

Mr. McDonald. In this engagement Lieutenant Robinson commanded a flank company of militia, and was mentioned in Sir Roger Sheaffe's despatch as having "led his men with great spirit." Immediately after the action he was again detached to escort the American prisoners to Kingston, among whom was Colonel (now General) Scott, late Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army. Here Lieutenant Robinson's military career ended, for on his return to Toronto he learned to his great surprise that he had been appointed to the position of his former principal, as Attorney-General of Upper Canada. This office, by rule of rotation, properly fell to Solicitor-General Boulton; but having had the misfortune to be taken prisoner by a French privateer, on his voyage to England, he was unable to profit by the opportunity for promotion. The appointment of Mr. Robinson, who had then hardly attained his majority, and might be said not to have completed his studentship, met with warm approval, and was strongly recommended by Judge Powell, "as fully justified by the high character the young student had already attained for legal knowledge, and the zeal and assiduity which he always brought to the performance of every duty that devolved upon him."

Having been called to the bar by a special rule of the Court of King's Bench, which was afterwards confirmed by an act of Parliament, Mr. Robinson performed the duties of his position until the year 1815, when Mr. Boulton returned to Canada, and assumed the office of Attorney-General, Mr. Robinson being appointed Solicitor-General in his stead.

Shortly after his appointment to the office of Solicitor-General, he procured leave of absence, and proceeded to England, in order to be called to the bar of the mother country. He was then however, only able to complete some of his terms, and was not called to the English bar, as a member of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn, until 1823.

In 1817, Mr. Boulton became a Judge, and Mr. Robinson was again appointed Attorney-General, which office he continued to hold until his subsequent elevation to the bench. It was during this tenure of office that the celebrated controversy between the North West Company and Lord Selkirk occurred, ending in a most calamitous manner, and causing various criminal prosecutions to be instituted, the management of which necessarily devolved upon the Attorney-General. Time will not permit us to enter into the details of these important trials; and we cannot better describe the ability with which Mr. Robinson vindicated himself against the charges which had been preferred by Lord Selkirk, and the manner in which he conducted himself throughout, than in the

words of Lord Bathurst's despatch to the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, in May, 1829. His Lordship stated, "that he had laid the report of the Attorney-General before H. R. H. the Prince Regent, and that he should not do justice to the Attorney-General if he were to forbear expressing the satisfaction which he had derived from his detailed explanation, and desiring the Lieutenant-Governor to assure him that the temper and judgment with which he had conducted himself during the whole of these long and difficult proceedings, had received His Royal Highness' entire approbation."

In the year 1821, Mr. Robinson entered the House of Assembly as the first representative for the town of York (now the city of Toronto), for which constituency he continued to sit until his appointment as Speaker of the Legislative Council. He at once joined himself to the Tories, and, with the same rapidity that attended his former promotions, he was soon the recognized leader of that party. In the following year, he was charged with a mission to England, for the settlement of the difficulties that had arisen between Upper and Lower Canada, relative to the apportionment of certain customs duties collected at Montreal. The general satisfaction which was entertained at the success of his efforts was suitably expressed in a vote of thanks from both branches of the Legislature. During this visit to England, the Imperial Government, in recognition of his public services in the colony, offered him the appointment of Chief Justice of the Mauritius; but he preferred to earn his well-deserved promotion among his own people, to whom he was strongly bound by ties of a private as well as of a public nature.

The refusal of this appointment redounds greatly to the credit of Sir John Robinson. The office was a valuable one not only from its high position, but from the remuneration attached to it which was nearly three times that of the highest official in Canada. His decision in this matter has shown more forcibly than any act of his life how great a love he bore to his native land, and establishes the fact, that his public acts were influenced solely by motives of the purest patriotism, and not by any sordid or selfish hope of personal advancement. He subsequently declined the proffered elevation to the bench in this country on the retirement of Chief Justice Powell, and it was only at the earnest solicitation of his friends that he was induced, on the retirement of Sir William Campbell in 1829, when the Chief Justiceship again became vacant, to accept that high office.

The political career of Sir John Robinson has been assailed times innumerable, and as often defended; but in this he has only shared the fate of all who have embarked upon the stormy sea of political life. It is neither our province nor desire to enter upon a discussion of the