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## SIR GEORGE ROSS.

SIR George Ross was one of a group of distinguished public men who formed the Cabinet of Sir Oliver Mowat in the Province of Ontario, and to which, at the time he entered, Pardee, Fraser, Hardy, and A. M. Ross belonged. Time brought changes in the personnel, and with these changes Hardy and Sir George Ross as successors to Mowat in the Premiership of the Province. With the death of Sir George at Toronto on March 7, a chapter in the history of Liberalism in the Province ends.

In the thirty-three years of continuous Liberal Administration in Ontario, from 1872 to 1905, there were placed upon the Statutes the mass of constructive legislative enactments which, with some of the earlier measures, constitute the legislative background of the Province to-day. Sir George Ross' life centres in what was accomplished at that time. It was a formative and constructive period, and one that reveals the work of Liberalism in days of prosperity and growth.

The Toronto *Globe* referring to the death of Sir George Ross has epitomized in a paragraph some of his attainments and the story of his career. “His death,” says the *Globe*, “removes from the arena of public affairs a man of more varied gifts, activities, and experiences than any other present-day Parliamentarian. Teacher, journalist, school inspector, author, orator; resourceful in debate and resolute in action; a member at various periods of the Commons, the Ontario Legislature, and the Senate; Minister of Education, Premier of Ontario, and at the time of his death, Liberal leader in the Senate of Canada, Sir George during his busy life had done a man's work in the service of his country.” To this appreciation might be added, as an inspiration to others, that these high attainments of character and position were won against the handicaps of circumscribed opportunity in youth and infirmity of body in later years; won by hard industry, by a rigorous application to duty, and a constant endeavour to perfect the gifts with which he was naturally endowed.

Many are the achievements of Liberalism with which the name of Sir George Ross will ever be associated. Foremost, perhaps, is the moulding of the educational system of the Province of Ontario to its present position of unity and efficiency. It was as an educationalist that Sir George was best known by his contemporaries, and will be remembered in history. For sixteen years he was the head of the educational affairs of the Province. Among the reforms in the Ontario educational system effected during

this time were the establishment of kindergartens, the extension of the Provincial system of free libraries, the introduction of the compulsory teaching of hygiene and temperance in schools, the introduction of household science and manual training, the establishment of continuation classes, the admission of women to the Universities, the establishment of the school of Pedagogy, the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Toronto, the federation of the University of Toronto with Victoria and Trinity Universities, and the consolidation of all provincial laws respecting education. As Premier of the Province, Sir George Ross opened up the hitherto unexplored region of new Ontario. He projected as a Government-owned road, the Northern Ontario and Temiskaming railway, a work which resulted in the discovery of the Cobalt silver mines and the development of that Northern region with its untold resources. He foreshadowed the work of the Hydro-electric Commission by enacting a measure which enabled the municipalities of the Province to unite for the purpose of utilizing the energy of Niagara Falls in producing and transmitting electricity.

Sir George was appointed to the Senate in 1907 and upon the death of Sir Richard Cartwright in 1912 was chosen the leader of the Liberal Opposition. In 1911, during the reciprocity campaign, Sir George took a stand which gained for him from his political opponents a measure of praise equalled only by the degree of censure they heaped upon him two years later, when he moved the amendment to the Naval Aid Bill which required its approval by the electorate before becoming law. Seen in the perspective of years, the stand taken by Sir George on each of these occasions will be interpreted in terms of his conception of Canada's position in present day international and imperial affairs. He seldom let pass an opportunity of espousing the cause of Canadian Nationality. In doing so he never forgot Canada's citizenship within the Empire. It was rightly said of him that he was a great Imperialist, but his Imperialism was of the self-reliant, not the subservient type. It was this that caused him to oppose a policy of contribution, which he believed to be as unworthy the status of the Dominion, as it was unnecessary to the unity or the security of the Empire.

Concluding on the 22nd of January, a speech on the address in reply to the speech from the Throne, the last time he spoke in Parliament, Sir George said:

“In whatever respect legislation is necessary for strengthening the institutions of this country, for assimilating our foreign population, for furnishing suitable transportation, for deepening our harbors, for strengthening the ties between us and the Empire, for extending our commerce on the seven seas, for standing as prominently as we ought to stand before the nations of the world as a great commercial people, thoroughly independent, leaning on no arm for assistance, not even the arm of the Empire, let us work out our destiny in our own way. Let us stop quarrelling about matters of mere party difference, and let us join hands. Let there be no discord of race or religion. The task is large enough to demand all the powers that we possess.”

Canadians irrespective of party will find common ground for the highest arts of statesmanship in the accomplishment of these patriotic aims. By Liberals they will be cherished as the ideals, the life principles of a great Liberal—a torch handed on by a veteran leader to his successor for the guidance of the generations to follow. In this fashion the path of progress has been lighted all down the centuries of the world.