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MEN OF THE DAY



LOUIS OLIVIER TAILLON

LOUIS OLIVIER TAILLON

Tall and vigorous, with open countenance and waving beard, Mr. Taillon is a man whose appearance naturally attracts attention.

When he speaks, his sonorous voice is animated, now by the accents of deep rooted conviction, now by honest indignation, now by an ardent enthusiasm for the cause which he pleads. It is not easy for his hearers to withhold their assent from the views which he expresses, and his sincerity is beyond the reach of doubt. He impresses one as a man who says what he thinks and who says it because he thinks it. In a word, and I think it sums up the characteristics of the man, Mr. Taillon is a man of conviction and therefore a man of strength.

In this country the entrance into the political arena is made at an early age. Scarcely out of college, the young man enrolls himself in one of those armies which are called political parties. In the ranks at first, he soon aspires to a less insignificant grade. Not long after, he makes his *début* in Parliament, and, if talent and character are his, he will take his place, while still young, on the ministerial benches. Such precocious success is not without its counterpart in England, where William Pitt, at the age of twenty-four, formed a ministry, and where the present prime minister (Mr. Gladstone) has been nearly seventy years in public life.

Mr. Taillon is still in the prime of life, and yet his career has already been a long one. He was born at Terrebbonne, birthplace of numerous statesmen, on September 26th, 1840. He studied at Masson College, and, on leaving that institution, embraced the legal

profession. He was admitted to the bar in 1865, and commenced to practice in Montreal.

Like many others, Mr. Taillon commenced to take an interest in politics at an early age. A very strong fighter, he soon rose from the ranks, and, in 1875, was selected to bear the conservative standard in the electoral division of Montreal East, the most populous constituency and the most important in the Province of Quebec. Mr. Taillon did not deceive the expectations formed of him. He was elected by a large majority. On subsequent occasions, he asked of the electors of this powerful division the renewal of their confidence, and each time his name was returned at the head of the list. In 1882, when the Legislative Assembly met after the almost phenomenal victory of the Conservative party at the General Elections of December 2nd, 1881, Mr. Chapleau, then prime minister, proposed the election of Mr. Taillon as speaker of the Legislative Assembly. This proposition was carried with enthusiasm, and Mr. Taillon mounted the presidential chair, amid the acclamations of the whole Chamber. He occupied this distinguished position for two years, during which period he displayed his urbanity, his impartiality, and his familiarity with the rules of parliamentary procedure. During this same period, Mr. Chapleau had retired from provincial politics, and resigned together his portfolio as head of the Cabinet, and his seat in the Provincial Legislature, of which he had been a member since Confederation, to accept the post of Secretary of State in the Federal Cabinet. The late Judge Mousseau had taken his place as Premier of the Province of Quebec. The Mousseau ministry lasted a year and a half, and was replaced by one headed by Doctor Ross, in which Mr. Taillon received, on January 23rd, 1884, the portfolio of Attorney-General. On this occasion Mr. Taillon was elected by acclamation in Montreal East.

The Ross-Taillon ministry lasted two years. With a large majority in the Legislative Assembly, a majority secured at the polls on December 2nd, 1881, it seemed to be justified in claiming a long lease of life. But serious events had happened in the North-West. Louis Riel, returned a short time previously from the United States, had raised the standard of rebellion throughout the territories. Before the country could realize, even, what was going on in

these distant regions, it became necessary to take part in the incidents connected with the first insurrectionary movement since 1837. The history of this war, if it can really be so styled, need not be told here. The *dénouement* was not long delayed. The Metis were crushed. Their leader was arrested, tried on a charge of high treason, and found guilty. Louis Riel paid the penalty of his offence on the scaffold ; but his death was the beginning of a series of grave troubles throughout the country, and nowhere more than in the Province of Quebec.

The history of the movement, known as the "national" movement, can be written when its principal leaders shall have been judged before the tribunal of posterity, more impartial and less under the influence of passion than ourselves. We are too near the events to be able to appreciate them. Even now, it would be rash to hazard an opinion which would be hotly discussed and which would infallibly be condemned as influenced by political prejudices.

But we will be permitted to say that it was a hurricane, or, if the word is preferred, a kind of cyclone. The whirlwind of dust which accompanied it, darkened everything. Carried off their feet by the violence of the tempest, many men neither could nor knew how, until later, to steady themselves and regain their footing. The Ross Cabinet had resolutely decided upon a policy of non intervention, a position which to me seems to have been a logical one, since its responsibility did in no wise extend to occurrences happening a thousand leagues away from Quebec. But it was merely raising the storm. At the time of the elections of 1886, the tempest was still raging, though its violence had lessened somewhat. Mr. Taillon was one of its victims. He fell at the hands of his constituents of Montreal East, who thitherto had never failed to acclaim him. It was difficult to appreciate the general result of the election ; so many men of new shades emerged from the electoral testing machine, that the judgment of the Legislature had to be waited for. The day preceding the opening of the Session, Mr. Ross resigned his portfolio, and Mr. Taillon, who had been elected in Montcalm, formed a ministry, which was shortlived, since its members resigned two days later, on January 27th, 1887, following an unfavourable vote in the

Legislative Assembly. (1) Mr. Mercier succeeded Mr. Taillon, who became leader of the opposition.

