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MEN OF THE DAY



SIR CHARLES TUPPER, BART.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER

The family motto of the High Commissioner for Canada: "*L'espoir est ma force*," so far, at least, as his public career is concerned, might seem more appropriate, were it reversed and made to read: "*La force est mon espoir*," for, beyond cavil, sheer strength,—strength of purpose and of will, of conception and of execution,—has been his distinguishing characteristic. Surveying the series of historical events with which his name is inseparably connected and which will be referred to in their place, the simile may be applied of a snow plough forcing its way through one of the vast drifts that sometimes impede travel upon our Canadian railways. Sir Charles is nothing if not strenuous. Whatever he undertakes, he undertakes with all his might; and as the snow plough, by repeated charges, in due time clears the track for the waiting traveller, so he, accepting no repulse as final, returns again and again to the onset until victory is achieved.

The physical constitution of the man suggests and explains this mental quality of surpassing strength. In height, he is a little above medium. Without being at all corpulent, he is, so to say, thick-set, his shoulders being positively massive, and his head being set upon them with a certain forward inclination, as though he were pushing his way through some more substantial medium than the viewless air. "Assuredly," you say to yourself, after glancing from the powerful frame to the countenance whose every line speaks decision and determination, "this man would be a difficult antagonist to cope with in either the forum or arena."

In view of the attention now being paid to hereditary influences, it is significant to note that Sir Charles can trace his descent from a family which was so progressive in its day as to embrace the principles of the Reformation, although the so doing inevitably implied persecution. To escape the consequences of thus daring to be ahead

of their times, two brothers Tupper were fain to flee from Hesse-Cassel, about the year 1522. One settled in Holland, where his descendants still flourish. The other crossed over to England, and made his abode in the fair county of Kent. From him sprang one Thomas Tupper, who, inheriting the ancestral spirit of enterprise, undertook a hazard of new fortunes by emigrating to America, where he became one of the incorporators of the town of Sandwich in Massachusetts.

His son, another Thomas, was so fortunate as to win the hand of the daughter of Governor Mayhew, of Martha's Vineyard. One of his descendants transferred himself to the still newer country of Nova-Scotia, about the year 1760, and settled in Cornwallis. Here a family of ten sons and four daughters sprang up about him, one of the youngest becoming the Reverend Charles Tupper, a distinguished linguist and Biblical critic, whose eldest son is the subject of this sketch.

Sir Charles was born at Amherst, in the county of Cumberland, on the second of July, 1821, and received his early education at Horton Academy, then considered one of the foremost educational institutions in the country. Selecting the profession of medicine for his occupation in life, he was sent to Edinburgh to study, and, in 1843, returned with the degree of M. D. from the University, and a Licentiate's diploma from the Royal College of Surgeons.

He settled down to work in his native place, and, before many years passed, had established a practice that was hardly bounded by the borders of the county. If he then entertained other thoughts for the future, he never suffered them to interfere with the duties of the present. He concentrated his energies upon his profession, and, through showing far more anxiety to heal his patients than to be paid for the trouble of accomplishing it, laid the foundation of that enduring popularity which, in part at least, explains an experience unparalleled in the history of parliamentary institutions, he having been returned fourteen times continuously as the representative of the county of Cumberland in either the provincial or federal legislature.

The year 1855 marks the entrance of Sir Charles into public life. A general election for the Legislative Assembly was on, and Joseph Howe, one of the most brilliant men the province by the sea has ever produced, and then the leader of the Liberal party, had decided to run

for the county of Cumberland. In spite of the heavy demands his extensive practice made upon his time and energies, Dr. Tupper had found opportunity to manifest an interest in public affairs, and to give some hint of the stuff that was in him. His sympathies were with the Conservative party, although, as will be seen presently, his programme of action was so vigorously progressive, that the party had to expand its name in order to fit it. Mr. Howe would be an exceedingly hard man to beat, and the Conservative leaders were clear in their minds that there was only one man in the county who could oppose him with any chance of victory. That man was Dr. Charles Tupper. To him, therefore, they went with the request that he would accept the nomination as one of the candidates for the county. It was, of course, a very flattering request from any point of view, but hardly as attractive as flattering. To enter the lists against so formidable an opponent meant a tremendous struggle to a certainty, whatever might be the issue. In the meantime, the practice must take care of itself, and then, if success haply should come, the young physician's professional interests could not fail to suffer seriously while political returns were engrossing his attention.

Nevertheless, a reluctant consent was given, and then the gage of war having been thrown down, Dr. Tupper threw himself into the contest with all the strength of his strenuous nature. He had still, perhaps, much to learn in the art of public speaking, and he had the most intelligent and fascinating orator in the province to confront upon the hustings; but he stuck sturdily to his task, and, when the result of the polling was declared, as much, perhaps, to his own surprise as to the delight of his party and the chagrin of his opponents, it appeared that he had scored a brilliant triumph.

It is significant that, when Mr. Howe, on his return to Halifax, was inquired of as to the young doctor who had just taken his seat from him, with that frank readiness to do full justice even to a successful opponent, which was one of his many noble characteristics, he answered his questioners that they would soon find out he had been defeated by the leader of the Conservative party. The Liberal leader's prophecy had not to wait long for fulfilment. Although Dr. Tupper had won, his party had been practically cut to pieces. In a House comprising some fifty-two members, the Conservatives counted up only sixteen. At the first caucus held in Halifax, Dr. Tupper, among

the others, was called upon to give his opinion as to the causes of this collapse.

Although the latest joined recruit, Dr. Tupper had the courage of his convictions, and at once proceeded to indicate certain respects in which he believed the party to be wrong in principle, and which were fatal to its success. The Conservative policy of that day rendered it practically impossible for a Roman Catholic to belong to the party, and it must needs give way to a broader and more statesmanlike policy, that would enable men to stand on a common platform in politics, utterly regardless of the religious faith they might profess. In regard to the important question of railways, the position of the party was also a mistake, and the policy propounded by the Liberal leader was the true one, namely that these great works should at that time be undertaken and carried on by the Government, and not left to private enterprise. If the Conservative party would achieve success, it must execute a complete *volte-face* on the railway question.

To the surprise of many, the Hon. Mr. Johnstone, then the Conservative leader, not only admitted the soundness of the new member's contentions, but added that it was too late in life for him to undertake such radical changes, and the best thing to be done was to give *carte blanche* to Dr. Tupper. Mr. Johnstone's advice was accepted, and from that hour, although he had not as yet taken his seat in the Legislature, to the present moment, Sir Charles Tupper has been the undisputed leader of the Conservative party in Nova-Scotia.

A vigorous plan of campaign on the new lines was at once projected, and carried out with such skill and strength that, a year later, the Liberal administration was swept out of office, and the Conservatives came into power with a good working majority. In the new administration, Dr. Tupper had the important office of Provincial Secretary; and, being now fully committed to the uncertain sea of politics, he relinquished his profession altogether, and removed to Halifax, which continued to be his place of residence for many years thereafter.

