weekly was the link between him and the life of the people and the life of the country just beginning to shape itself for nationhood. Bowell got his practical education from that paper. He read the exchanges and got to know what was happening in the large centres. He got posted on politics. He knew all about the price of pork and the value of lumber that went swinging out in the wooden ships. Belleville was big enough for him. He had imagination—and the *Intelligencer*, which, one day, he was to own. He read; plenty of books but not much schooling. He mastered the English language and got it not as an orator or as a profound scholar, but as a young man who in a small town felt himself in the midst of forces that would compel him some day to have opinions.

AND he was a Tory. He had served in the Rebellion. Of a humorous bent he had some sympathy with the rebels. But he had inherited Toryism; and it was not long until he began to see what were the real lines of cleavage between the parties in Canada. When the Act of Union between Upper and Lower Canada was passed he was a youth of eighteen, getting his hooks on to the *Intelligencer*. When reciprocity got into the cards between Washington and Canada he was a young man, realizing that there was something bigger than reciprocity to be worked out. Protection and the national policy were shaping up; slowly—neither one side nor the other being quite sure which way the cat was going to jump. American money was pretty plentiful along the lakes. Canadian money was scarce. Most of the shipping in Belleville harbour was Yankee. It took a good deal of practical imagination to be sure that a tariff might be framed that would keep Yankee money out.

But Confederation was to come first; whatever that might mean. And Bowell was one of the men who, when it came, saw the value of it. Before it came the first sign happened in the Grand Trunk Railway that struck Belleville and put it on the map of Canada; British capital—not Yankee; a chapter in colonialism. I don't know what Mackenzie Bowell's sensations were when the first train went through Belleville. Be sure he was excited. I imagine he had his opinions about the Atlantic terminus of the road being at Portland, Maine, and

not in either Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.

By this time he was getting fairly acquainted with certain almost fabulous characters east and west; Joseph Howe, far down below, the champion of a separative maritime; John Macdonald, in Kingston not far away, beginning to be the chief of Toryism; George Brown, up in Toronto, the great Grit. The west was nothing—except the habitation of one Donald A. Smith, now Lord Strathcona, and a few years older than Mackenzie Bowell.

But this was the era of the old, movable Parliament of Upper Canada. Ottawa was not yet discovered by Queen Victoria. It was still Bytown, or the Arctic village, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier remembers Goldwin Smith's description of it.

In 1863 Bowell ran for Parliament and was defeated. That was right in the midst of the agitation for Confederation. Macdonald and Brown and Howe were three big figures. Blake was another. There was John Sandfield Macdonald and Dorion and Cartier. There was Leonard Tilley, from down below, and John Costigan—and Laurier was yet unknown outside of Arthabaskaville.

ALL those pre-Confederation figures, with many more, were as familiar to the young editor of the *Intelligencer* as his father's cabinet shop had been in the thirties. Bowell had great faith in Confederation. He should have gone on record as one of the many fathers of it. He followed all the conferences that preceded the British North America Act. In 1867, the year of Confederation, he ran again for Parliament and was elected. From that day till the end of the Conservative regime, in 1896, when he was Premier, he never left the House. He saw the union governments come and go and the new principle of straight partyism emerging with Macdonald and the C. P. R. along with it. When Mackenzie drove Macdonald out, in 1873, Bowell remained in the House. As yet he knew comparatively little about Macdonald. The first time he had anything to do with the chieftain

was when he got a wire from Macdonald to go down east and help in an election. But before the National Policy got into the Conservative programme Macdonald knew what Bowell amounted to. When the first meeting was called by Macdonald in Ottawa to frame up the protective policy—somewhere about '76—Bowell was one of the junta.

"This never will suit Bowell," said Macdonald. "We'll have to get something pretty stiff for that radical."

