

JUNE 2nd, 1893.]

THE LATE UNITED STATES CONSUL TAYLOR.

A TRUE FRIEND OF CANADA.

By the death of United States Consul Taylor, at the Winnipeg General Hospital, on the 28th day of April last, Canada lost one of her greatest and most useful friends. Born in the State of New York seventy-three years ago, Mr. Taylor was there educated for the bar. After being admitted to the practice of his profession, he removed to Cincinnati in 1842 and continued to reside there for four years. During that period he became interested in the abolition of slavery, and established the Cincinnati Morning Signal. Mr. Taylor continued to reside in Ohio until 1856. He was a member of the Ohio Constitutional Convention in 1849-50 and took a prominent part in reforming and simplifying the judicial procedure of the State. The proceedings of the Convention directed his attention to the early history of the Ohio valley. In 1852 he became Librarian of the State of Ohio, a position which he continued to hold until 1856. An ample opportunity was thus afforded him for historical research, and during that period was published his "History of the State of Ohio, First Period, 1650-1787." It was while engaged upon this work that his interest in the Red River valley and the great West of Canada became aroused. He himself has said, "My interest in the great valleys of Riviere Rouge, Saskatchewan and other river systems converging to Hudson's Bay, dates from 1850. While engaged in the publication of a history of Ohio, the authorities I consulted were a revelation of the sleeping empire here and beyond; and I anticipated in 1855 all my subsequent utterances on the subject in an open letter to W. R. Marshall, of St. Paul." On removing to St. Paul in 1856, Mr. Taylor was given further opportunities to study the Canadian West and Northwest, and to apply his great intelligence and energy in directing the attention of the world to their vast resources. Again relinquishing the active practice of his profession, he was appointed secretary of the Minnesota and Pacific Railway, which has since become the Great Northern Railway of J. J. Hill. Its charter provided for a railway from Stillwater, via St. Paul and St. Anthony (now Minneapolis) to the Red River of the north at Breckenridge, and a branch (which was really its chief division) to the international boundary. Its main line was endowed with a valuable Congressional land grant. In 1857 such a scheme was anything but attractive. To the world at large Minnesota was a region of ice and snow, and Rupert's Land, as the terminus of a railway, appeared about as desirable as the North Pole. Moreover, in their rush to California and the gold fields, the western immigrants were both blind and deaf, so far as other portions of the continent were concerned. The selection of Mr. Taylor to overcome this almost universal ignorance, and to open the eyes of the West was in every way most fortunate. With tongue and pen he laboured assiduously and with wonderful effect. He has told the story briefly in his own words: "When in 1856, I became a citizen of St. Paul I was commissioned, as secretary of

the Minnesota and Pacific, now Great Northern railroad, to reiterate the argument in season and out of season. It was taken up by others—the word Saskatchewan was pounded down the Mulla ears of the world; our securities were floated in Amsterdam; Canada was fired with ambition to have a west, and you know the rest." The opportune discovery of gold on the Fraser River, now the Cariboo mines of British Columbia, contributed, of course, to the result. It was in the discharge of this task that Mr. Taylor, deputed by General Sibley, the first governor of Minnesota, made his first visit to Fort Garry in 1859. In the same year the first steamboat arrived from the south and the first newspaper commenced publication. As the writer once had occasion to say, Rupert's Land was blessed by the arrival of these great civilizing agencies at the same time, steam navigation, the newspaper press and Mr. Taylor. In 1860 Mr. Taylor's report was published and widely circulated, and created great interest in the new west. To what extent he was instrumental in arousing the attention of the people of Canada to the illimitable possibilities of the great west, and how far his exhortations contributed to develop Canada to her present vast national proportions, are questions of sufficient interest to require separate treatment.