Without loss of time, the new administration proceeded to fulfil its pledges. One of the first reforms effected was the removal of the coal monopoly. It was a fact that, at that day, no Nova-Scotian could dig a pound of coal upon his own property. A close corpora-

tion in London had the exclusive right of mining and selling coal. By the removal of this oppressive monopoly, a boon of incalculable value was conferred upon the province, and the development of her vast resources in mines and minerals entered upon a new and vigorous stage of progression. Another great evil requiring reform was the representation of the counties. This was of a most anomalous character, the small county of Hants, for instance, returning five members, while the great county of Cape-Breton returned only two. A bill was accordingly passed, redistributing the electors so as to obtain a more equitable condition of affairs. It was bitterly denounced by the Liberals, (the word "gerrymander" was not current in those days), and was no doubt chiefly responsible for the fall of the administration in the following year. Yet the fact that the settlement of the boundaries of the electoral districts then made remains undisturbed to this day is sufficient proof that it was effected with substantial impartiality.

From 1860 to 1863, Sir Charles was out of power, and resumed the practice of his profession. He did not permit any abatement in his political activity, however, and wrought to such good purpose as to turn the tables upon his opponents at the general elections of 1863, and to sweep the country from end to end. When the House met, he found himself supported by no less than forty out of the fifty-five members, and was in a position to accomplish almost anything.

The following four years were signalized by important legislative enactments all along the line of reform and progress; the creation of the Equity Court, the passing of the jury law, the establishment of and provision for free schools, the Executive and Legislative Disabilities Act, which was the first law made by any of the provinces prohibiting dual representation; the abolition of the cabinet offices of Financial Secretary and Solicitor-General, and the act reducing the number of members in the Legislature from fifty-five, which was far too many, to thirty-eight, which was none too few.

The vital matter of railway extension was not neglected. When the Conservatives returned to power in 1863, there were only nine miles of railway in the province. When, in 1867, Sir Charles passed from the sphere of provincial politics to take a leading place in the new Confederation, the railroad had been carried to the St-Lawrence on the one hand, and provision made for its extension to the Bay of Fundy on the other.

But, important as these matters were, they were all overshadowed by the vast scheme for the Confederation of the Canadian provinces, in the advocating and perfecting of which Sir Charles' services yield precedence to no others. The question of a federal union had long occupied his mind. In the year 1860, he delivered a lecture before the Mechanics' Institute, in St. John, N.B., on the political condition of British North America. On that occasion, he pointed out the serious defects that existed in the condition of Canada, and argued for a federal union as being the only feasible and practical plan for removing those defects, and placing the government of the country upon a proper foundation.

The time had not yet come, in the lecturer's opinion, to carry out such an enterprise in its entirety, but one of the best steps towards it would be a union of the maritime provinces. Four years later, he had the satisfaction of moving and carrying a resolution for the sending of delegates on behalf of Nova-Scotia to confer with representatives of the other two provinces upon the question of union. The conference took place at Charlottetown, but had hardly got to work before a request came from Sir John Macdonald, then Premier of the united provinces of Upper and Lower-Canada, asking that their deliberation should be delayed in order to enable himself, and those associated with him in the undertaking, to be present and offer a broader scheme for their consideration.

The request was granted. Sir John Macdonald, the Hon. George Brown, Sir E. P. Taché, Sir Georges Cartier, and Sir A. T. Galt, appeared and advocated a confederation of all the provinces, in preference to a federal union of only three. The delegates went back to their provinces more than half convinced, and the Nova-Scotian Premier realized that the great scheme was nearer accomplishment than he had conceived in 1860.

Subsequently, a second conference was held at Quebec, attended by delegates from all the provinces; and, after a month's earnest deliberation, a plan was propounded for the creation of the Dominion of Canada, which is substantially the constitution of the country to-day. The final touches were given to this plan at a third conference held in London, and then it was ready for submission to the different provinces.

In all these proceedings, Sir Charles had played a prominent part,

and had been especially helpful in the difficult task of harmonizing the widely-varying interests involved. But a still more arduous undertaking had yet to be achieved, namely, the overcoming of the hostility with which the scheme was regarded by the bulk of the people of the maritime provinces. He had to encounter an anti-confederate combination, which embraced influential members of both parties, and the struggle was a long, exciting, and bitter one, in which such intense feeling was aroused, that it has not altogether died out, and there are yet remaining in the province voters, the sole article of whose political creed is opposition to Confederation.

But there was no such word as "fail" in the Conservative leader's dictionary; and, by dint of heroic labour and eloquent appeal, the representatives of the people were steadily won over to his side until, at last, in 1866, he had the supreme satisfaction of seeing the measure triumphantly carried by a two-thirds vote, in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

And not only did Sir Charles convince the members: he accomplished a feat perhaps even more remarkable and significant. He brought over to his support the Hon. Joseph Howe, the great Liberal leader, and his chief opponent for so many years in the House of Assembly. The two men met in London, whither Mr. Howe had been sent by the Nova-Scotian Government to ask for a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of Confederation, with a view to breaking up the Union, if possible, and Sir Charles had been despatched by the federal Government to oppose his endeavours.

The result of the meeting was that, after long consultation together, Mr. Howe became convinced, not only that his mission was foredoomed to failure, but that it was his bounden duty to lay down the arms of opposition, and to devote his splendid talents in assisting to work out the scheme he could not have cancelled, and to work it out in the way that would be most beneficial to the province he represented.

Although Sir Charles had every possible claim to a seat in the federal Cabinet, on its first formation under the direction of Sir John A. Macdonald, he preferred to waive them successively in favour of Sir Edward Kenny and Hon. Joseph Howe, in order that the new administration might be as fully representative of creeds and classes as possible. It was, accordingly, not until June, 1870, that he took

office, his first seat in the Cabinet being that of President of the Privy Council, which he held for the next two years. He then was Minister of Inland Revenue until February, 1873, when he became Minister of Customs, and continued so until November of the same year, when the administration went out of power.

The three years whose history has thus been outlined were full of activity on Sir Charles' part, and he left his impress upon the statute book in the form of more than one enactment of national importance and benefit. Among these were the Weights and Measures Act, at first regarded with much hostility, but which has proved itself a boon of exceeding value, and the law prohibiting the importation into, and the sale of liquors throughout the vast North-West Territories,—“a Maine law,” covering a wider extent of territory than any statute of its kind that ever was passed, or probably ever will be so long as grass grows and water runs.

Of all the measures passed by this parliament, the greatest is, beyond doubt, that concerning the Canadian Pacific Railroad, with which wonderful undertaking no name is more closely connected than Sir Charles'. The North-West Territories and the province of British Columbia having been added to the Dominion, thus uniting the whole of British North America into one vast domain, the biggest by far of Britain's colonial possessions, the Liberal-Conservative administration, for so it had been called since Confederation, determined to make it a real and practical union, instead of a merely legislative one, and, to accomplish this, took steps for the construction of the most gigantic work ever ventured upon by a nation numbering little more than four millions all told.