From that moment henceforth, we enter upon the history of our own times. Thanks to a small majority in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Mercier retained power until June 17th, 1890, when the General Elections were held, which tripled his majority. Mr. Taillon could have been elected by acclamation in Montcalm, but he wished to contest the enemy's stronghold in the county of Jacques Cartier. There he fell, and, after fifteen years of public life, during which he had occupied the foremost positions, he retired and resumed, without regret, we believe, the practice of his profession.

I have said that Mr. Mercier had tripled his majority at the General Elections of 1890. That is to say that he was all powerful in the new legislature. But, as he had reached the summit of the Capitol, he was not far from the Tarpeian Rock. On his return from a voyage to Europe, in the summer of 1891, a journey, we are told, that was one triumphant progress, he found the Senate of Canada occupied with the consideration of a question which referred to the Baie des Chaleurs Railroad. Public opinion was excited over the declarations made in the Senate, and Mr. Angers, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec, invited Mr. Mercier to give explanations. A commission of enquiry was appointed; numerous witnesses were examined, and, on December 17th, 1891, Mr. Angers dismissed Mr. Mercier, and summoned Mr. de Boucherville to form a ministry.

For a year and a half previously, Mr. Taillon had devoted himself ardently to the practice of his profession. Mr. de Boucherville summoned him to his side, and, with a rare desinterestedness, Mr. Taillon agreed to form one of the new cabinet, without holding any portfolio. This was equivalent to accepting the task but refusing the remuneration. The General Elections of March 7th, 1892, followed. Mr. Taillon was elected in the County of Chambly, which had long been held by the enemy, and the de Boucherville Government, throughout the province, scored a brilliant triumph.

(1). The fall of this ministry recalls the fall of the Brown-Dorion Cabinet of 1858, which also lived only two days.

Mr. de Boucherville, however, did not long wish to continue to support a burden, so heavy, especially at his age. From the moment that his probable retirement began to be talked of, public opinion designated Mr. Taillon as his successor.

Without being guilty of indiscretion, the author, who can vouch for the fact, may be permitted to say that Mr. Taillon did not seek the high position, that it was almost thrust upon him, and that he only accepted it in deference to the unanimous wish of the Conservative party. Mr. Taillon, then, became Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec, in December, 1894. He is Prime Minister to-day, and without trespassing upon the domain of politics, I can vouch for the fact that he possesses the confidence, not only of his party, but also of those men who, affiliated to no particular political party, are content to judge governments, like men, by their works. The present prime minister is, in fact, a man, whose honesty is above all suspicion, whose disinterestedness borders on the scrupulous, and who reckons not personal sacrifices when duty is in question. Mr. Taillon could have acquired an honourable fortune at the Bar; he is one of those men to whom clients would never be wanting, because such men know how to inspire confidence. And yet, I do not hesitate to affirm that Mr. Taillon is to-day a poor man. If to sacrifice one's self for one's country; to neglect one's affairs for those of one's country, is patriotism, surely men who, like Mr. Taillon, make this sacrifice unhesitatingly, are patriots worthy of all praise.

Again, if this disinterestedness were rewarded—— Ah! Public life! How many men with generous ambition, with nobility of character, has it filled with enthusiasm at the outset of their careers, and disgusted, before they had yet been able to give to the public service the full extent of their abilities. Politics, a war more merciless than that carried on by shot and shell. It is a field of battle where no quarter is given where to the light of day are exposed, all the weaknesses, all the failings, true, supposed or even manufactured of whole cloth, of the opponent. Should one be astonished, then, if, in certain moments, the public man, to whom nothing appears to be left to desire, who is an object of adoration to his friends, of enthusiasm to his partisans, who is listened to with an

unquestioning obedience, must one be astonished if this man lets fall occasionally an expression of regret, that he pictures to himself a more peaceful existence wherein he would be permitted to live for his family, for his friends, and to free himself, not that his courage fails him, but that disgust overcomes him, of the mire with which cowardly insulters have besmirched him? Indeed, what else can be expected? Cincinnatus ever regrets his plough, and I am not disinclined to think that he is right.

Mr. Taillon, perhaps, escapes not this fate. Hardy combatant though he be, whatever his natural vocation for a political career, and I think he has such a vocation, since it is imposed upon him, and since it is said that "*Vox populi, vox Dei*," it does not prevent him from having more aversion than love for political life. He ever regrets his professional studies and the more worthy and more courteously conducted contests in the courts.

Are such regrets as these calculated by nature to diminish the strength of the man who experiences them? It is possible, for, as a general rule, intelligence cannot be exerted to its fullest extent when the heart is not beating in sympathy. Nevertheless, true patriotism consists in uniting devotion to sacrifice; one must first conquer one's self, if one wishes to conquer others. So, without doubt, Mr. Taillon understands it, since he stands there at the breach, and, God knows, he evades not the blows.

