

During the session he wrote and published a pamphlet on the inland navigation of the Canadian Provinces, advocating an extension of the canal system. Throughout the whole of his public career he took special interest in promoting public works and improvements, more especially that *magnum opus* which had been successfully inaugurated under his auspices. He was also a zealous advocate of the Union, which was finally consummated in February, 1841. During the rebellion of 1837, though he was of course on the side of law and order, he adopted a very moderate course. He had a great contempt for Mr. Mackenzie, who had taken a very hostile stand to him in the House. He designated the enterprise as a "Monkey War," and did not regard it as by any means a serious matter. Immediately after the collapse of the demonstration at Gallows Hill, near Toronto, a magisterial meeting was held at St. Catharines, with a view to providing for the preservation of the peace in the district. Mr. Merritt presided at this meeting, and certain measures were taken for the desired end. A few suspected persons were arrested and examined, but no one was imprisoned, and a general policy of moderation was observed. After the Union of the Provinces he accepted the Reform nomination for the county of Lincoln, in which he resided. He was returned for that county, and represented it continuously for about nineteen years. Among many of the important enterprises with which he was connected during this period was the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge, which was projected by him in 1845. He was elected President of the company by which it was built, and so remained until his death. He also promoted the Welland Railway Company, and obtained its charter of incorporation.

Within a few months after the formation of the second Baldwin-Lafontaine Administration, in 1848, Mr. Merritt accepted office

in it as President of the Council. This office he retained until April, 1850, when he became Commissioner of Public Works. This latter position he retained until early in 1851, when he resigned his office and retired from the Government, owing to his want of harmony with that Body on certain economical measures. This, at all events, was the ostensible reason of his resignation, but as matter of fact he was tired of office, and longed for that perfect freedom and independence which a member of a Cabinet can never entirely enjoy. "The restraints of office," says a contemporary writer, "were in the last degree irksome to him. He had accustomed himself to speak when he liked, to say what he thought, and to do as he pleased; and the obligation, therefore, of speaking by the card, and in accordance with the decisions of Council, must have been as new to his experience as it was foreign to his taste. Few who had observed his previous career imagined that he would be able to stand the discipline; and the chief surprise his retirement occasioned was that it did not take place sooner. Those who most admired him doubted whether he would find his colleagues in the Government an applauding auditory, or the Executive Council a congenial place for airing successfully some of his peculiar crotchets on Government currency and finance; crotchets by which he had, as we think, impaired the influence of his grander and more statesmanlike views on the subjects of progress and improvement, and their relation to the almost inexhaustible resources of Canada. The truth seems to be that he was neither a party man nor a politician, in the exact sense of those terms. Government as a science had, as we conjecture, been but slightly studied by him. His popularity sprang from his independence, his purity of character, and the practical nature of his aims. Those who most differed from him never questioned the hon-