At the outset, as may be easily imagined, tremendous difficulties presented themselves, and before long these brought about the downfall of the administration, and the return of their opponents to power under the leadership of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie.

This happened in November, 1863, and from thence until October, 1878, Sir Charles, although retaining his seat in the House, devoted himself to the practice of his profession both at Ottawa and Toronto, finding time, however, to take an active part in political life, both inside the House and among the constituencies. The Liberals had an overwhelming majority, but this did not daunt his courage, nor dash his hopefulness in the least. He was the financial critic of the oppo-

sition and the leader in all questions relating to the Canadian Pacific Railway, and he suffered nothing to pass unchallenged that seemed to him to call for criticism or condemnation.

It was during this sojourn in the cold shades of opposition, that Sir John A. Macdonald conceived the new fiscal policy, generally called the National Policy, which, being strenuously advocated by his supporters from one end of the country to the other, so took possession of the minds of the people that, at the general election of 1878, the Liberal-Conservatives came back to power with nearly as large a majority as their opponents had had after 1873. The majority was none too large, however, for the Government had to fulfil their pledges in regard to protection and for the construction of the great railway.

On resuming office, Sir Charles became Minister of Railways, so that henceforth the burden of the work and the brunt of the conflict in connection with the carrying out of the Government's railway policy fell upon his shoulders, which, happily, however, were quite broad enough and strong enough to bear the strain with ease. The original plan had been that the Canadian Pacific Railway should be built by a company aided by large grants of land and money ; but some portions of the proposed line were obviously so costly to build and would be so unprofitable to operate, that the Government thought it best to assume the construction of these portions, and, accordingly, in the year 1881, Sir Charles was enabled to introduce and have passed an Act granting a charter to a company composed of Canadian, British and European capitalists, who were willing to undertake the completion of what has been well called "the Queen's Highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

Two other very important measures relating to the railway, which were passed subsequently, but may be referred to here, were the Act granting the company a loan of thirty millions dollars, whereby they were enabled to finish their tremendous task some years before the time provided in their contract ; and the arrangements by which their rights of monopoly, acquired under their charter, were surrendered in consideration of the Government guaranteeing an interest of three and one-half per cent, for fifty years, upon fifteen millions dollars' worth of bonds, the proceeds of which were to be employed in certain specified ways.

The railway was built, as has been already stated, some years be-

fore the time stipulated. It has developed and prospered far beyond the utmost expectations of its promotors or its proprietors, and to no man more than to Sir Charles Tupper belongs the credit for this remarkable undertaking.

Nor was his interest confined to the Canadian Pacific Railway Act of 1879, and the Railway subsidies Act of 1883. He opened the way for the extension of the railway system in general, and by doing his best on behalf of the Intercolonial Railway, which unites the maritime provinces with the rest of Canada, succeeded in converting an annual deficit on the operating expenses of about three-quarters of a million dollars into a small, but promising balance on the other side of the ledger.

In the year 1883, Sir Charles Tupper was appointed High Commissioner in Great-Britain for the Dominion of Canada, and, for a year thereafter, performed the duties of that office while still retaining his seat in the Cabinet. But the toil of his dual position proving altogether too onerous, he resigned his place in Parliament in 1884, and, during the next four years, gave his whole attention to the furtherance of the interests of his country in the Old World.

In 1885, he was Executive Commissioner for Canada at the Antwerp Exhibition, and, the following year, at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London. To the latter, he was also appointed a Royal Commissioner by Her Majesty. In connection with both these exhibitions, but more particularly the latter, he manifested untiring energy and zeal in securing the utmost consideration for Canadian interests, and with such success, that Canada was generally considered to have had the lion's share as regards the accommodation for her exhibits and other important advantages eagerly striven for on such occasions.

A service of commanding merit, that Sir Charles rendered during these years, was the rescue of Canadian cattle from the ban laid upon other live stock by the Imperial Government, in order to protect Great-Britain from the destructive disease known as pleuro-pneumonia, with which American cattle were apt to be infected. The trade in live cattle between Canada and Great-Britain is one of growing extent and increasing value, and the prohibition of their importation by the Mother-Country would be a positive calamity to the Dominion. To prevent such a calamity has been the High Commissioner's con-

stant care, and, on critical occasions, he has not hesitated to go into the cattle pens and personally examine the animals suspected of infection, in order that he might be able, were the suspicion unfounded, to offer the strongest proof of that fact.

In 1887, another general election was announced, and Sir Charles, unwilling to be out of the fight, resigned the High Commissionership, and re-entered the Cabinet as Minister of Finance. He took a very active part in the campaign which resulted in the Liberal-Conservative administration being sustained by a good working majority. He continued to act as Minister of Finance until 1888, and, during his term of office, was responsible for the Customs Act, inaugurating a policy of protection and promotion of the iron and steel manufactures, and the resolutions for the transfer to the Government of certain liabilities of the Montreal Harbour Commissioners, incurred in deepening the channel of the St-Lawrence, and of the liabilities of the Quebec Harbour Commissioners, in connection with the Graving Dock and Harbour at that place.

Also, on returning to London in 1888, he arranged the placing on the market of a loan of £4,000,000 at three per cent interest, being the first colonial loan ever issued at that rate. Yet despite the low rate of interest, so high was Canada's credit, that tenders aggregating twelve millions sterling were received, and the loan was allotted at an average price of £95.1 per cent.

A very high and unusual honour was conferred upon Sir Charles when, toward the close of the year 1887, he was appointed one of Her Majesty's Plenipotentiaries to the Fisheries Conference at Washington, which, early in the following year, resulted in the signing of a treaty for the settlement of matters in dispute between Canada and the United-States in connection with the Atlantic fisheries. On his return to Ottawa, he carried a bill for the ratification of the treaty through the Canadian Parliament, and it was especially in recognition of these services that he was created a Baronet, on the 13th September of that year.

Since May, 1888, Sir Charles has again been High Commissioner in London, finding in the comparative ease of his exalted station opportunity for the recuperation of his health, which had been seriously affected by his arduous services continued through so many years.

Having thus glanced at the most prominent features in the public life of Sir Charles Tupper, it now remains to refer to those personal details which are necessary in order that something like an adequate presentation of the man may be made. The illustration which accompanies this biographical sketch, and which is from a recent and exceedingly accurate photograph, renders any characterization of his countenance unnecessary. Some reference, moreover, has already been made to his figure and carriage.

In regard to manner, he is exceptionally attractive. He is the most accessible of men. No barrier of haughty reserve rings him around like a barbed wire fence. Whether approached on public or private business, he always vouchsafes a ready and courteous hearing, never suggesting by look or word that the visitor is a bore, whose absence is much more desired than his presence. Not only does he hearken, but, if the request be right and proper, and it be in his power to further it, he heeds it; and his promise, if given, is to be relied on. He has a remarkable memory for faces, and for facts concerning those with whom he is brought into contact. He is of a thoroughly sociable disposition, and knows how to appreciate a good time, although, it need hardly be said, the course of his life has left scant opportunity for leisure.