Mr. Taillon is one of our most potent popular orators. Not that he is a rhetorician; but, as I have said above, he is a man of conviction, and that is all that he requires to enable him to attain to what should be the highest ambition of every speaker, the persuasion and the carrying away of his hearers. Anxious to convince rather than to dazzle, Mr. Taillon neglects the flowers and the figures of rhetoric. There fall from his lips no effective phrases, no high sounding words, high sounding but often meaningless, which call forth applause, it is true, but which change no opinions. Oratorical ruses are to him unknown. He does not dress up truth; nor does he denude it. He goes straight to the point, discusses and dissects the arguments of his opponents and appeals to the good sound sense of the hearer. He disarms passion by the calmness of his reasoning; without soaring into inaccessible

regions, he can view everything from above ; rise clear of the prejudices of the moment, and regain the rights of truth against the clamours of the unreasoning. He will not espouse a cause because it is popular, but because he considers it just. For that, he will brave temporary defeat. "In a good cause," he says in a passage which I will quote further on, "one is not bound to succeed always." And a good cause will be always good and will triumph in the end. No one more than he has the right to appropriate the motto "*Do thy duty, come what may.*"

The oratorical talent of Mr. Taillon is supplemented by a powerful voice, sonorous and ringing. Add to that an imposing presence and a commanding figure. Mr. Taillon is not prodigal of gestures and disdains measured periods. He improvises readily and speaks with warmth and conviction. As with most orators, he should be heard rather than read.

For this last reason, and although it is customary, when one speaks of an orator, to quote from his speeches, I find it an embarrassing task to find a passage which will be able to do justice to Mr. Taillon. I prefer to select haphazard, for chance is sometimes inspired, and, in any case, does not suggest pre-arrangement or want of taste. The discussion of the Riel Question in the Quebec Legislature has not been forgotten. On one side an appeal was made to national sentiment, to patriotism even. The cause of misfortune was pleaded ; the defense of the vanquished was undertaken. On the other side, the reply was : "We are not the judges of the acts of which you complain. We have no jurisdiction. The tribunal before which you bring your case is incompetent." Mr. Taillon spoke on behalf of the Government. He had but one arm to oppose to the fiery harangues of his opponents, and that was reason. I shall quote the peroration of his speech which sums up the whole.

"One cannot but deplore such an abuse of noble sentiments. Let us reserve great measures for great causes. Let us respect great sentiments which can have nothing in common with parties, and the little affairs of political coteries. The true patriots are those who loyally relinquish certain advantages for themselves and for their party, to accomplish a higher duty, that of teaching the

electors to use properly our constitution, and to show them how to use it for the happiness of the entire country. I should have preferred to have heard the honourable member for Chateauguay express the ideas which I am trying to communicate to the House. I should have wished that all who have spoken in a cause more noble than that of party, had spoken reason, and the discussion would have produced better results. At least we should have passed our time in the accomplishment of a useful and lofty task, that of teaching the people how the constitution should be applied and understood. But no. Attempts have been made to banish elevated ideas and replace them by appeals to prejudice. I regret it for the sake of the Liberal party and for the sake of the country. To those who have spoken of the dangers to which the autonomy of the Province is exposed, I shall say: 'Fear nothing, we shall be sheltered from all danger as long as we exceed not our jurisdiction.'

"The constitution gives us all the powers necessary to assure our welfare as a nation. I fear not the laws which may be made, which would encroach upon our rights, for the tribunals are there to protect us. What I do fear is this inclination to twist the constitution for party purposes, discrediting, above all, our province in the eyes of the rest of Canada, in making this house a simple house of debate, a veritable 'mock parliament.' Under such a system the people will no longer have confidence in this body. And if, one day, it is convinced that the sums that we expend are too considerable for the advantages resulting, if it thinks that legislative union will be better than the new system introduced by discussion on matters foreign to our jurisdiction, who will they be who will be responsible for the destruction of our provincial liberties, if not the men who ask us to exceed the limits prescribed by the constitution?

"I do not dissemble the fact that what we are doing at this moment may result unfavourably for us. I cannot say, as has said a Liberal newspaper, that I laugh at it. No; I cannot say that, for I intend to solicit the suffrages of my constituents; but I am not obliged to submit to prejudices and to triumph by their means. In a good cause, one need not always be successful. The people

may be deceived at next elections ; but the day of retribution will only be the fairer and the more glorious."

This long quotation gives a sufficient idea of the oratorical style of Mr. Taillon. I shall take permission however to draw the attention of the reader to another speech of Mr. Taillon. It is that which he delivered in the Quebec Legislature, on the 25th of May, 1888, during the debate upon the resolutions of the Interprovincial Conference. It is a model of forcible dialectic, and at the same time a learned discussion of the position of the provinces of the Dominion under the British North America Act (1867).

Another thing to remark when I speak of Mr. Taillon's oratorical talent, is the rapidity of the thrust, the vigorous and incisive repartee, the witticism, which suffice sometimes to confound an opponent and gain the favour of the audience. How often, in the Quebec House, has he brought the laughers to his side, at the expense of a formidable adversary, by a word thrown into an acrimonious discussion. It would be desirable to preserve some of his repartees, if only to show that the old Gallic blood does not belie itself on the banks of the St. Lawrence. I shall only quote the latest ; perhaps it is not the latest, for the scene, which I shall reproduce from *La Minerve* of November 29th, 1893, took place two months ago.

