

The Canadian Courier

A National Weekly

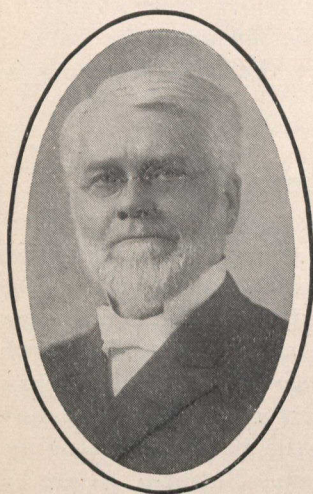
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No. 2

IN THE PUBLIC VIEW

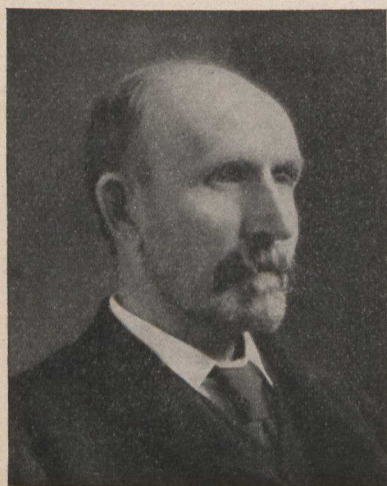


Rev. Dr. DuVal, recently elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly.

the poetic soul.

That Canada knew Sir Robert Reid from Newfoundland to Vancouver and heard of Frechette only now and then, probably means that Canada has had more direct use for bridges and docks and railways than for gems of literature. Sir Robert Reid, however, was a restless, adventurous sort. He traversed Canada in the rude and raw places of a generation ago when public utilities were in the making. He saw the country regardless of its beauty or its history and mainly in the light of its practical destiny. Poet Frechette got as far west as Chicago where for a while he published a French paper called *L'Amerique*, but after the decease of that paper he went back to French Canada where he was happier than anywhere else in the world. What he knew about Canada was largely in the nature of a poet's dream added to the ken of the historian and the statesman.

Dr. Frechette was born at Levis in 1839; educated at the seminary of Quebec and at Nicolet; called to the bar in 1864; went to Chicago as a journalist. In 1871 he returned to Quebec, went into politics and at the election of 1874 entered the House of Commons as member for Levis. In the year of Sir John Macdonald's return to power with the National Policy, Mr. Frechette was defeated and turned his attention to literature; he was defeated again in 1882. Seven years later the Mercier Government appointed him clerk of the Legislative Council. In twenty years of political and legal and literary life Dr. Frechette found time to edit half a dozen French papers and to write two volumes of poems, recognised by the French Academy. Many minor works also he wrote in verse and considerable prose. Even his prose was poetic; but Dr. Frechette was also a profound scholar on the purely literary side and was man of action enough to fight a duel.



The late Sir Robert Reid, Railway King.

THE same week in the same province died two men who by the broadest kind of contrast made each a great name in Canada; Dr. Louis Frechette, the poet laureate of French Canada, and Sir Robert G. Reid, the most celebrated bridge-builder and one of the most famous contractors on the continent of America. It is safe to say that this country never before lost in one week two such big men.

Reid flung bridges over half a continent; Frechette wrote verses immortalised by the French Academy. The Scotch-born contractor ruled and all but owned a whole Crown colony whose railways and docks and telegraph lines he built and whose ships he floated. The Quebec-born poet translated his vision of life into words that lovers of pure literature rank among the choicest gifts of language and

The duel was fought in New Orleans during the siege of Paris in the Franco-Prussian war, his opponent being a German who in a theatre had spoken insultingly of the French.