In 1860 Mr. Taylor removed from St. Paul to Washington, where he became a special agent of the Treasury Department under Secretaries Chase and McCulloch, a position which he continued to fill until 1870. The particular duty allotted him was the investigation of all questions relating to commercial intercourse with Canada. The task could not have been entrusted to better hands. On three different occasions, in answer to unfriendly resolutions emanating from Congress and addressed to the Treasury, he submitted reports favouring reciprocal trade with Canada, all of which were approved by Secretaries Chase and McCulloch and published by Congress. In the same spirit, at the Detroit Commercial Convention in 1866, he was recognized as an envoy from Selkirk Settlement, and drafted a resolution which was brought before the Convention, in favour of an international commission to discuss the enlargement of the reciprocity schedules of the treaty of 1854, and the extension of the treaty to Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, as well as to eastern Canada. From the New England section bitter opposition to the resolution was expected; but the activity of the St. Paul delegation, supported by the eloquence of Joseph Howe, of Nova Scotia, secured its unanimous acceptance.

In September 1870 President Grant and Secretary of State Fish appointed Mr. Taylor to the position which he continued to hold under successive administrations until his death. The history of his life during the almost quarter of a century which has elapsed since his appointment as Consul is to some extent the history of the Province of Manitoba, then created, and is replete with instances of great services rendered by him to the Province and to the Dominion. In the autumn of 1871, through an interesting circumstance, which may some day become modern history, he was made aware of a contemplated Fenian raid on Manitoba. He experienced considerable difficulty in convincing the Canadian authorities that there was any real cause

for alarm, but they consented to the American troops crossing the international boundary, if necessary, in pursuit of any persons who might be found violating the neutrality laws of the United States. A despatch to General Grant found him dining with Mr. Jay Cooke, at Washington, and orders were issued by the General at once to Col. Lloyd Wheaton, commanding at Pembina, to cross the boundary and overtake the invaders. The result was the capture of Gen. O'Neil and thirty others in the Hudson's Bay port of Fort Pembina, and the complete annihilation, at the outset, of a movement which otherwise would have assumed great and most dangerous proportions. For this service Col. Wheaton and Consul Taylor were formally accorded the thanks of the British Government.

Distinguished services rendered by Consul Taylor to Canada in 1879 may be passed over for a moment, to refer to the part which he was enabled to play in aiding to suppress the rebellion of 1885. Ever alert where the peace and good government of the Northwest were concerned, he at an early date became aware of the designs of the Saskatchewan insurgents and their sympathizers in Montana. As in 1871, so in 1885, he promptly reported the condition of affairs to Washington and urged immediate action, with the fortunate result that an armed patrol was extended from Pembina to the Rocky Mountains by the United States Government. The object was to cut off all communication between the Blackfeet Indians and Metis of Montana with the Saskatchewan insurgents. Had not this prompt and timely precaution been taken, the emeute of 1885 might, and no doubt would, have become a tragedy indeed. During this most perilous period the Washington authorities showed their implicit confidence in their representative by placing him in direct communication with the military along the boundary.

Let me return now to 1879. To Mr. Taylor, as to other men of genius and enthusiasm, soubriquets from time to time attached. When editing the Cincinnati "Signal," previous to the presidential election of 1848, his personality was so impressed upon the United States that he was known far and wide as "Signal" Taylor. While advocating the route of the Minnesota and Pacific railway he was "Railway" Taylor. From pouring the name Saskatchewan down the dull ears of the world, from 1856 to 1860, he became universally recognized as "Saskatchewan" Taylor. But no one knew better than he did that even in central British America, far beyond the Saskatchewan, lay untraced areas of fertile land, of almost inconceivable extent. On Thursday, October 2nd, 1879, Mr. Albert Peil, M. P. for Leicestershire, and Mr. Clare S. Read, M. P. for Norfolk, commissioners of the English Government, sent out to ascertain the relations of this continent to the United Kingdom in the production of grain and cattle, were publicly banquetted at Winnipeg. Consul Taylor seized upon the occasion to make the statement that "three-fourths of the great wheat-producing belt of the continent lay north of the boundary. There the future bread supply of America, and the old world, too, would be raised." To establish the truth of this statement he subsequently wrote to the St. Paul Pioneer Press, furnishing the meteorological