The question of the taxes was under discussion in the Legislature. The subject was dry, since heaps and heaps of figures were piled up, and orators delivered perorations from behind literal ramparts of blue books. At length the member for L'Islet, Mr. Dechéne, rose to speak. I shall reproduce, without further commentary, the newspaper report.

"Mr. Dechéne, continuing the debate, said, 'The honourable Prime Minister, unable to successfully defend his policy, is waiting for light from above, from below, from the left, from the right.'

"Mr. Taillon. — 'Yes, but not from in front of me.' (Laughter and applause).

"Mr. Dechéne, very much put out, lost himself in his speech and muttered inconsequential phrases, until six o'clock, when the House rose."

I do not know whether it is an injury to Mr. Dechène to say that he was disconfited ; but there is not one man in a hundred who would not wager that Mr. Taillon's rejoinder was a refreshment, as pleasing as unexpected, for the poor members, whom the mathematical dissertations of the orators strong in figures, doubtless disposed to yawn.

In the preceding pages I have spoken of Mr. Taillon as a politician. It is fitting that I should add a word regarding his career at the Bar. First of all I shall notice a fact worthy of the attention of lovers of paradoxes.

There is no question but that the legislator, more than any one else, must possess the temperament of the juriconsult, and that nothing is more adapted to mature legal acquirements, and one's store of juridical knowledge, than the preparation of laws. If need were, I could cite great names in support of my proposition, such names as that of Chancellor d'Aguesseau ; but it is evident that the task of comparing the different systems of legislation, the necessity imposed upon one to take existing laws into consideration and to endeavour to foresee the debates which the omission of a single word in the text of an act will give rise to, are eminently well adapted to form jurists. And, nevertheless, from the time that the man of law crosses the threshold of our legislative chambers — rare exceptions apart — he commences to lose interest in matters connected with his profession.

Nevertheless this paradox provides an easy solution, and it is only necessary to closely examine the working of the parliamentary machine to find the key to the enigma. In fact, although the primitive, and, so to speak, natural function of a legislature should be to make laws, Parliament, in England as in the colonies, has assumed or usurped another function which has not been long in becoming the most important. Parliament has constituted itself the judge of the administration of public affairs, and the supreme arbiter of the destinies of the ministry. It is in controlling this administration that the work of the member of the House really consists, and it is work of such an absorbing nature that it seems to-day to engage all his attention. Laws are frequently the work of men who are not members of the Legislature. The latter votes

upon them; often rejects them, but, assuredly, cannot claim the credit of having originated them.

Nevertheless it cannot be said that Mr. Taillon has become estranged from his profession; on the contrary, I believe him very strongly attached to it. He has occupied the highest positions among his legal confreres, having been bâtonnier for the Montreal section, and bâtonnier-general of the order for the Province of Quebec. He bears the title of Queen's Counsel, which is a presumption, I do not say *juris et de jure*, but a legal presumption of juridical science since these counsels hold the official title of *Her Majesty's Counsel, learned in the Law*. He has not lost his legal acumen nor his knowledge of jurisprudence; he has been engaged in many celebrated cases, among others that of Auger *et al.* versus Labonté *et al.*, better known as the affair of the churchwardens of Notre-Dame de Montréal. He has often been designated to fill vacancies on the bench, and it is there that he will find a worthy ending for his career.

Outside politics, the Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec has none but friends. The young men, especially, receive the most kindly treatment at his hands. Absolutely unaffected, his modesty is the more beautiful that his sincerity cannot be doubted. In society he prefers reunions where music forms part of the evening's entertainment, and a baritone voice of agreeable quality enables him to take part in the improvised concerts that take place on such occasions. For those who are fond of parallels I would add that in this respect he resembles the present Prime Minister of England, who, returning from a stormy sitting in the House of Commons, does not fail, it is said, to seat himself at the piano to forget, amid the harmonious strains of music, the discordant notes of political discussion.

These few pages are sufficient to depict — for those who do not know him, — if really such there be — a statesman truly worthy to figure in the series of *Men of the Day*. In reperusing them, the idea occurs to me that perhaps those who do not know Mr. Taillon — I need not apologize to those who do — will think that I have not found enough defects in the subject of this article, who, like all other mortals, must be formed of clay and exposed to the

calamities which affect all mankind. As a matter of fact I might have pointed out one fault in Mr. Taillon, namely want of confidence in himself; but this fault is so rare among our public men that it would probably be not accepted as worthy of credence. Let us admit, however, that it exists, since every picture necessarily has its shadows; but let us add that this defect cannot but increase our admiration for a statesman who is a truly good man and who seeks not his own aggrandissement, but that of his country, and I may add, the country of all Canadians of French origin, the Province of Quebec.

P. B. MIGNAULT.

August, 1894.

[Translated by J. McHUGH].

