

MacDonald—our present Premier—at its close, walked over to him and paid him a high compliment. Perhaps Mr. McGee *did* at times allow his drollery too much vent, or, indulge in a superabundant quantity of invectives at other seasons. Be this as it may, the “grave and reverend seignors” who held sovereign sway in old Canada, were often at their “wit’s end” to preserve their gravity, when Mr. McGee was speaking on a question.

The air of Canada too, was tainted with distrust of Irishmen. It was said that an Irishman could not be trusted, they would be sure to rebel on a most trifling cause, it was preposterous to treat them with any degree of kindness; they had been so often tried, time and again, but all to no avail. These words grated harshly on the ears of the member for Montreal and he felt that he had a duty to perform. He must and would break the chains that bound his beloved countrymen. He did not pursue his old plan, no, he was truly loyal now, he remembered “Young Ireland,” he recollected, Dan O’Connell too, the new order of things must be brought about by clear calm reasoning, and to this he devoted himself with vigor. He earnestly besought a few of the discontented ones to let the evils of the past rest, forget their old grudges, and look upon the brighter picture. On, on sped the good work, the theory he had advanced was fast gaining ground. Men who had viewed him with distrust now began to think favorably of him and his professions. Through him the Irish were raised higher in public estimation, “a Loyal Irishman” could be seen now. It was a hard battle, but it was well fought and a glorious victory was achieved.

Now (1858) a crisis occurred in the Canadian Cabinet, through the violent opposition of McGee and his friends, which led to the formation of the “two day’s ministry.” McGee, contrary to his expectations, was not offered office; but sent on a mission to Ireland, on educational matters. The Ministry died still-born. In 1861 our member was returned by acclamation. In 1862, the Cartier-MacDonald Government received their death blow on the Militia Bill, and were forced to resign. J. Sandfield MacDonald and Mr. Sicotte formed a government, and Mr. McGee, through whose exertions the former administration had been defeated, entered the new Ministry with the office of President of the Council. The year 1863 brought about the dissolution of the MacDonald-Sicotte Administration, and then arose the MacDonald-Dorion Government. McGee was lying dangerously ill at the time of the going out of the one government and the coming in of the other, and the news of his retirement was not communicated to him until all arrangements were completed. McGee did not, to say the least, much like this rather shabby treatment.

Conservative principles were having an influence over him. His old opponents came to him, when he had been “left out in the cold” and made him overtures, which he at once entertained and embraced. He went to the hustings an avowed neutral, but in his speech he set forth his ideas in pretty plain and unmistakable language. “Gentlemen,” said he, “if we are unable to give you a conservative government, we will at least manage the public affairs on a more economical basis than has been done by the combination now at the helm.” He and his friends were sustained by the people and the Ministry, with barely a working majority were forced to resign in 1864.

The result was the Taché-MacDonald Government sprang into existence and Mr. McGee was made Minister of Agriculture. A short time after, this administration was also defeated and a coalition with Upper Canada, was