In contrast to this literary, rather knightly and altogether chivalrous career, the life of Sir Robert G. Reid is a striking study. The character of the man was far different from that of a man who either wrote verses or fought a duel. He cared nothing for public life except that the big things he put up over half a continent and as far south as Mexico were monuments of publicity. When he began to build bridges in Canada there was more need for bridges than for poetry. Long before he had

done contract work on the western section of the C.P.R., he had built part of the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, and the Lachine bridge over the St. Lawrence and the bridge at Niagara Falls. At the Soo and over the Rio Grande, on the Delaware and at Cape Breton, the bridges of Sir Robert Reid are standing to-day, while two volumes of verse from the pen of Dr. Frechette repose in the library of the French Academy. As to Reid's work in Newfoundland, it has never had a parallel on this continent. Newfoundland without Reid and his boys would be a strange place even for so rugged a character as Dr. Grenfell. No poet has ever told the story; most of it would make infinitely better prose; but in all their industrialism and commercial character the enterprises of the quiet Scotch wizard on the island of fog are an epic as big as any of the epics that have made Canada, from the discovery of the northern rivers to the building of the C.P.R. and the railways of the Saskatchewan.

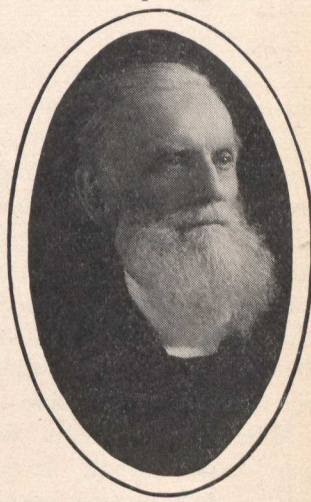
That Reid worked largely with dynamite while Frechette toiled with the pen is one way of noting that Canada has become large enough this while back to produce great men who have little or nothing in common except the desire to leave the land for which they laboured bigger than they found it. The bridge-builder was always building bigger than he knew even when he was building fortunes of colossal magnitude for the family of the Reids. The poet of French Canada was writing bigger than his race in Canada, more widely than the boundaries of Quebec, even though the English-speaking population of Canada knew next to nothing of the medium which he used or the things he uttered.

One of these days the bridges and the telegraph lines of Sir Robert Reid will have to be rebuilt by those who knew nothing of the conditions that made the career and the character of the greatest bridge-builder of America. The writings of Dr. Louis Frechette may not be so universally known; but they will be a deal harder to destroy. Some of them may never die as long as the French language endures. As long as they last they will be one of the voices of Canada.

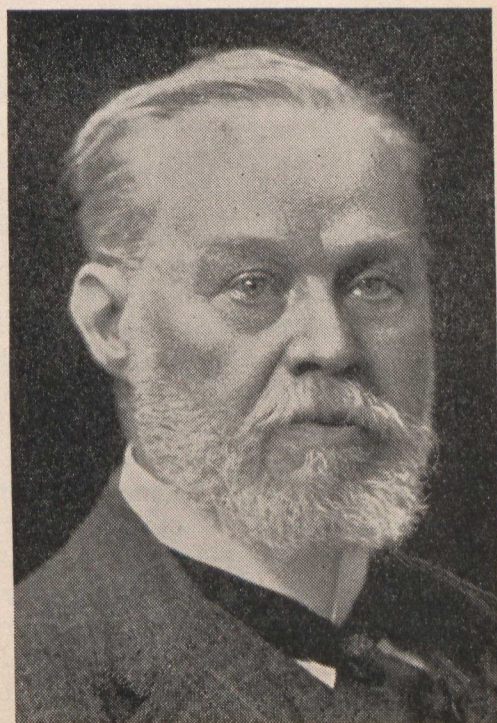
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THE highest official honour in the gift of the Presbyterian Church of Canada has been conferred upon Rev. F. B. Du Val, D.D., the pastor of Knox

Church, Winnipeg. With a pastorate of over twenty years in Western Canada, the new Moderator has accomplished much for the cause of religion and morality and his ability and familiarity with the affairs of the church, with its legislation and enactments, and with its principles of doctrine and discipline, will eminently qualify him for the responsible duties which have devolved upon him. Born in the State of Maryland of Huguenot French and Scotch ancestry, he began a brilliant ministerial career in the eastern States and in 1888 when the people of Winnipeg were much discouraged by the crash of the early boom days, and when many other ministers had declined an invitation to Knox Church, Dr. Du Val was induced to come.



Rev. R. Campbell, D.D., retiring Moderator of Gen. Assembly Presbyterian Church, Canada.



The late Dr. Louis Frechette, C.M.G.