Québec, 24 octobre 1894

M. R. H. Taahé,
Municipal.

Cher Monsieur,

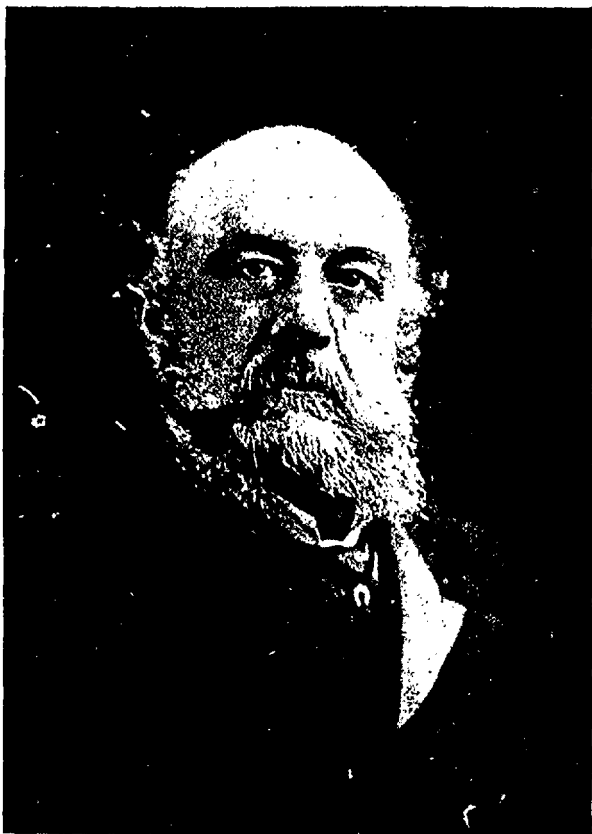
Puisque vous le voulez absolument, je vous écris quelques lignes. Vous m'offrez une place parmi les Hommes du jour, dans votre galerie de Portraits Contemporains. J'en suis flatté; mais en acceptant, je pense au malheureux qui entreprendra de faire mon portrait. Il lui faudra beaucoup de bienveillance et... d'imagination. Dites lui que je ne tiens pas à ce que le portrait soit fidèle, surtout qu'il ne cherche pas, comme mon ami David, à faire croire que je me trouve heureux dans la politique. C'est une carrière que j'ai embrassée sans l'envie. Je confesse ma faiblesse; mais j'en rejette la responsabilité sur les amis qui m'ont dit que je pourrais être utile à mon pays et à mon pays. Ai-je partagé cette illusion?

Je ne me crois pas obligé de répondre.

Bien à vous

L. O. Paillon.

MEN OF THE DAY



LEWIS JAMES SEARGEANT

LEWIS JAMES SEARGEANT

When the history of a great commercial organization and enterprise, like that of the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada, comes to be written by an impartial hand,— as some day it must be written,— it will be found, we think, to cover the real story of the growth and development, the rise, progress, and material advancement of the very country itself. Population, we know, ever follows in the track of the railroad. And in making that statement, we are uttering no idle platitude. We are simply relating what has happened, since the first sod of the Grand Trunk Railway Company was turned, and the vast capital of the British holders of the stock was employed to add to the material wealth of our young country, and to make it at once the jewel of the Empire, in point of standing, character, probity and enterprise. The Grand Trunk, too, was the cause of the expenditure of great engineering skill. Rivers larger than any to be found in the old world had to be spanned, huge mountains of rock had to be cut through, and tunnels to connect two shores had to be made. Indeed, the building of this great highway, which opened to settlement vast tracts of land, our natural heritage, and made accessible to the enterprise of our merchants, manufacturers and farmers, the wide treasures of land and water, the products of the field and the forest, forms one of the most interesting and instructive feats, in the history of commerce and the arts, during the greatest part of the century drawing to a close, a century famous for its progress in science and in invention. He would have been a bold man, fifty years ago, who could have predicted what has followed the inception and construction of the great line of steel and iron which

spreads like net-work to-day from Levis to the furthestmost western points in Canada and the adjoining republic. Fortunately, for the success of those dauntless and far-seeing men who invested their money, and their brains, and pluck, in the enterprise, those placed at the head of the Grand Trunk, whether as presidents of the Company, general managers of the road, on the spot, and the vast army of officials who run, in their several capacities, the actual business of the road, were men of keen discernment and excellent judgment, well versed in all those details which go to make the able administrator, and strong in attributes which ensure success in everything they undertake. Doubtless, as time wore on and the mechanical part of the movement was being carried forward, there was often dismay and discouragement, for the country was new, the population was sparse, and the cost exceeded, by many millions, the estimates of the projectors. There were many, too, in those early days, who predicted failure from the outset. They were never tired of saying that the investment would not pay and that ruin only stared the builders in the face. But the history of all railroad enterprises, and particularly those in new countries, unfolds a similar tale. Croakers the world has suffered from, from time immemorial, and croakers will have their place in the future as well as in the past. It is easier for some men to cry down an enterprise, than to put out a hand to build one up. The Grand Trunk had its experience in that way, of course, but the owners know that their investment has borne good fruit, if the actual cash value has not always reached as high as their expectations presaged. To-day, the Grand Trunk Railway is one of the great public works of the world. Its mileage is surpassed by but few other lines, while its connections east and west, and north and south, afford facilities to the traveller, which place the line in the very front rank of such corporations. In the dark days, which came even long after the early trials and vicissitudes had been passed by, the Grand Trunk had no firmer friend, no man who believed more in its future, no more untiring worker, than the gentleman whose name appears at the head of this sketch,— a sketch which gives but an imperfect account of his career, however. He has lived

through its trials, and like his immediate predecessor, has triumphed amid difficulties, which would have appalled the stoutest heart.