In the administration of a department, he is prompt, painstaking, and progressive. His correspondence receives scrupulous attention, and he takes care to keep himself posted as to the main details of the work going on under his direction.

As a public speaker, Sir Charles stands in the first rank, whether his rostrum be the "stump," the platform, or his place in Parliament. His oratory is distinctly of the serviceable kind. It is not characterized by smoothly rounded periods, by carefully constructed antitheses, by studiously culled similes and illustrations. Its most prominent feature is strength, strength in thought and strength in word. It may not inaptly be likened to a mountain torrent in full flow, abundant in its volume, irresistible in its onrush, and imposing in its tremendous dash and mighty swirl. He has no superior in Canada as a "stump speaker." His brothers "Bluenoses" are fond of referring to him as the "war-horse of Cumberland," and the phrase tells its own story. When a general election takes place, he throws himself into the fray with an ardour and energy that make opposition

to him a task little short of heroic. Night after night, he will address audiences limited only by the capacity of the place of meeting, and hold their absorbed attention for hour after hour without exhausting either himself or his hearers. His tenacious memory enables him to dispense with notes. He looks straight into the faces of those before him, and stays not his speech until he has delivered himself of what he has to say.

Sir Charles' remarkable facility with figures needs to be noted. He handles the most intricate questions of finance with an ease all the more surprising in view of his professional training. His trenchant attacks upon the budget speeches during the Liberal administrations were always listened to by the House with profound attention, while his own budget speeches, when he had the portfolio of Finance, were considered to worthily compare with the Right Hon. Mr. Gladstone's, in point of lucidity and vital interest.

Concerning the private life of a man whose time and talents have been principally devoted to the services of others, in either a professional or public relation, there necessarily cannot be very much to say. Three years after he had entered upon the practice of his profession, Sir Charles, (then simply Dr. Tupper), was married to Frances-Amelia, daughter of Silas-Hibbert Morse, Esq., of Amherst, a lady of great charm of person and of manner, who has been to him a help-mate in the fullest sense of the term. Four children have been born to them. The eldest, James-Stewart, is a barrister-at-law, practising with much success in Winnipeg, in partnership with Hugh Macdonald, the only son of the veteran Premier of Canada. The second son is the Hon. Charles-Hibbert Tupper, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and likewise a barrister, who has already established for himself a notable reputation as a public speaker and administrator of an important department. The third son, William Johnson, another barrister, is associated with his eldest brother in practice at Winnipeg. The only daughter, Emma, is the wife of Major-General Cameron, R.A., Commandant of the Royal Military College at Kingston, Ontario. Sir Charles is a most affectionate father, who has always taken the deepest interest in the welfare of his children. Their mutual relations are of the happiest nature, and he has good cause to feel proud of his family.

He has been the recipient of many honours in the course of his

career, outside those which fell to his lot as the direct consequence of political triumphs. From its formation, in 1867, until 1870, he was president of the Canadian Medical Association, declining re-election on becoming Privy Councillor. In the year 1862, the provincial Legislature of Nova-Scotia appointed him a Governor of Dalhousie University. The year of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London, 1886, in connection with which his zeal, determination and diplomacy were so signally illustrated for the benefit of Canada, saw the University of Cambridge confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, while, on the very same day, the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers presented him with the freedom of their guild. He is also a D.C.L. of Acadia College, Nova-Scotia.

From the Imperial authorities he has received many gratifying proofs of the recognition of his commanding abilities and services. He was nominated a Companion of the Bath on the 29th June, 1867, and a Knight Commander of the Order of St-Michael-and-St-George, on the 24th of May, 1879. He received the Grand-Cross of the same Order on the 1st of February, 1886, and was created a Baronet by patent, dated the 13th September, 1888.

It hardly falls within the province of this necessarily brief biographical sketch to attempt any forecast of Sir Charles Tupper's future. At present it appears very evident the dignity and comparative ease of the high Commissionership to the "toiling and moiling" inseparably connected with the lot of a Minister of the Crown in Canada, although, at the same time, he is ever prompt to respond when the battle-cry is raised, and to take his place among the foremost in the fight.

He possesses exceptional qualifications for the office he now holds. He has a perfect mastery, not only of the political history of the Dominion, as to which indeed he might in truth assert *quorum pars magna fui*, but of her economical history, her resources and her possibilities. Through his experience in the departments of Inland Revenue, Customs, Railways and Finance, he has been intimately acquainted with the conditions of all the problems, upon the happy solution of which the prosperity and progress of the country depend.

To this abundant and well assimilated knowledge, he adds a manner of courtly grace, under which, like the steel hand beneath the velvet glove, lies a will of adamant that, combined with a rare gift of

persuasiveness, enables him almost to command success in any negotiation he undertakes.

He still retains the leadership of his party in the maritime provinces, and, owing to the handsome majorities in support of the present administration, returned in the recent general election, this leadership is of more significance to-day than ever before. By general consent, moreover, he is the heir-apparent to the Premiership of the Dominion. Although he has reached the bound laid down by the Psalmist as the ordinary limit of life, his natural force is but measurably abated, and, were the need to come, there is little doubt that he would be ready to take his place at the helm. However that may turn out, Sir John A. Macdonald, in the meantime, has no more loyal lieutenant nor trusted counsellor, and their mutual relations are, as they always have been, of the most cordial character.

In any event, even though the fates should otherwise decree than that Sir Charles Tupper should crown his remarkable career by becoming Her Majesty's First Minister, he will have achieved far more than sufficient to stamp his name and fame indelibly upon the history of his country, as one of her strongest, wisest, and most loyal statesmen.

J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

Ottawa, 10th May, 1891.

97 Cromwell Road S.W.

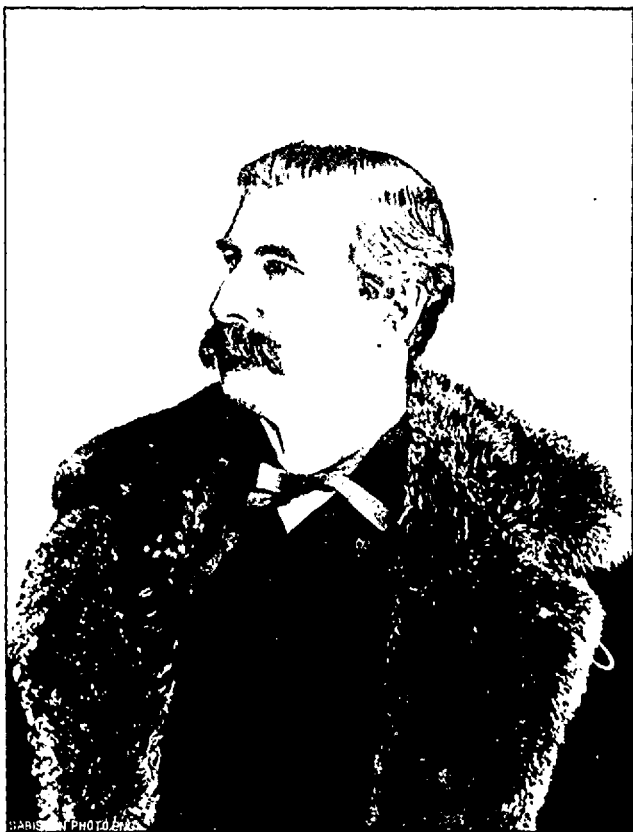
May 4th 1891

My dear Mr. O'Kelly,

I am very glad to see that in addition to your official duties, you find time to devote yourself to literary work and that you give so much promise of excellence in that direction. I need not say that coming from the same Province as yourself, and having had the pleasure of bringing you into the public service I follow your course with much interest and pride.

