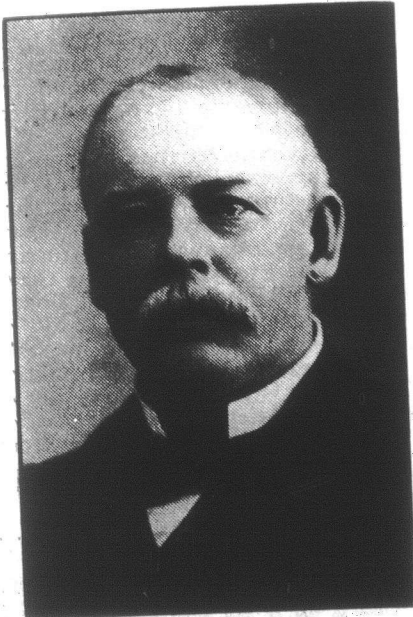


dark and costly page of its history.

Shortly after this, Mr. Ross married Miss Barbara E. McKay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. McKay, of Moose Jaw, formerly of Prince Edward Island. Mr. Ross has been described as a pioneer. So was Mrs. Ross. She made a pleasingly playful allusion to this in a neat little speech at a semi-public function at Government House, Regina, on the occasion of a presentation to her by the ladies of Regina on her departure to share her husband's new career as Governor of the Yukon—a journey brightly heralded, but on which the dark shadow of tragic gloom throws a quaint and interesting side-light on her pioneer life. She spoke with pride of being a Northwest woman, claiming the Northwest as her



HON. J. H. ROSS, EX-SPEAKER.

only home. It had been said, she remarked, that Mr. Ross was the first white man in his district and that she was the first white woman, so that when he selected her for his wife he had not many to choose from. The marriage was a fortunate one to both parties. They were companions meet for each other, and her "strong, sunny personality," her "wisdom in counsel and strength in execution," (to quote from the farewell address to her from the ladies of Regina) indicate what a support she was to her husband in his political life, and an inspiring lustre to his home.

At the general election in 1887 Mr. Ross was selected the standard-bearer of liberalism in West Assiniboia, his opponent being the late N. F. Davin. It required courage and an iron will even to avow liberalism, let alone championing it, in the Northwest in those days. The strong personality of Sir John A. Macdonald and the dazzling attractiveness of his policy had dazzled people. The task Mr. Ross undertook, therefore, was no light matter, and although he fought splendidly, the brilliant Irish orator was again elected. But the effect of the battle was the making of Mr. Ross and the beginning of the unmaking of Davin, the latter evidenced by the fact that Mr. Davin's next opponent was one of his own political household, viz.: Mr. Tweed, of Medicine Hat.

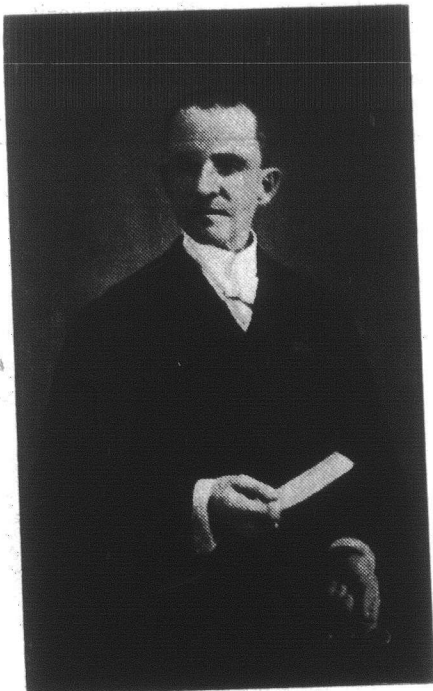
Coming back to the Legislative Assembly we find that in 1888-9, that is, in its first session, the great and only constitutional fight the Territories have ever had, began. The elected Assembly demanded control of its revenue from all sources. Lieut.-Governor Royal did not so read the Act, and the fight waxed fierce. In the second session Mr. Ross was elected Speaker. He filled the office to perfection. His constant cheeriness, equal temper and transparent impartiality made him a favorite with every member of the Assembly. All went merrily along until 24th August, 1902, when Mr. Haultain's Government met with sudden defeat, and a motion of no confidence was carried by a majority of one. The following day Mr. Haultain and his colleagues resigned, and on the 29th of August a new executive was formed with Mr. Cayley at its head. On the 30th September, Mr. Ross resigned his position in the chair, because, as he said, an executive was formed that was opposed to those

principles for which he had struggled, and he wished to place himself in a position where by voice and speech he could continue the struggle. So Mr. Ross stepped down and there was a "tie" in the strength of parties. He thus saved the Government.