Mr. Lewis James Seargeant, who succeeded Sir Joseph Hickson as general manager of the Grand Trunk, is a born railroad man. From his youth up, he has been associated with the prominent railroads of his native land. He was born at Trowbridge, Wiltshire, England, where he was carefully educated and learned the first principles of the business which he has since carried out with such conspicuous ability, prudence, and success. He was clever at school and took a high place in his classes, and by his school-mates was much loved and admired. His earliest experiences in the career which he was destined to adopt, were passed in connection with the South Wales Railway, where he looked after his department with such assiduity, that promotion rapidly ensued. This line was affiliated with that largest of British railway systems, the Great Western, whose capital is £83,000,000, and whose length is 2,482 miles. The South Wales Railway Company strenuously promoted the development of Milford Haven, as a great international sea port, and especially in connection with American trade and commerce, which were energetically cultivated. During his stay with the road, Mr. Seargeant, though quite a young man, was popular with all his confreres and employes, — and when the South Wales Company amalgamated its fortunes with those of the Great Western, he was waited on by the proprietors, and in recognition of his eminently valuable services, a substantial gift was made to him. At this time also, he was given the appointment of the Superintendency of the South Wales Division. In this capacity also, he rendered the proprietors a service which they never forgot. In the direct line for promotion, he had not long to wait for preferment. The chairman of the Great Western Railway Company was the Earl of Shelburne, son of the great Earl who once or twice refused a marquise, and father of the present Marquis of Lansdowne, who succeeded Lord Lorne as governor-general of Canada, and the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava as Viceroy of India. Lord Shelburne, and Sir Daniel Gooch, known far and wide as a promoter of the Atlantic cable, remained to the last his warmest friends.

They never ceased to have confidence in the young superintendent, and he pleased them so well, that when a vacancy occurred in the staff of the South Devon Railway, Mr. Seargeant was immediately created first officer of that important line, and afterwards a similar position was given him on the Cornwall and West Cornwall Railways, which together, it will be remembered, formed a compact system between Exeter and Penzance. Mr. Brunel, the famous engineer, whose plans for crossing the river Severn gave him a vogue at the time, was an active scientist, whose experiments with the atmospheric system in connection with the South Devon had brought him into notoriety. The South Devon was in a low financial state, and Mr. Seargeant had his work pretty well cut out for him when he assumed his duties. Those duties included the work appertaining to the offices of general manager, and secretary, and secretary also of the joint committee of the Great Western, Bristol and Exeter, South Devon and Cornwall companies. He was also named the official representative of those interests before Parliamentary committees, and in that department he had no equal, as his contemporaries are men willing to admit. We have said that the finances of the road were at a low ebb when Mr. Seargeant took the helm. He was not there long, however, before a change occurred, and largely increased dividends were the results. His success at once became known all over England, and other companies were eager to obtain his services. Several offers were made to him, including the request for him to take the responsible post of agent or chief officer of one of the most extensive railway systems in India. This position was a very delicate but tempting one, and called for the exercise of peculiar and brilliant talents, owing to the fact that the Imperial and local governments, and railway companies, required the best services of men distinguished for their tact and good judgment. He might have taken the place, which was urged upon him with much vehemence, but the Great Western Company begged him to remain where he was, and his promotion, as a matter of course, followed soon. The traffic department he had continually under his eyes. He and his colleagues, representing the other companies, framed an agreement for the division of traffic between

the Great Western, and London and South Western systems, at the numerous points where these large systems came into competition.

But, successful as he was in England, Mr. Seargeant, with his clear vision, saw that he had even greater possibilities for the employment of his undoubtedly great talents and abilities, in the new world, beyond the sea. The Grand Trunk Railway Company, then as now, had always the aim in view of securing on its staff the strongest, the most capable and the best equipped minds. Mr. Seargeant was well known as a prudent and skilful railroad man, one who never lost heart and whose pride was in his profession. He was energetic, and enterprising, and at the same time a perfect slave to duty. He was popular with the business men, who had frequent opportunity of consulting him, as his remarkable aptitude for work was known to everybody connected with the running, control and management of railways. Overtures were made to him, which he could not decline or resist, in justice to himself. Accordingly, therefore, in the year 1874, he resigned all of his several offices in England, to the infinite regret and sorrow of all concerned, and crossed the Atlantic Ocean, to join his fortunes with those of the great railway company which he manages to-day with such consummate tact and ability. He did more than a man's work, the very year that he took office. As a proof of the respect and esteem of his former employers and associates, the directors and officers of the companies with which he had been connected in England, he could show tokens of great value, intrinsically as well as otherwise. Before leaving his old home for Canada, many handsome presentations had been made to him by gentlemen occupying high places in official and social life in Great Britain, and even from the men who served under him, he had many testimonials which he valued highly. Prior to embarking for the Dominion, too, he was the recipient of several addresses, breathing in every line sentiments of esteem and affection. It has been the lot of but few men to leave their native land with such emblems of regard in their possession. But Mr. Seargeant was a man who both deserved and compelled respect, and his Canadian career amply justified

