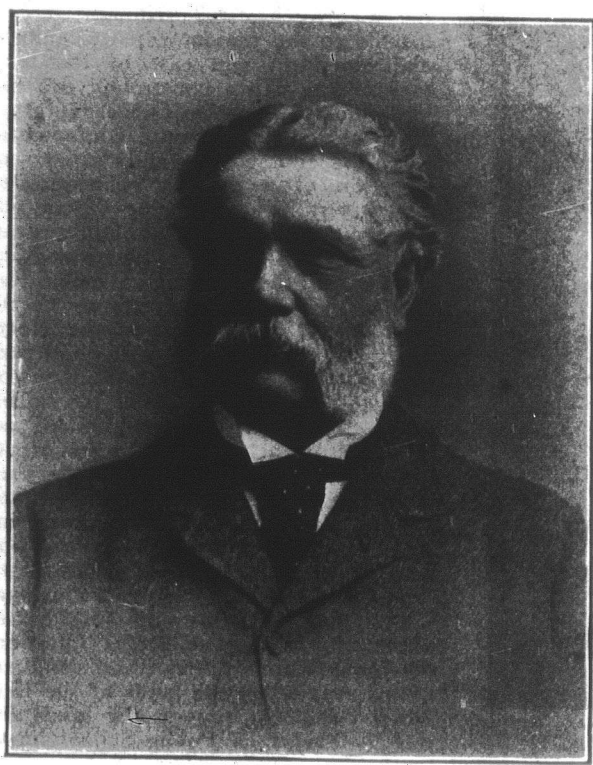




Edgar Dewdney.

One of the "Old Guard." Lieutenant Governor during the Riel rebellion, 1881-1888.

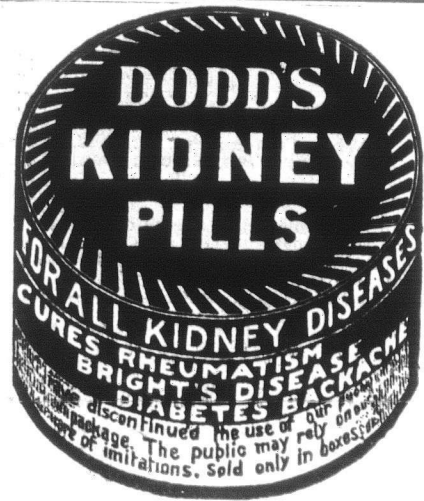
older provinces, particularly from Ontario, and change in the form of government became necessary. Up to 1876 the administration of the Northwest Territories had remained in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, as already indicated, and an appointed Council of eleven, the Council of Assiniboia, it was called. In 1875, however, was passed by the Federal Government an "Act to amend and consolidate the law respecting the Northwest Territories," and it came into force the following year. Under this Act the affairs of the Territories were entrusted to a Council composed of the Lieutenant Governor and a Council appointed by the Governor General in Coun-



OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE, REGINA.

cil. Provision was also made by the Act for the creation, as population increased, of electoral districts for the election of additional members to the Council. When these should reach twenty-one in number the Council was to be abolished and a legislative assembly take its place.

The first meeting of the Council was



in 1887, at Livingstone, on the Swan River, the place selected pending the erection of suitable buildings at Battleford, then regarded as the capital of the Territories. The Lieutenant Governor presided at the meetings of the Council and had a vote therein, as well as a casting vote in the event of a tie. The enactments of the Council, Ordinances they are called in contradistinction to the enactments of the provinces, which are called Statutes, were on such matters only as were permitted by order from the Governor General in Council. The subjects were such as would naturally suggest themselves in a newly formed community and indeed were often suggested by the people themselves. For instance, one of the very first matters to consider was a petition for aid for a

school. But the money allowed by the Federal Government for the Government of the Territories was voted for specific purposes and the Council, therefore, had no power to grant the prayer of the petitioners. They, however, took a very wise step. They placed the matter before the Dominion Government and asked that the desired aid be granted for so laudable and urgent an object. It was pointed out that although the newly constituted council had no power to appropriate any of its grants for such a purpose, yet that it had power to permit the existence of corporations for the establishment of schools, that these corporations could raise money by a tax for the purpose, and that the

central authority would be willing to give grants in aid. From this germ has grown the present splendid school system of the Territories; with its school districts, Boards of Trustees, Council of Public Instruction, and all paraphernalia of a sound educational system.

In 1881 the population of the Northwest had so increased that one district was erected into an electorate and returned a member to the Council. The honour of being first elected member of the Council belongs to Mr. Laurence Clarke, who was returned for the district of Lorne. In 1883 there were six districts, each sending a representative, Frank Oliver and J. H. Ross taking their seats for Edmonton and Moose Jaw respectively. In 1887 the number was fourteen, and the following year the constitution of the government was amended before the prescribed number of twenty-one was reached. In the meantime, after three sessions at Battleford, an important change took place. Battleford was too far from the railway to maintain its position as capital, and Regina was selected for that distinction in 1883. From that date the seat of government has been at Regina.

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Lieutenant Governor 1888 to 1893. Lawyer, journalist and legislator. Defended Lepine in the trial for the murder of Thos. Scott by Riel's provisional government.

ANNUAL MEMORIALS.

There were many matters that from their nature were beyond the jurisdiction of the Council. They were not, however, beyond its discussion. There thus came into existence a formulated assertion every year of the wants and desires of the Council, which was placed before the Federal Government by petition or resolution and generally urged by a delegation from the Council to the Government at Ottawa. These documents are of interest and importance as showing the increasing desire of the people of the Territories for self-government and entire control of their own affairs, as well as an assumption of the privilege of tendering advice in those matters upon which it was beyond its power to legislate. Thus we find the Council calling upon the Federal Government to recognize the rights of squatters and of dealing favorably with the claims of the half-breeds. The Council formulated, too, such alterations in the statutes of the Federal Parliament for governing the Territories that it thought desirable should be made and it may be at once stated that all the laws affecting the Territories that have been passed by the Dominion Parliament, all the constitutional changes that have been effected, are not only foreshadowed in, but are the direct result of, these annual memorials. In 1883, we find the first intimation of the wisdom of irrigation in certain parts of the Territories and of the desirability of railway extension. We find, too, that the Council urged that it should have greater control in the expenditure of its money. It also demanded more money. It claimed the same subsidy per capita, as was given the provinces, additional sums as compensation for the public lands that were being sold by the Dominion Government as well as an advance on account of the school lands

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that would be sold in a future more or less remote. The Council also asked for more extensive powers generally. The following year still stronger requests were preferred. It was asked

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