The full significance of this action on the part of Mr. Ross will never be forgotten. It at once drew to him the attention and confidence of the people as showing him to be a man who did not allow his private interests to interfere with his public duties. A by-election gave Mr. Haultain a majority of one, and the following year Mr. Ross was re-elected Speaker, and occupied the chair until the Assembly died a natural death. Mr. Cayley's administration did not last long, and after the elections Mr. Haultain was again premier with Mr. Ross as Commissioner of Public Works and Minister of Finance.

In 1898 the Dominion Government appointed Mr. Ross a Commissioner to go to Athabasca and make treaty with the Indians in those far-away regions; and at the same time he examined for the Northwest Government into the capabilities of the Peace River district. He fulfilled both missions so satisfactorily that the public experienced no surprise when, in 1901, he was offered and accepted the first governorship of the Yukon. "Just the man for the work," was the general verdict, and so it was. The pole star of Mr. Ross' policy has ever been—faith in the people, and he carried the principles for which he had fought in the Territories into the far-away district of the Yukon.

I pass over with bare mention the great tragedy of Mr. Ross' life. Mrs. Ross, the devoted wife and loving mother was on board the Islander, on her way from the Yukon to Vancouver, when the ship ran into floating icebergs, those treacherous terrors of



EX-SPEAKER BETTS.

the sea that have sent so many to their doom. On this occasion most of the passengers were drowned or frozen to death in the cold water. Mrs. Ross, her baby and her niece were among them. Her death was the death of a brave woman and loving mother; and no words that could appear here would properly describe first the horror that was felt and then the sympathy that arose in every heart.

The catastrophe happened at a time when Yukon affairs demanded close attention and presence at Ottawa of the Governor, and it was hoped that

these activities would serve to divert anything like brooding over the awful grief that had fallen upon him; yet a further trouble befell him. While on his way to Ottawa he was stricken down in a moment with a serious illness, induced by sleeplessness that followed the poignant suffering that was the result of the terrible blow already recorded. Fortunately, he soon recovered sufficiently to be at work again, and when the Dominion elections came along in 1902 he relinquished the governorship and was elected M.P. for the Yukon district. He was thus its first Governor and its first M.P. It remains to add that a strong desire on the part of the public and the Government that Mr. Ross should not have to bear the rough and tumble of political life induced his appointment as a senator, a step that met with the approval of the whole Dominion, irrespective of party politics. From 1882, when he first struck Moose Jaw, up to to-day, he has never ceased to do good public work, and I cannot do better than close this brief sketch by quoting Frank Oliver's tribute to him as a man "always on the side of progress, always protecting public right, always advancing public interest, never self-seeking."

The next Speaker was

Mr. J. F. BETTS.

The Hon. John Felton Betts, M. L. A. for Prince Albert East, was the Speaker who succeeded Mr. Ross. He is a son of the Rev. L. A. Betts (Methodist minister) and was born at Stirling, Ont., on 9th October, 1854. Mr. Betts was educated at Albert College, Belleville, and shortly after leaving school he came west and settled at Prince Albert as a merchant and general trader. In this capacity he was very successful and has now large interests in Saskatchewan's noted capital. Mr. Betts very soon began to occupy prominent public positions: became a Justice of the Peace, Chairman of the Protestant School Board, and a member of Prince Albert's first Council. In 1888 he was elected M. L. A., and in 1895 was unanimously chosen Speaker. Every session Mr. Betts entertained the members and other prominent public men to a "Speaker's Banquet," and on each occasion the function was the vehicle for excellent speechifying. Mr. Betts himself is a model president for that sort of gathering and indeed for any other kind of meeting. He is a graceful and forcible speaker, full of gay wisdom, and his refined wit is always thoroughly enjoyed. In politics Mr. Betts is a moderate Conservative, but he has always opposed the introduction of Dominion party lines into the Northwest Assembly, and he is a man who is personally popular with all sorts and conditions of men of every shade of politics. In 1882 Mr. Betts married a daughter of Mr. Robt. Boyle, county clerk of Prince Edward, Ont.

MR. WILLIAM EAKIN.

It is sometimes said that the Northwest is a young man's country. To a great extent this is true, and it accounts for the fact that young men who have the sand in them to come west and pioneer are usually found to the front in all walks of life in that portion of the Dominion. Occasionally, however, the graybeard comes west and shows just as much sand and grit as his younger brethren, gets to the front and holds his own with the best of them: Mr. Wm. Eakin, ex-Speaker of the Northwest Assembly, is such an one, and the writer of this article saw him three years ago, then seventy-five years of age, dart ahead of the M.L.A.s visiting the Sun Dance Canyon at Banff, with a lighter step

than any of them, and arrive first of all the party at the summit of the steep incline. Mr. Eakin has had an interesting career. He was born at Cashel, township of Markham, county of York, Ontario, on the 12th day of June, 1828. His father, Samuel Eakin,

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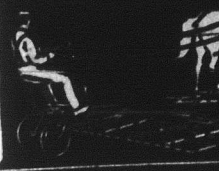
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