all the good words and prophesies which his early friends uttered about him, when the steamer sailed away from Liverpool town for this land, where he has ever since made his home. He arrived in Montreal, as we have said, in 1874, and immediately joined the staff of the Grand Trunk Railway Company. He was the first appointed traffic manager on our continent, and practically made the office what it is to-day. He initiated many reforms and introduced very many improvements into his immediate department. As vice-Chairman of the Grand Trunk Executive Council, during the incumbency of Sir Joseph Hickson, the Chairman, Mr. Seargeant made an enduring name for himself. It was not long before the English stockholders suitably recognized his abilities, and made him vice-president of the Chicago and Grand Trunk Railway Company, and other of their affiliated lines. He held on to his appointment of traffic manager of the Grand Trunk Company, however, feeling fully confident of being able to perform all of his duties, with satisfaction to the Company as well as to himself. But though more than three thousand miles away from his early home, among the British Isles, Mr. Seargeant had always a tender place in his heart for old companies. Chief among these were his unvarying and well-tryed friends, the present Chairman, late General Manager, Mr. Grierson, the author of "Railway Rates, English and Foreign," and other old officers of the Great Western Company of England, with whom he had spent so many happy days in times gone by. And this friendship has ever continued.

Mr. Seargeant, as traffic manager of the Grand Trunk Company, would have had, in all conscience, very many duties to perform. But it must not be forgotten that when he assumed the functions of his office, he had no table of precedents to guide him, no index finger to point the way, no one, with years of experience behind him, to tell him what to do. He had to create the office, as it were, in a word, and this he succeeded in doing, in a very short time, to the eminent satisfaction of his employers. To the Grand Trunk he gave his services freely and unreservedly, and valuable indeed were they in those important arbitrations which secured to that railway a full share of the

through American traffic, which forms no small part of its entire business. When the present "Central Traffic Association" of the Western American lines was formed, his name was prominent among the list of those who founded the body. He often represented the Grand Trunk Company at the meetings of the Board of Presidents in New York, in the absence of the late general manager, Sir Joseph Hickson, and is now a member of the Trunk Line Board of Presidents. He has been an active member of the Vice-Presidents Committee of the same distinguished organization, and in that capacity has performed yeoman's work for his line. In his official intercourse with representatives of other trunk lines, he has advocated with great ability the division of traffic between the railways interested, instead of a competition which could only prove suicidal, hurtful and ruinous to all concerned, including the very public itself. For many years, he advocated the settlement of all railway disputes on equitable principles, and the arrangement of differences between the railway companies, by arbitration, the fairest and most just of all methods. Though always standing up for the rights of the Grand Trunk, Mr. Seargeant has ever been respected and esteemed by his contemporaries belonging to rival roads, on account of his honourable conduct and reasonable opinions. He never, in all his life, advocated an unjust course, nor has he ever been unfair to anyone.

Mr. Seargeant is a man of rare culture, an excellent linguist, a close student, and one who has written extensively and exhaustively on questions affecting railroad interests. To the pages of the *Railroad Review* he has been an honoured contributor. On the pool question he is often quoted as an authority. A few years ago, he visited Europe, where he studied the English, French, and Italian railway systems. From them, however, he had nothing of importance to learn, the Grand Trunk system comparing very favourably with the systems of the old world.

In the wider sphere of general manager of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, Mr. Seargeant has had the opportunity of proving his fitness for the position many times since his appointment. In the crucial period of the American coal strike, in 1894, when his company was forced to close down the work shops and discharge

many hundreds of hands, Mr. Seargeant had a sad but imperative duty to perform, which tried him hardly, for he is a humane man, and he knew well the consequences of the act which he was compelled to put into execution, as the chief officer of his road. When the order came to reduce, in every possible way, the general expenses, Mr. Seargeant had only one course to pursue. Perhaps, it is better in this connection to use his own words. Talking to a press interviewer, he said :

“ You ask me whether any reductions in salaries or wages are in contemplation in addition to the already ten per cent. reduction in the staff. My instructions from the home board are to reduce the working expenses of the Company to the lowest possible point, and as judiciously as I can, and not to incur any new capital outlay. The Company has already expended some sixty-five millions sterling, and the encouragement is so poor, having regard to the returns, that capitalists are chary of providing more funds. The Grand Trunk has for many years been worked more economically than other railways. There has been no waste and no excess. It is therefore very difficult to introduce new economies, especially as my instructions are accompanied with the proviso that nothing must be done to endanger the efficient working of the line. During the current year, we have to meet certain fixed obligations. That is a necessity of the situation, and at any sacrifice these obligations must be met. I have, with some success, been able to effect reductions during February, March, and April. When the accounts come in, without in any way impairing the efficiency of the service, I shall be very glad personally if we can pull through without making any reductions in salaries or wages. As a matter of fact, the Company's pay-roll in 1892 was \$8,800,000, and in 1893 about \$8,700,000. These sums include the salaries or wages in the general traffic, engineering, mechanical, and stores departments. Now it will be seen that a small reduction in the expenses means a very large result for the proprietors. But our men are a very good set of fellows. Although we sometimes come across grievances which mean increase in wages in some shape or another, if the positive necessity should arise to preserve the credit of the Company, I think that we shall all cheerfully acquiesce in the necessities of the

situation as a temporary measure. At the same time, my own personal feeling is that it is better to preserve, if possible, a moderate even scale of remuneration to employes than to have wages inflated and depressed according to the momentary requirements of the times."