With best wishes for your continued success,

Believe me
Yours faithfully
Charles Tupper



HONORÉ MERCIER

HONORÉ MERCIER

It was in 1861. The Reverend Father Larcher, professor of rhetoric in the college of Ste-Mary, at Montreal, had arranged a grand public exhibition on the occasion of some holiday, I forget now what it was.

As a part of the performance, four students in turn were to deliver speeches, each in praise of a different branch of military service ; while to a fifth was allotted the task of reviewing the arguments and pronouncing judgment. Buteau Turcotte spoke in praise of the cavalry with that caustic spirit and splendid brilliancy of diction which are now, alas ! silent forever ; Charles DeLorimier, (to-day a judge of the Superior Court), extolled, with many flights of great eloquence, the merits and importance of the infantry ; while Ferréol Dubreuil gave superabundant evidence, as far as I can now remember, of the excellence of the artillery.

I, who came fourth on the list, demonstrated with equal conclusiveness that engineering ranks above all the other branches of the service, and that the absolutely indispensable things are mines, scarps, and counterscarps. The student charged with the duty of summing up and giving judgment, and who sat calm and dignified in the Judge's chair, was Honoré Mercier.

When the last of the four speeches was concluded, Mercier rose, and advancing slowly to the front of the stage, (for we were upon an actual stage), glanced for a few moments about the audience. He was not then the man of powerful build, denoting the strength and repose of maturity, whom we know to-day. In height, he was the same, but he had that youthful slenderness, and that slightly bashful manner which distinguishes every college student.

The situation was, it must be owned, a sufficiently trying one. The impassioned and vibrating tones of DeLorimier's address had created

a profound impression. To gain a hearing after him, and, above all, after the delivery of four long speeches, was no ordinary undertaking. Mercier was perfectly conscious of this, and his first words betrayed a lack of assurance. He had uttered only a few sentences, however, when it became evident that he had regained possession of himself, and, at the same time, taken possession of his audience. Speaking gravely, slowly, but very audibly, he began his summing up, which was clear, succinct, and careful, —putting aside or turning to advantage all obstacles in the way, suppressing extraneous considerations and holding fast by the leading idea, which he never failed to grasp. Gradually, more warmth crept into his voice, without, however, to great a sacrifice of the dignity which the circumstances imposed upon him; and his sonorous words, metallicly clear in their tone, flew like arrows, straight to their mark, in every corner of that large hall. Everyone listened with surprise, mingled with pleasure, to the speaker who, though still but a youth, was already asserting himself with such genuine authority, and who held his way, calmly but surely, towards his goal, with a certainty of aim and a persistency of will that are by no means common.

I cannot remember now which branch of the service gained the day. I think, indeed, that all four of us had our share of the victory. What I do remember is that, when Mercier had concluded his summing up, he had achieved a great and well-earned success, and had already given earnest of a future career of great distinction.

Those of us who have watched his progress since that time know how bountifully he has fulfilled that promise.

Honoré Mercier is the descendant of a French family, who originally settled in the district of Montmagny, and a branch of which, afterwards, took up their abode in the county of Iberville. His father, J. B. E. Mercier, and his mother, Marie-Catherine Laflamme, lived at St-Athanase, where he was born on the 15th of October, 1840.

After completing his course at the college of the Jesuit Fathers, in Montreal, he studied for the Bar, and began the practice of his profession at St-Hyacinthe, in 1865.

He had already, however, some three years before, made his *début* as a journalist, and edited the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, which was then devoted to the defence of the political views of Mr. Sicotte, who had gone over to the Opposition. This brief sketch does not

allow of my entering into the details of the political history of that time, in which Mr. Mercier, young as he was, took a very active part. I may say, nevertheless, that as early as 1864, at the commencement of the discussion as to the federation of the provinces, he vigorously combatted that project and was even forced to abandon the *Courrier*, the management of which did not share his views.

In 1866, as confederation, in spite of numerous protests, seemed destined to pass into the region of accomplished fact, Mr. Mercier concluded that all further discussion would be utterly useless. He decided to submit to a trial of the new *régime*, and renewed his connections with the *Courrier*. Subsequently, however, when the maritime provinces revived several questions which had seemed to be finally decided, the young controversialist, becoming discontented with the manner in which those questions were being dealt with, again resigned his position on the paper, and devoted himself almost exclusively to the practice of his profession.

Apart from the reputation which his spirited controversies had gained for him, he had further made himself known by many lectures and speeches which had created much comment.

In 1871, the question of Separate Schools in New-Brunswick, which placed the most precious rights in jeopardy,—brought him again into the arena. He valiantly defended the minority against the attacks of a not over-scrupulous majority, and attempted then, for the first time, to form a National party, which would enable the two great divisions of the Lower-Canadian representatives to unite and fight together on the basis of a common interest. He was one of the most forcible and successful of those who, on the platform and in the press, devoted themselves to the discussion of these great questions, so full of importance to our compatriots whose lot was cast in other provinces.

In 1872, the electors of Rouville returned him to parliament. At the first session, this very question of the New-Brunswick schools was brought before the House by the honourable Mr. Costigan, and gave rise to a long debate. The young member delivered a speech, on the subject, which immediately secured for him a distinguished position in the House. It was not a common occurrence to hear a question treated with such breadth of view, or such skilful tact; and equally rare was the force of logical reasoning, which, elucidating

every point,—dismissing all petty objections and special pleading,—gathered together at last, as into a strong bundle, all the most powerful considerations in support of his contention.

Upon a division being taken, the Government was defeated by 35 votes ; but the head of the Ministry, Sir John A. Macdonald, did not deem it necessary to resign.

A new session was convened in the autumn of the same year, and, as everyone knows, the Ministry resigned in consequence of an episode known as the "Pacific Scandal." The honourable Alexander Mackenzie was called upon to form a new administration.

Mr. Mercier, meanwhile, continued the vigorous campaign which he had undertaken, both from the hustings and in the press. Endowed with an energy and activity no less remarkable than his manifold talents, he was always the first at any post where there was a struggle to be sustained, and gave himself up ungrudgingly, body and soul, to the defence of the cause he had so ardently embraced.

In 1874, the electors of Rouville eagerly pressed him to present himself again as a candidate for their county ; but, by an act of patriotism, he withdrew in favour of Mr. Cheval, in order to avoid "splitting" the vote.

