

contracted for the building of the North Shore Railway as part of the Canadian Pacific Railway, almost all the Quebec contingent to the Federal Parliament begged him to take their lead in forcing the Government's hand. He had only a word to say (at least the probabilities authorize the statement) to hold the destiny of the Cabinet in his own hands; but he remained thoroughly loyal to Sir John, knowing that justice would be done in the end without violence. His loyalty and the excellence of his political judgment were equally conspicuous in 1879, when the Marquis of Lorne refused to sanction the dismissal of Lieutenant-Governor Letellier de Saint-Just. The French-Canadian Conservatives were almost unanimous in accusing Sir John's Government of weakness, and, at a meeting held in Montreal by the most influential Conservatives, to protest against the retention of the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Chapleau stood alone against the excited crowd of his own friends in combatting the violent tactics they wished to try.

When Riel was executed, Mr. Chapleau could have become King of the Province of Quebec. The Liberals united with the Conservative members in begging him to put himself at their head. There is no doubt that his action would have entailed the fall of the Government at that time and that he would have returned to power with an immense strength. One can get an idea of it by the wholly unexpected strength which this incident alone suddenly gave to Mr. Mercier. What would this weapon not have been in the hands of a man whose prestige was already so firmly established? For all men of sense and moderation, Mr. Chapleau gave, in these circumstances, proof of a courage and a self-denial which the purest disinterestedness could not surpass.

It is now generally admitted that his talents and his services have not had an opportunity of achieving all that they could at Ottawa, since it is unheard of that a Minister should have remained eight years simply Secretary of State; that is to say with a portfolio carrying no patronage. In our constitutional system, patronage is as necessary to popularity as the air is essential to the lungs. Generally a Minister is beloved according to the services which he can render, or the favours which he can distribute. There is no doubt that Mr. Chapleau has been obliged, as others, to experience