It is in time of danger and depression that Mr. Seargeant is called upon to exercise his keenest faculties. A far-seeing man, he takes time by the fore-lock, and prepares for the future, months in advance, so as not to be caught napping. In that way, when he saw the business of the country gradually falling off, he took the opportunity to examine his resources, enquire into the causes, and make ready for what was sure to come and which would affect his own line. He was not disappointed. The World's Fair at Chicago taught a valuable lesson, and lessons from that spectacle are still to be learned by the wis. Here is an idea which fell from his lips not long ago, which is worth considering. This is what he said :

"At present international transactions are at a standstill to a certain extent. People will not order goods until they know what duty they have to pay. With all those fiscal difficulties out of the way, local and international trade will improve naturally. As regards the general position of affairs in the United States, optimist views have been expressed by Messrs. Depew, Flower, Goddard, and other gentlemen who, to a large extent, represent the railroad interests of the Republic ; they think the clouds are being gradually dissipated and that things will begin to improve. Another healthy fact is that there has been a better understanding arrived at both in respect of passenger and freight rates between the companies which are members of the different organizations in the United States. That is the trunk lines and central traffic associations, which control all the railroad property between St. Louis, Chicago, and the sea-board. What may be expected this year so far as the Grand Trunk is concerned is a large weekly decrease in traffic as corresponding with 1893. The World's Fair opened on the first of May last year. There was no very material improvement in the traffic returns at first, and all the railway companies were disappointed. Special trains had to be cancelled, and the ordinary service was

found sufficient. But as the time approached for closing the Fair, September and October, our traffic returns showed a very large increase over 1892. Now we have to compete with these heavy traffic receipts, and it is reasonable to expect that the comparison will be very unfavourable, and may lead to wrong inferences, unless the reasons are carefully borne in mind. I anticipated that the World's Fair would interfere with ordinary traffic, both to the seaside and pleasure resorts as to passengers and as to freight, by diverting the attention of people from commercial pursuits. This took place, but matters were made a great deal worse by the extraordinary financial conditions which surrounded commercial operations in the United States. A species of panic existed throughout the whole period. A very large proportion of the railroad property across the line became bankrupt, and conditions existed which we hope may never occur again. We may, I think, expect that although there will be no traffic corresponding with that which was created with the World's Fair, there will be a restoration of business in both passenger and freight of the ordinary descriptions. This would certainly mitigate the expected decrease in our weekly traffic returns, were the fiscal difficulties to which I have alluded removed and were business to resume normal conditions. At the present moment there is a demand all round for cheap transportation, and it is a fact that railroads are called upon to carry traffic at rates which are positively near cost price, and leave little margin of profit for the company. It is a struggle for existence all round, but doubtless there will be a survival of the fittest, and I hope the Grand Trunk is one of the fittest."

And one more quotation must close :

"Touching the immigration of the year, it appears to me that the conditions existing both in the United States and Canada are at the present time against the introduction of new labour. There are thousands, and probably hundreds of thousands, of men on the continent with nothing to do. Then again the price of wheat and other cereal products at the present time is so low, and the demand is so comparatively small, that an increase in the area of production does not appear to be necessary. There must be too much cereal product in the world already, judging from prices, which, I believe,

in September last year, reached in wheat the extraordinary figure of fifty-five cents per bushel. Another reason why the continent does not present any encouraging field for imported labour is the prevalence of strikes, and the absence of tribunals which prevent resorts being had to the *ultima ratio* as between employer and employed."

Imposing in appearance, Mr. Seargeant is easily approached, and liked universally by all who come into contact with him. He is a governor of the Royal Victoria and Montreal General Hospitals, and a member of the St. James Club, of Montreal, and the Rideau Club, of Ottawa. He is President of the Chicago and Grand Trunk Railway Company, Detroit, Grand Haven and Milwaukee Railway Company, Grand Trunk Junction Railway Company, Chicago, Detroit and Canada Grand Trunk Junction Railway Company, Michigan Air Line Railway Company, and Vice-President of the International Bridge Company. Mr. Seargeant is married to Miss Elizabeth Sedley Barnes, of London, England, sister of Dr. Robert Barnes, the celebrated physician and author of many standard medical works.

GEORGE STEWART.

Quebec, August, 1894.

Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.
General Managers Office.

Montreal 15th Oct 1894

Dear Mr Tasche

I have much pleasure
in sending you my
autograph which has
I fear, in the performance
of many duties, been rather
prodigally spread over
Her Majesty's Dominions

Believe me to be

Very truly Yours

L J Seargeant

Louis H Tasche Esq
pp

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