In 1878, he contested the election for the county of St-Hyacinthe with Mr. Tellier, who gained it by only 6 votes.

In the spring of 1879, at the time of the lamented death of Mr. Bachand,—a member of the Quebec cabinet and Treasurer of the province,—the Premier, the honourable Mr. Joly, found himself in a position of extreme peril. The loss of one of his ablest lieutenants, and the fact that he had a majority of only one vote in the Legislative Assembly, made it an absolute necessity that he should find some one who could regain the county of St-Hyacinthe, re-establish the majority, and, above all, bring reputation and talent to re-inforce him in the deadly struggle in which the two political parties were engaged.

The Premier's thoughts turned, first and at once, to Mr. Mercier. He was sought out, in the seclusion of his retirement. In spite of his disinclination ever again to re-enter political life, he felt himself compelled to yield to the necessities of the moment, and carried the county by a majority of 304 votes. He was entrusted with the portfolio of Solicitor-General.

From that moment, he threw himself once more into the work with that incomparable energy which he is well known to possess, and prepared the programme of the following session, which was destined to be so stirring in its incidents. It was during this session, (that of 1879), that he dealt with the constitutional question raised by the intervention of the federal government in connection with the action of Lieutenant-Governor Letellier in dismissing his ministers, on the 2nd of March, 1878.

Whatever may be the point of view adopted in forming a judgment on the speech he made on this occasion, it is impossible not to admit that it was one of the most vigorous and powerful addresses ever delivered within the precincts of our Legislative Assembly.

Industry and talent, however, were alike powerless to avert the danger that was impending; and the reader does not need to be reminded how the Ministry were defeated in the month of October in the same year.

In 1881, Mr. Mercier, worn out by the desperate battles he had fought, and realizing, moreover, the necessity of devoting all his labours to the interests of his family, which circumstances had forced him to neglect, took up his residence in Montreal, and announced his firm determination of abandoning politics, in order that he might give himself up entirely to the practice of his profession. But his career had already been too remarkable, and of too much service to his country, for his retirement to be so readily accepted. His friends in all parts of the province, especially in the districts of Montreal and St-Hyacinthe, opponents as well as fellow-partisans, pressed him to reconsider his decision, and became so urgent that, at last, he was compelled to accede to their wishes. The county of St-Hyacinthe elected him by acclamation.

It was at this period that several conferences were held, in the first instance with Mr. Chapleau, then with Mr. Mousseau, with reference to a coalition, the aim being to give the province new power and impetus by the union of its best elements. Mr. Mercier, indeed, has always manifested this desire to broaden the bases of politics. The two parties, however, were unable to come to an agreement over the concessions they would mutually have had to make.

In 1883, Mr. Mercier was appointed leader of his party in the province.

It is at this point that his real political career begins, and that we see him about to display on a larger stage, or, at any rate, under more varied conditions, the great powers which distinguish him; it is at this point that we find him about to demonstrate his undeniable abilities as a great chief and leader of men. At the head of a phalanx, small in numbers, but devoted in spirit, we find him multiplying his own individuality, and appearing to be present at every point at one and the same time. No subject of discussion seems foreign or unfamiliar to him: finance, statistics, compulsory education, agriculture and colonization, woods and forests, public works, law, constitutional questions, commerce and industries, he launches into them all, and gives evidence at once of the most widespread erudition and of a remarkable faculty of expression. His address during the debate on the speech from the Throne, on the 22nd of January, 1883, and those which he delivered on similar occasions in subsequent years, present strikingly effective passages, which give a ready idea of the diversity and the amazing fecundity of his talents.

I would gladly introduce here some extracts from these powerful oratorical efforts, but it would be impossible to do so without giving a certain political colouring to this biographical sketch, which I am, above all things, anxious to avoid. Read, however, (it matters not which you choose), his speeches on the New-Brunswick schools' question, on the rebellion of the *Métis* in the North-West, on the Riel question, on the restitution of the Jesuits' estates, on the autonomy of the provinces, etc.: you will find in them all the same breadth of view, the same vigorous spirit, the same wealth of information which enables him to grasp the subject in its entirety, and still not to miss consideration of a single detail.

Listen to him as he deals with the question of the Jesuits' estates; I take a passage at random:

"The rights of conquest were pleaded in justification of taking possession. Such a declaration was a direct violation of the terms agreed upon in the articles of capitulation and in the treaty of Paris. If the principle laid down in this claim to possession be a just principle, in natural law and international law, it must be just not only in the case of religious corporations, but also in the case of private parties. Now, Mr. Speaker, what a cry, and what a just cry of indignation would have been uttered by any inhabitant of this province

had his property been confiscated after the conquest ! What, think you, would our honest *habitants* have done, if, by virtue of the 'right of conquest' it had been said to them : 'We are going to take possession of your goods ; we are going to take possession of these lands, which belong to the Crown by right of conquest?' There would have been a prolonged outburst of grief and protest throughout the whole province. That despairing cry would have been heard in Europe, and, in spite of the decadence of the French government at that time, it would have been heeded by France, and France would have said : 'You are violating the treaty of Paris and the articles of capitulation ; you have no right, by virtue of the conquest, to confiscate the property of private individuals.' And, if such a thing cannot be done where there are no treaties, far less should it be done where there are treaties.

"What could not be done against mere private individuals, against men who, in the last resort, could defend themselves, take up arms and proclaim their grievances, find protection in public meetings and initiate a political movement ; what could not have been done against men placed in these circumstances, might have been accomplished against poor and defenceless priests, against men who had devoted their whole lives to the cause of civilization, and whose predecessors had penetrated through the country from end to end, bedewing it with their blood with such heroic devotion. Whatever it may have been rightful to do against the Jesuits, it would have been equally rightful to do against every inhabitant of this province. But, in this, we find neither right nor justice, and when, in 1800, it was declared, in that claim of possession, that these properties were taken 'by right of conquest,' a right was invoked which had no existence. The articles of capitulation were violated, and the treaty of Paris was violated, and the rights of men were violated.

"At that time, as to-day, the ancient barbaric law of conquest had become obsolete. That is to say that then, as now, the conquest of a country conferred only the right of superior domain, and not that of property. . . . And, to-day, the conquest of a nation gives the victors only the sovereignty, or the right of government, that is, the right to receive the revenues and to take possession of all public property. But private property is respected, and the liberty of the subject is not outraged.

"Let me see a conqueror who, in our day, dare pretend that, because he has taken possession of a country by virtue of a temporary victory, he may seize upon the property of its citizens, throw them into slavery, and blot out from our codes those glorious pages which have been inscribed there by Christianity."

As I have already said, Mr. Mercier, in the public career which he has so far achieved, has entered into every subject and dealt with every question which is of interest to the country. His splendid monograph on the province of Quebec affords an excellent proof of this assertion. The subject, however, which has always claimed his attention, above all others, and which has constantly been the subject of his keenest solicitude, has been education,—the instruction of the people,—widespread, and, as far as possible, brought within the reach of everyone. In nearly all the speeches which he has delivered, the articles which he has written, or the lectures which he has given, he has endeavoured to bring forward this pre-eminently vital question, and has seldom failed to invest it with the importance it actually possesses, or to throw it into the prominence it so justly deserves.