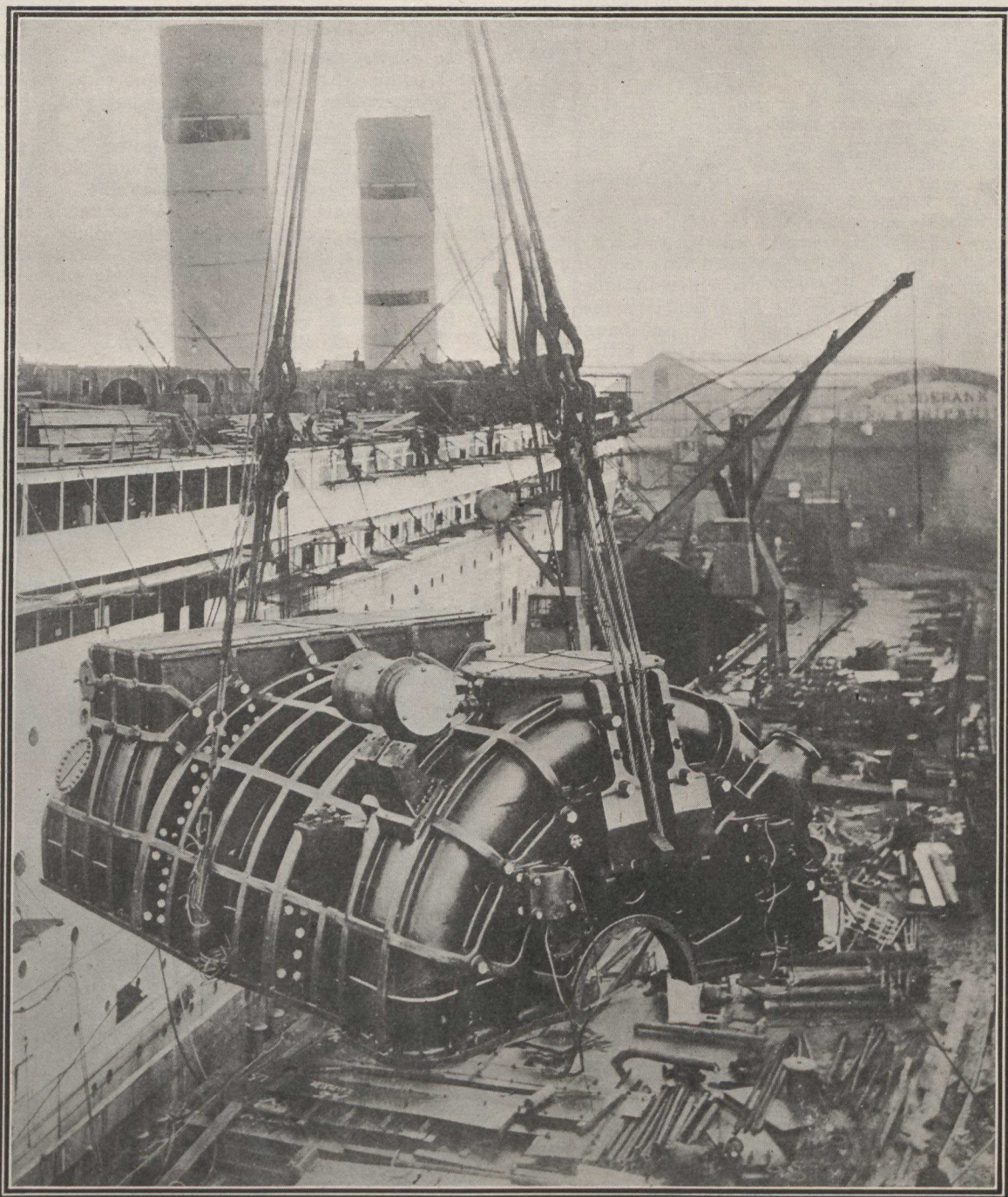
"No, it isn't strong enough to suit me," said Bowell. "The principle is all right. But put it higher."

And he wasn't any sort of manufacturer, either. It was not a matter of profit, but of principle, with Bowell. He was an Englishman. He was becoming an Imperialist. He is an Imperialist now—up to the hilt. He is more of an Imperialist than the present Government. He would not merely lend Great Britain \$35,000,000 for three ships; he would donate the money and let them have the ships without recall by Canada—so long as Canada remains in the Empire, which he expects will be a very long while yet.

So in 1878, when the Conservatives swept the country with the broom of the N. P., he would have had all the various tariffs of the province averaged up higher than the N. P. It was a big problem even as it was. But not so big a problem as Confederation, which, as he recalls, took a long series of low and divergent tariffs and averaged them up into a tariff for the whole country. In fact the tariff was one of the biggest problems in Confederation. A few years ago, when Australia was wrestling with federation, Mackenzie Bowell was over there. Asked his opinion on the workability of the scheme, he said:

"Infinitely easy for you. Look at Canada. We had everything against Confederation. We had

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