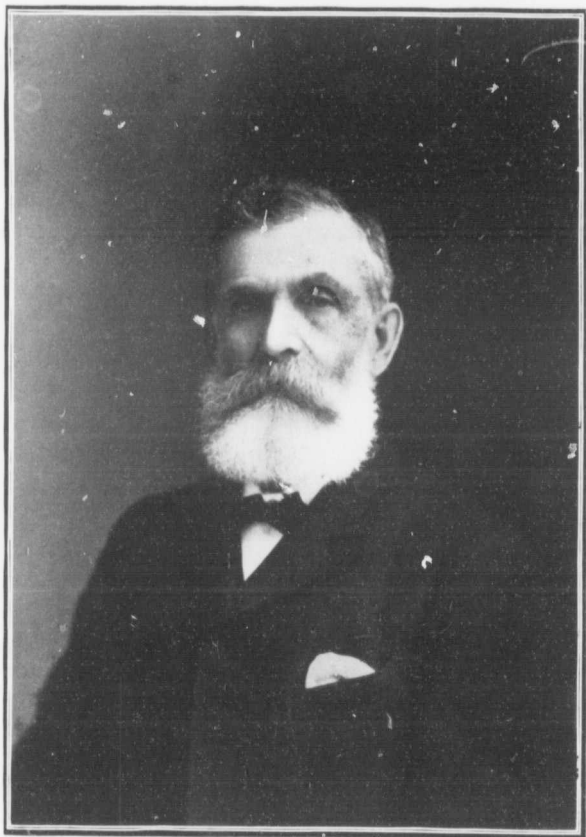


Sketch of  
The Life and Career  
of

Lieut.-Col.  
The Hon. David Tisdale

P.C., K.C.

Simcoe, Norfolk County  
Ontario



LT.-COL. THE HON. DAVID TISDALE, P.C., K.C.

10. 11. 1954

SKETCH OF THE LIFE  
OF  
COLONEL TISDALE

---

COLONEL TISDALE was born at "Oak Hill" Farm, the Tisdale homestead, in the Township of Charlotteville, County of Norfolk, on the 8th day of September, 1835.

His father, Ephraim Tisdale, was born in the same Township in 1801, and his mother, Hannah Price, in Walsingham Township, Norfolk County, in 1802.

His grandfather, Ephraim Tisdale, as a Canadian militiaman, took part in the battles of Queenston Heights and Lundy's Lane.

His great grandparents, Ephraim Tisdale and Ruth Strange, as U. E. Loyalists, emigrated from the State of Massachusetts to the Town of Parr, now the City of St. John, N.B., in 1783, and in 1798 removed to that part of Upper Canada now known as the County of Norfolk.

Colonel Tisdale's maternal grandparents were Thomas Price and Frances Montross, also the descendants of U. E. Loyalists, who settled in Norfolk County over a century ago. Colonel Tisdale himself is a Vice-President of the U. E. Loyalists' Association of Ontario.

On November 16th, 1858, Colonel Tisdale married Sarah Araminta Walker. Mrs. Tisdale is a daughter of the late James Walker of Woodhouse Township, Norfolk County, whose father was also of U. E. Loyalist descent.

#### EDUCATION

Colonel Tisdale's school days were spent in the County of Norfolk. His education commenced at "Kitchen's" school house in the Township of Charlotteville, and was continued at Forestville school house, in the same Township; at St. Williams school, Walsingham Township; and at the village of Vittoria. He completed his studies at the Simcoe Grammar School.

#### PROFESSIONAL CAREER

In 1852, in the office of G. R. Van Norman, at Simcoe, Colonel Tisdale commenced the study of law. Mr. Van Norman afterwards was County Crown Attorney at Brantford. Colonel Tisdale passed his preliminary examination at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, in 1853, and entered the Law Society for call to the Bar of Upper Canada. He continued his legal studies under D. B. Read, K.C., at Toronto, and was called to the Bar in 1858.

Returning to Simcoe, Colonel Tisdale formed a partnership with Francis Gore Stanton and subsequently became the head of the successive law firms of Tisdale & Duncombe; Tisdale, Duncombe & Livingstone; Tisdale, Livingstone & Robb; Tisdale, Livingstone, Robb & Jackson; Tisdale, Robb & Tisdale; Tisdale, Tisdale & Reid.

Colonel Tisdale was created a Q.C. by Lord Dufferin in 1872, during the administration of Sir John A. Macdonald.

During his professional career Colonel Tisdale had some tempting offers to leave his native County of Norfolk, but preferred the home life and familiar surroundings of the County in which he was born and in which he still lives.