Upon the establishment of the schools of art and industry, in 1881, he strongly supported the project of the government, and delivered a speech, on the subject, which was remarkable in every respect.

"The first duty of our legislatures," he said, "is to spread abroad primary instruction, to make it penetrate into the most remote of our rural districts, and to overcome the opposition or indifference of parents in certain conditions of life, towards insisting upon the duty of attending school."

On another occasion, he expressed himself thus: "Elementary education is the prime necessity in a constitutional country. As Girardin says, the education and the constitution of a country must be brought into harmony.

"We give only \$160,000 to elementary schools, and \$70,000 to what is called higher education. I admire and respect our classical colleges, which we owe to the devotion of pious ecclesiastics, who were true lovers of their country, and I desire in no degree to detract from their reputation or their merits; but I oppose a system which is neither just, nor wise. The common people are those, above all others, whom we should strive to educate. The rich can protect

themselves unaided. It is to the children of the poor that we should extend the beneficent hand of education, to defend them against the dangers that encompass them, to lift them off the squalor and misery which are so likely to quench their dawning intelligence, and to open wide to them the gates of the future, and aid them in the attainment of honourable positions in life."

Elsewhere I find him saying: "Certain branches of knowledge, beautiful and desirable as they are in themselves, would be of little service to our manufacturers, merchants, and artisans; and these sciences, interesting though they be, would not tend greatly towards the advancement of those who are willing to accept them as sufficient, in our day, and especially in our Americanized towns."

Again, further on: "This reflected glory which is shed upon us by our connection with the Old World, imposes new duties upon us, among the first of which we should place the obligation of arousing the populace from their lethargy, and of bringing within their reach the benefits of education. Ignorance is poverty, education is wealth; ignorance means slavery, education means liberty. It is the mother's duty to nurse the child which she has brought into the world; it is the father's duty to provide it with daily bread; the duty of society is to educate it. And what is this populace whom it is incumbent on us to instruct? What, but *the people*, the real people of our land? Those who work, the labourers and the artisans, the foster-fathers of the human race, those who construct, those who sow, but who, alas! do not always reap. To them let us open, and open wide, the doors of the temple which spreads its beneficent light over the world, and let us make sure that that light shall penetrate into even the humblest of humble homes."

In another place, he says: "Let us cover the surface of our province with school houses; let us make them numerous, tasteful, comfortable, so that our children may love to see them. Let us surround them with trees and with flowers, so that the young people, who are the hope of our land, may know, (to adopt the expression of a philosopher), that 'education is the rich man's ornament and the poor man's wealth.'"

He expresses himself frankly and boldly in favour of compulsory education:

"There is no use in ignoring the fact," he says, "that compulsory

education is a problem which, one day or another, is sure to force itself upon the attention of all democratic communities like our own. Fortunate are those countries which foresee the advent of this problem; for, to foresee it is to have already begun to solve it, and means exemption, in the future, from many difficulties and much agitation."

Elsewhere he demands that, in the arrangement of courses of study, more room should be given to political education: "How can you expect that the education of a child will prepare him for the great and noble part he will afterwards have to play, under representative governments like our own, as a voter, unless he is taught the principles and working of the Constitution by which he is ruled, unless he is instructed in the rights which it will be his to exercise, and the duties which it will be his to fulfil, unless he is acquainted with the dangers,—political, economical and social,—which will one day beset him, if he has not been put in a position to vote with intelligence and discrimination on the men and the affairs of his country?"

With the teacher himself he is also in full sympathy: "The title of 'teacher,'" he says, "is a title of nobility, and should be sufficient to carry with it that of elector. The man who is fit to educate citizens is fit to be a citizen himself. By elevating the position of the teacher, you will elevate the school."

Whenever he finds occasion to revert to the subject, he never fails to express the same broad, lofty, and pregnant ideas. This, of all the different departments of the public service, is the one that makes the strongest claim upon his solicitude.

He has, moreover, proved the sincerity of his views by recently founding, and endowing so generously, those free night-schools, which have already accomplished so much good and which are destined to effect much more.

We have now reached an epoch, in Mr. Mercier's life, which forms, so to speak, the point of departure in a new career: I allude to the rebellion of the *Métis* in the North-West under the leadership of their chief, Louis Riel, the latter's trial, his sentence to death, and the execution of that sentence.

There is no necessity to enter here into the details of that drama, still so fresh in the memory of the whole country. Let us merely recall the fact that, from one end of the province to another, there arose a tremendous cry of indignation, when it became known that, in this

land of glorious liberty and in an enlightened epoch such as we live in, the authorities had decided to punish, and had punished with death, a man who was guilty of a purely political offence; a man almost irresponsible for his actions, as he had already been confined for a long while in a lunatic asylum.

Mr. Mercier was one of the first to raise his voice in protest, and to call upon the people to put aside party considerations and unite in that cry of rebuke.

A whole population rose to support him, and he literally held the supreme power in his hands. It was at this juncture that he performed one of the noblest actions, perhaps, in his career, and made one of those generous sacrifices which leave their mark upon a whole life. A leader was required to command this new army in its entrance upon a new field of action. Mr. Mercier was, as a matter of course, selected for this post of honour; but he chose to efface himself, and generously offered the leadership to Mr. Chapleau. Such an alliance would undoubtedly have formed the representatives of our province into a body that would have been able to exercise a preponderating influence. As we know, however, the offer was not accepted.

During the session of 1886, on May 7th, Mr. Mercier delivered a speech upon the North-West and Riel questions, which was one of the most eloquent pleas ever heard in any of our legislative assemblies. This address, with its wealth of information and its irresistible logic, combined with its thrilling fervour, produced an extraordinary sensation. But Mr. Mercier did not feel that this completed his duties.

The provincial elections were announced to take place in the autumn of the same year. He lost no time in beginning his campaign, in order to prepare the ground.

Rarely had there been seen such remarkable zeal and activity as he displayed, aided, as they were, by an ability and tact which were never at fault. Let it be sufficient to say that, during this campaign, Mr. Mercier went through every electoral district in the province, and delivered ninety-three great speeches.

The result was such as might have been foreseen.

On the 16th of September, 1886, Mr. Mercier emerged from the conflict with a majority.

In the month of January, 1887, on the assembling of the legislature, he was called upon to form a ministry, all the members of which,

(those, at least, who belonged to the Legislative Assembly), were re-elected by acclamation.

Since that time, Mr. Mercier has set himself to the work of fulfilling the programme which he had formulated. He has brought to the execution of his task that capacity for labour, that tenacity, and that perspicacity which so markedly distinguish him.

