

But few records of the first U. E. Loyalists, their previous homes and histories, their individual experiences, and the circumstances attending their settlement in Canada, having been preserved by their families, so far as is known, such things being gradually dispersed and lost in various ways, it was felt that unless some systematic effort was made to gather together the fragments which might yet be found, every trace of them would in time be lost, excepting such as are fortunately preserved in the public archives—and which are for the most part meagre and inadequate fitly to represent and illustrate the inner life, if such an expression may be used, of the U. E. Loyalist emigration as an historical event without precedent or parallel.

With the object, therefore, of organizing the means of preserving such historic records, with also that of keeping bright the spirit of loyalty in the inheritors of so noble an ancestry, the formation of this association was resolved upon, and the initial steps toward that end were taken at a meeting called by Mr. William Hamilton Merritt and others, and held in the Canadian Institute, February 28th, 1896.

Mr. Allan McLean Howard was appointed Chairman, and Mr. Merritt, Secretary *pro tem*.

The following Committee was also appointed to draft a Constitution:

Mr. McLean Howard, Mr. Merritt, Mrs. Hicks, Miss Merritt, Mr. S. C. Biggs, Mr. H. H. Cook, Lt.-Col. George A. Shaw, Mr. Charles E. Ryerson, and Dr. George S. Ryerson, and thus was formed "The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Ontario," the first general meeting of which was held at the same place May 11th, 1896. The Honourable John Beverley Robinson was unanimously elected President, and Mr. William Hamilton Merritt Secretary. Much was expected from Mr. Robinson in this position, because of the prominence of his official and social position, his long experience of public life, and because he was known to be well versed in matters appertaining to the early history of this country, and took a keen interest in everything connected therewith. But it was otherwise ordered, and under circumstances of an almost tragic nature, whilst preparing to speak at a great public meeting, Mr. Robinson died, June 19th, 1896. In him the Association lost an unselfish and patriotic friend, and an eminent President. Dr. George Sterling Ryerson was elected President in his place, and continued in office until March, 1898, when he was succeeded by Mr. Herman Henry Cook, who has held the office to the present time.

An interesting circumstance connected with the formation of the Association and the election of its officers is worthy of special mention. It was ascertained that at this late date, one hundred and thirteen years after the close of the revolutionary war, there still survived several sons and daughters of U. E.

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