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eral therefore naturally called upon him to assume the duties of the first premier, and to form the first Government of the new Dominion. In the performance of this task Sir John Macdonald acted on the understanding that the coalition out of which the confederation arose would be continued still, in order to overcome any difficulties which might arise in getting the new ship of the State fairly off the stocks. Accordingly he invited prominent Reformers as well as Conservatives to accept office in his cabinet, his intention being that, as far as the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario were concerned, his Government should represent equally both of the old parties. His invitation was accepted by several of the leading men among his old opponents, and there seemed a fair prospect that one great object of the confederation was to be accomplished—that the bells which rang in the first Dominion Day would ring out the 'ancient forms of party strife.'

But the spirit of the old factions died hard. The calm which preceded the birth of the new constitution was but the prelude to a stormful party fight. Some time before, indeed, an incident had occurred of ill omen for the success of the coalition, which was seeking to merge the political differences of the past in a larger sphere of future work. While the coalition was maturing its plans, one of its members, the Hon. George Brown, suddenly resigned his portfolio, without any definite indication of the reason which led him to abandon his colleagues. Mr. Brown had long been a recognized leader of the Reform party, and, therefore, one of the chief opponents of the new premier, Sir John Macdonald. His action necessarily excited a feeling of uneasiness at the time, and seemed to receive its explanation afterwards, when the writs for the first general election were issued, and Mr. Brown explicitly declared the policy he intended to adopt under the altered circumstances of the country.

Sir John Macdonald had succeeded in forming a cabinet fairly representing the parties of the old Province of Canada, as well as the other provinces of the Dominion. To Mr. Brown it was a sufficient objection to the ministry that its head was his old political foe. His friends of

the Reform party, who had accepted office, became thereby in his eyes renegades from the cause of Reform; and if any one urged that it was unfair to attack the new administration before its policy was known, the answer was ready, that the only safe government is by parties, and that it would be hazardous to the interests of the new Dominion if its Government were unwatched and unchecked by a regularly organized opposition.

Mr. Brown has had the advantage, during the greater part of his public career, of possessing, as an exponent of his opinions, the most popular newspaper in Canada. About these opinions it is evident that he is thoroughly in earnest: he acts and speaks with the passion of intense conviction. Yet with every allowance for the earnestness of his intentions, and in view of all that his organ had to say in defence of his position at this crisis, we cannot but regard that position as involving a political blunder of the most serious nature. Even from his own point of view, was it legitimate to let the government of the country slip from the hands of his party, to fall under the control of politicians whose principles were worthy of being denounced in the passionate language which he uniformly employs? He had, at the time, not only a right to demand for his party an equal share with his opponents in the administration of public affairs, but he had also an opportunity offered by the premier of asserting that right. To demand that his party should exercise no influence on the business of the country beyond that which proceeds from the opposition benches, when they had the right and power of controlling the Treasury, seemed to many to involve a betrayal, not only of the interests of party, but of the more sacred interests of the whole people.

But the history of the formation of the Dominion was meaningless if Mr. Brown's position was justifiable. By common consent the new confederation was to drown in a flood of wider sympathies the arbitrary landmarks by which the old parties had been separated. Yet here was a proposal that the confederation should start on its young career by instituting a division of parties, which, as the nature of the case implied, was demand-