

swift and sounding sentences reduced the hostile element in the meeting to subjection was Honourable E. B. Wood, of Brantford. He had been Treasurer in the Sandfield Macdonald Administration, which held office during the first Legislature under Confederation. But for reasons which have never been fully disclosed, perhaps partly personal and partly political, but not necessarily discreditable, he joined hands with Honourable Edward Blake against the sardonic, intractable, petulant, obstinate, incorruptible politician, who was incautious enough to meet the House with a group of constituencies unrepresented and confident enough in his own integrity to neglect the "fences", which, if properly guarded, would have protected the citadel against successful attack. Defeated by one vote on the Address, Mr. Sandfield Macdonald sought to adjourn the Legislature for a fortnight, but he could not prevail against the forces which had manœuvred so dexterously to accomplish his destruction.

During the contest in Ontario Sir John Macdonald was engaged in the negotiations which produced the Treaty of Washington. The Conservative leader was anxious to have the election delayed until his return to Canada, but Sandfield would not be advised, nor would he delay calling the Legislature together until the vacant seats were filled. In Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald" there is a letter from the Federal leader which shows how fully he understood the situation in Ontario. "I hope," he said, "that nothing will happen to Sandfield or his Government. I am vain enough to think that if I were in his place just now, and had his cards, I could carry him through the first three weeks of the session (wherein alone there is any danger) triumphantly. I am not so sure that he will be able to manage it himself." Sir John Macdonald would have used the surplus which Sandfield had accumulated, have created two or three

new portfolios, and have delayed the session until he had a complete Parliament. But his advice was not taken. Mr. Sandfield Macdonald resigned, Mr. Blake took office, and for more than thirty years thereafter the Liberal party enjoyed an unbroken ascendancy in Ontario. All this because the counsel of the most consummate political strategist in Canadian history was rejected.

We do not know the exact relation of Honourable E. B. Wood to these events. We do know that he broke away from Sandfield Macdonald and united with Blake and Mackenzie to bring in a Liberal Administration. During the debates preceding Sandfield's downfall, a vigilant Conservative collected and pieced together the torn fragments of a note which Mr. Blake had sent across the House to Mr. Wood, and which said only "speak now". There is no need to elaborate an incident with which students of the period are familiar. It is clear there was an understanding between Mr. Blake and Mr. Wood and that Wood was ready to take the floor when his speech would be most destructive. He spoke, as has been said, with tremendous power and volume. Hence the sobriquet of "Big Thunder". It is curious that so many of the orators which Brant has produced or harboured had voices hardly less powerful than that which Mr. Wood possessed. Honourable A. S. Hardy was known as "Little Thunder". Honourable William Paterson could thunder as loudly as either Mr. Wood or Mr. Hardy. It is said that when Mr. Paterson first spoke in the House of Commons he was eager to have a word of commendation from Honourable Alexander Mackenzie. No man could have had less vanity than Mr. Paterson, but he courted his leader's approval. When the House rose he got alongside Mr. Mackenzie and whispered, "Do you think they heard me?" "Aye," said the Prime Minister, "they heard you at the Russell House." The Russell House was three blocks away.