

## HISTORY OF CANADA.

the arrival of which at Halifax has been made the subject of an impressive painting by the Canadian artist, Mr. Bell Smith.

Three Conservative premiers had now died in the space of three years and a half. Sir Mackenzie Bowell was then placed at the head of an Administration in which certain elements of disunion soon began to manifest themselves. On April 27, 1896, Sir Mackenzie yielded the reins of government to Sir Charles Tupper, who had for some years before been filling the office of High Commissioner for Canada in London. A question relating to the public schools of Manitoba had now become acute. Upon the establishment of the province a system of "separate schools" was organized, under which the control of Catholic schools was left in the hands of the Catholic section of a general School Board. The cancelling of this arrangement in 1890 led to protests and a demand for the "remedial legislation" provided for by the British North America Act in cases in which educational rights enjoyed by any section of the population before Confederation were abridged or disturbed by subsequent legislation. The Privy Council, to whom the case had finally been appealed, decided that such remedial legislation was called for; and the Dominion Government was consequently under obligation to introduce it. The question was much discussed before and during the general election of June, 1896, but to what extent it influenced the result is doubtful. The Government sustained a decisive defeat (June 23, 1896).

The death of Sir John Macdonald had been followed within a year by that of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie (April 17, 1892). The latter had not however been leader of the Liberal party for the last five years of his life, the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier having been elevated to that position after the general election of 1896. The new Government of which he was the head was sworn in on July 13. In some quarters it was hoped, in others apprehended, that the policy of the new Administration would embrace a serious reduction of the tariff established by their predecessors. No fiscal changes, however, of any moment were made. It was recognized that the business of the country had adapted itself to the measure of protection provided and that any violent change in that respect would be unwise. One of the earliest measures adopted was the reduction by one-fourth of the customs duties charged upon articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of the United Kingdom, or of certain specified British colonies, or of any others, the customs tariff of which was as favourable to Canada as the proposed reduced, or preferential tariff to the colonies in question. An impediment to the immediate carrying into effect of this arrangement was found in the existence of certain commercial treaties made by Great Britain with Germany and Belgium; this difficulty having been removed by the denunciation of the treaties in question, the reduced inter-Imperial tariff went into operation on August 1, 1898. From the application of this tariff, wines, spirituous liquors and tobacco were excepted.

The "British Preference," as it was called, was further increased to one-third in the year 1900. Important and beneficial changes had meantime been made in the postage rates. The Canadian domestic rate of three cents per ounce was reduced to two cents on January 1, 1899, and the same rate was established between Canada and Great