#### A MAN OF AFFAIRS

While his career as a lawyer was a most successful one, Colonel Tisdale also evinced an inclination for affairs of a general commercial character. As time went on he became more and more absorbed in various public and private enterprises and gradually gave up the practice of law.

He was largely instrumental in the construction of the Georgian Bay & Lake Erie, and Stratford & Huron Railways, from Port Dover to Wiarton, connecting at these points the waters of Lake Erie with those of the Georgian Bay. Colonel Tisdale was President for a number of years of the company that constructed and controlled these lines, which are now merged into the Georgian Bay Division of the Grand Trunk Railway, and which constitute a most important thoroughfare, crossing and connecting every railway system running east and west through the prosperous peninsula of Western Ontario. About seven of the best years of his life were devoted to the completion of this undertaking, which was obviously one of great importance to the County of Norfolk.

Colonel Tisdale evolved and worked out schemes for financing, and he then constructed the Owen Sound branch of the Grand Trunk Railway from Parkhead to Owen Sound, an important extension of the Georgian Bay System, also the Waterloo & Elmira Branch of the Grand Trunk System. He also worked out the financial scheme for and was the principal factor in the construction of the South Norfolk Railway from Simcoe to Port Rowan.

It was Colonel Tisdale's work and influence that brought about the building of the dock at Port Rowan, to which that part of the country was so well entitled.

Colonel Tisdale has for some time past devoted considerable time and energy to a project for the connection of Lake St. Clair with Lake Erie by a ship canal twenty-one feet deep.

Such a canal would greatly facilitate the movements of the commerce of the Great Lakes. It would avoid the difficulties, dangers and delays of the navigation of the Detroit River and the shoals, currents and narrow passages at its entrance into Lake Erie. At the same time the canal would shorten the distance seventy-nine miles each way.

Colonel Tisdale is the President of "The St. Clair & Erie Ship Canal Company," which has been incorporated by the Dominion Parliament for the purpose of constructing this canal. He and his associates have interested English and French capitalists to such an extent that they expect shortly to commence actual work upon this great undertaking and press it rapidly to completion.

Its importance can to some extent be realized by the mere statement of the fact that statistics show the passage yearly between the two Lakes of traffic to the enormous extent of over 40,000,000 tons.

Colonel Tisdale has also been engaged in other works and contracts of an extensive and varied nature. He has interested himself at various times in lumbering, mining, sheep farming and cattle ranching. He is now Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Crown Life Insurance Company. His commercial and financial experiences have made him pre-eminently a "man of affairs."

#### MILITARY CAREER

At the time of the Trent affair, in 1861, during the Civil War in the United States, Colonel Tisdale joined as a private, a rifle company then being formed in Simcoe and was unanimously chosen captain. He volunteered with his company for active service in the winter of 1864 and went to Niagara as part of a provisional battalion stationed there for four months to guard the frontier from breaches of neutrality laws by Southern refugees.

In the Fenian Raid of 1866 Colonel Tisdale was again out with his Company in defence of his country.

During September of that year a battalion of eight companies—the 39th Norfolk Rifles—was formed in Norfolk County and Colonel Tisdale was gazetted Lieut.-Colonel thereof.

In 1872 he was officially thanked, in General Orders, by the Militia Department of Canada for having successfully dispersed with his battalion a



United States mob which had assembled near Port Dover to witness a prize fight.

Colonel Tisdale retired from the command of the Norfolk Rifles, retaining his rank, in 1876.

He was one of the delegates who met at Ottawa in 1868 and organized the Dominion Rifle Association.

Colonel Tisdale was unable to accept, in 1897, an invitation from the Militia Department to be one of the military contingent to represent Canada at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration in England.

The Colonel is the Honorary President of the Veterans' Association for Norfolk County. As chairman of a committee appointed by the Association, and with its assistance, he succeeded in procuring the Fenian Raid medal for each of the surviving Norfolk Veterans. He also, with the assistance of the same Committee, procured from the Crown Lands Department certificates authorizing each member of the Association to locate one hundred and sixty acres of land granted to them by the Ontario Legislature.

#### POLITICAL LIFE

In accord with the traditions and actions of his forefathers, Colonel Tisdale has always been and still is an ardent loyalist and supporter of British connection, believing that the interests of Canada will be better served as an integral part of the British Empire, under colonial control and institutions, than if affiliated with the United States. Colonel Tisdale has throughout his life been a consistent conservative of the moderate type. The general policy of

the Conservative party, especially since Confederation, has appealed to his judgment as being the best and safest for Canadians to follow.