Space does not allow of my passing in review the whole of that programme. I may be allowed, however, to single out for special mention, among all the other important incidents and noticeable laws it contained, the inter-provincial conference of 1887, at which several of the various provinces arrived at an understanding that they would unite and act together, in order to protect their own interests by every constitutional method when they were found to be in conflict with the central authority.

The settlement of the Jesuit question, so difficult of solution and pending for so many years past, is, perhaps, the most remarkable of Mr. Mercier's achievements.

In truth, in a province such as our own, swarming with men of different races and creeds, it seemed almost impossible to break away from what was an accomplished fact, and to return to true justice, without wounding susceptibilities which may be easily understood and readily explained.

Nevertheless, the problem was solved; and now, in spite of vain attempts towards the resuscitation of movements on certain points, the solution is accepted, even by those who originally appeared most hostile to it.

The evening schools have already been referred to. In the establishment of these schools, there lay a broad-minded and patriotic conception, which our people grasped from the outset. As a consequence, they had not been established for two years before the number of pupils was more than trebled, and it became necessary to inaugurate new classes to meet the pressing demands that came from all quarters.

Another measure which directly interests our people, by aiding in the colonization of our lands and by helping to prevent our fellow-countrymen from emigrating to the United-States, is the law which grants a lot of one hundred acres of land to fathers or mothers of families who have twelve children living. In a country like our own

and with the prodigious fecundity of our race, this law is destined to produce great and lasting results.

The foundation of a prize for agricultural merit is also an important measure, which will assist to a remarkable degree in shaking our farmers to some extent out of their lethargy and making them abandon their routine methods.

At the first district competition, which included eight counties, the first prize, a gold medal, was won by Mr. Champagne, of St-Eustache, an old man of over eighty years of age. This medal, and the other prizes, were presented with great ceremony on the 23rd of December, at the legislative buildings, in the presence of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, His Eminence the Cardinal Taschereau and all the dignitaries of the government.

Some of the important acts of the session which has just terminated should, properly, also be mentioned here, such as those affecting railways, lunatic asylums, and manufactures ; as well as the appropriation for the branch of the Laval university in Montreal and the final settlement of that burning question. Lack of space, however, compels me to be brief.

If, in conclusion, the reader desires to form a general estimate of the talents of Mr. Mercier, talents which, incontestably, wield a distinct power among us, he will find, in the first place, a very remarkable readiness of perception, a faculty of swiftly and clearly comprehending the *ensemble* of any set of facts, and a singular skill in picking out the main features of a question and discarding all subsidiary considerations. Add to this a phenomenal fund of information, together with the impressive calmness of conscious power, a diction at once correct, concise, and moving in the extreme, and it will be easy to understand the effect which the combination of all these qualities, as a debater and orator, produces upon an audience.

Here, moreover, is the verdict, upon Mr. Mercier, of one who ranked among the ablest men in France and who left brilliant traces of his brief stay among us :

“ Mr. Mercier's eloquence is made up entirely of sustained force, of tenacity, and of logical power. It does not claim its origin from subtle and harmonious Athens ; but one may surmise that it would not have disgraced the Roman senate in the stern and sturdy days of those virile orations which were the outcome of the austere genius of

the ancient republic, and the whole secret of which a Cato did not carry with him to the tomb.

“To appreciate him, he should be heard on one of those great occasions when the orator surpasses himself and reveals his whole power.

“There is then felt to be a commanding influence in his broad eloquence, (somewhat deliberate and sonorous though it be), which crushes one after another the arguments of his opponent, captivates the attention of the least attentive or the most prejudiced of his hearers, and, in spite of themselves, gains the mastery over the passions of hostile audiences.”

And again, elsewhere :

“Recent events have demonstrated, in a manner which surpasses even the expectations of his friends, to what an eminent degree Mr. Mercier possesses the qualities of a political leader: the tact, the decision, the clear-sightedness, the wide outlook of the statesman, who sees and faces, beyond the success of to-day, the requirements of to-morrow; the fidelity which inspires confidence in all hearts, and which makes all alliances durable. But what was universally seen and understood from the very first, was that Mr. Mercier was essentially a popular leader.

“No one excels, as he does, in appealing to the sentiments of the people, in convincing them, in magnetizing them. Others may, perhaps, have been able to throw more brilliancy into the task, and so evoke more enthusiasm of an ephemeral kind. Mr. Mercier is not satisfied with seduction and cajolery; he persuades and convinces. He does not limit himself to appearing in the counties and there gaining applause. After having triumphed on the hustings, by the penetrating fervour of his eloquence and the virile force of his logic, he gains the victory over one mind after another, disciplines his party, and organizes it for victory.

“One has only to look at his massive figure, his face, full of power, of frankness and of resolution, his features, so expressive in their type, which seems to have retained something of the stamp of the Roman medals, to feel, at first glance, that one is in presence of a strong and influential individuality. When one has penetrated deeper, and has learned to detect and appreciate, beneath the apparent stiffness and severity of the orator's style, his warmth of heart, his

spontaneity of soul, his affability of character, and, (permit me to use the word), that real *bonté* which is to be found at its best only when allied with force of character ; then one is not surprised at the reputation and influence which Mr. Mercier has been able to gain among the people.

“ There is, moreover, in addition to this close sympathy between him and the popular heart, another characteristic which fitly caps the favours with which nature has endowed him. Mr. Mercier is, before everything and above everything else, a French-Canadian. He is, in the strongest sense of the expression, a son of his native land. All the generous sentiments which stir the hearts of our people find a strong echo in his own. The people felt this, as by instinct, and have not found themselves mistaken.

“ In Mr. Mercier, the patriot comes first, the party-leader afterwards.”

In *physique*, Mr. Mercier is of a good figure, and above the average height. His head is well poised, his hair black, and his face intelligent and very agreeable, bearing, (as says the writer from whom I have just quoted), something of the stamp of a Roman coin. His eyes, though quick to flash fire, have, as a rule, that calm, profound and far-away expression which one sees in those of a captain of a vessel as he searches the horizon. He has only recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his birth ; but he does not look more than forty years of age. His voice is sonorous, powerful, and carries far and clear. His physical characteristics well reflect those of his moral nature : harmony and power.

Mr. Mercier has held the office of *bâtonnier-général* of the Bar of the province, and has twice occupied that of *bâtonnier* of the district of Montreal. He bears the Grand-Cross of the Order of St-Gregory-the-Great, is an officer of the Legion of Honour, and a D.C.L. of Laval university ; and he has just received from His Holiness Leo XIII the title of Count, for himself and his direct descendants.

His career, so far, has been rich in achievement ; but he is still young and full of energy. Great things yet lie before him to accomplish ; and he will accomplish them.

NAPOLÉON LEGENDRE.

Quebec, 15th May, 1891.

(Translated by Arthur W. Gundry.)

Mon cher Luceignon
Viens dîner souper
avec nous vers six heures à
sept heures -

Je me fais plaisir
de te me faire venir souper,
viens donc avec ta petite famille,
vers 7 heures.

à toi

Honoré Mercier
Lundi après midi
25 oct. 88

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