In his own county he has all his life taken an active interest in political and municipal affairs. He served for some years as Councillor and Reeve of Simcoe and has been a member of the Norfolk County Council.

He was a strong supporter of Confederation and took an active part in Norfolk in the elections of 1867 and 1872, advocating the construction of the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railways, not only because they formed part of the compact of Confederation, but because he believed that a great rail and water system of communication was necessary to lay the proper foundation upon which to build up a nation.

In 1874 Colonel Tisdale was first nominated as a candidate for the House of Commons, opposing Mr. John Charlton, by whom he was defeated at the general elections, held under the Mackenzie regime in that year. The great issue in that contest was the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which Colonel Tisdale strongly supported. The wisdom of his stand upon that question all parties now admit.

In 1878 Colonel Tisdale was an ardent exponent of the then new policy of protection, the development of which on proper lines has done so much for Canada.

At the general election in 1887 he was nominated in opposition to the then member, Mr. Joseph (now

Sheriff Jackson. Colonel Tisdale was elected and was afterwards re-elected at the general elections in 1891, 1896 and 1900.

He was Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways and Canals in the House of Commons from 1891 to 1896.

Upon the formation of the ministry of Sir Charles Tupper, before the general election in 1896, Colonel Tisdale was appointed Minister of Militia and Defence and sworn of the Privy Council. He resigned with his leader upon the defeat of the Government.

Throughout the seventeen years of his parliamentary career Colonel Tisdale has urged and supported the construction and expansion of a great system of railway and canal transportation as the most direct method of developing the great natural resources of Canada. This he deemed of initial importance to the growth and enlargement of our agricultural and manufactured products. He has supported all measures in the direction of giving proper protection to all Canadian industries and products. Colonel Tisdale, in short, is an advocate of "tariff for tariff" with those who keep up a wall of that nature against us. He believes thoroughly in a policy of "Canada for the Canadians."

From 1887 to the present time Colonel Tisdale has made mutual preferential trade within the Empire one of the principal questions in his election contests. He has been a continuous and ardent advocate of this policy in both his public and private life. He believes that with this policy once adopted the future of Canada will become immeasurably greater than

under any other conditions—in fact, that no man living can fully grasp the illimitable possibilities of Canada under proper trade conditions within the British Empire. He is in hearty accord with Mr. Chamberlain's proposals and believes that that statesman's espousal of the principle of British preferential trade will bring the question within the immediate realm of practical politics.

When first elected to Parliament Colonel Tisdale found many of the rural parts of South Norfolk inadequately provided with postal facilities. With characteristic energy and persistency he took the matter up with the Postmaster-General's Department. Colonel Tisdale insisted that farming communities which had been contributing taxes directly and indirectly for one hundred years or more for the development of the country and the construction of public works far removed from them, should have postal facilities relatively as good as extended to towns and cities. He had new post offices opened; mail routes changed; new routes established and a more frequent and faster service inaugurated, and he did not relax his efforts until an efficient and satisfactory mail service was established throughout the riding.

#### JUSTICE FOR NORFOLK

During the last session of Parliament the Redistribution Bill deprived Norfolk of one of its members in the House of Commons. Colonel Tisdale protested strongly against this. He made a speech in the House of Commons in which he went fully into the question and proved conclusively that this

reduction in representation was a gross injustice to Norfolk. His protest was not prompted so much by the evident attempt to deprive him of the seat he has so long held as it was by the unfair effect of the Bill upon the representation of Norfolk in Parliament. He moved the following resolution which was rejected:—

“Whereas, in fifty-one constituencies in the Province of Ontario, as proposed by the Bill, which had the least number in population, the average population is 21,115; and whereas the proposed five electoral districts of Norfolk, Haldimand, Welland, Lincoln and Wentworth, excluding Hamilton, amount to 139,338, in the Bill, thus requiring for each of the five districts an average representative unit of 27,867, Therefore this committee is of the opinion that the said last mentioned districts are entitled to a representation of six members and that the schedule should be revised and amended accordingly.”

It will be seen that if the counties mentioned in the resolution had been divided into six electoral districts instead of five only, as is done by the Bill, each of the six would have had a population of 23,223 or 2,108 more than the average population of fifty-one out of eighty-six of the constituencies in the Province of Ontario.

Had this resolution been adopted justice would have been done the county of Norfolk, which would have retained the two members it has had in the House since Confederation. Norfolk County has always had, and still has, two members in the Ontario Legislature, and Colonel Tisdale's contention is that it is entitled to the same representation in the Dominion Parliament. The Government, however, took the responsibility of reducing the representation and Colonel Tisdale declared he would “appeal from its decision to the masters of the administration—the people of this country.”

W. W.