

Some Incidents in the
Public Life of

HON. R. W. SCOTT.

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BRIEF REFERENCES TO SOME INCIDENTS IN THE
PUBLIC LIFE OF HON. R. W. SCOTT

AND A

FEW PRESS EDITORIALS ON HIS RETIREMENT.

Extract from a despatch received by His Excellency The Governor General, from The Right Honourable, The Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

DOWNING STREET, 10 November, 1908.

I take this opportunity of requesting that you will convey to Mr. Scott an expression of His Majesty's appreciation of his long and valuable services to The Government of The Dominion and to The Empire.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

(Signed) CREWE.

Governor General, His Excellency,

The Right Honourable Earl Grey, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

From the *True Witness*, Montreal, December 5th, 1903.

SOME LESSONS.

To our young co-religionists and fellow-countrymen who have the ambition to enter public life we would suggest a careful perusal of the brief sketch of the life of the venerable and distinguished figure in the administration of Canada to-day—Hon. R. W. Scott—which will be found in another column.

Leaving aside the question of political partisanship with which the "True Witness" is not concerned, there are lessons in the career of the leader of the Senate, which leave no room for doubt that he is a man of culture, and has always displayed the courage of his convictions.

At no period in Catholic ranks in this country was there more pressing need for men of culture, executive ability and courage than now; men who will leave the impress of those characteristics not only upon the statute books but also upon the minds and hearts of their own people.

A GOLDEN JUBILEE AND ITS LESSONS.

The Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State, and Mrs. Scott have just celebrated the golden jubilee of their wedding day. Owing to the fact of Mrs. Scott being an invalid it was a family celebration only, but they had the happiness of having all their children and grandchildren with them on the auspicious occasion, and received many tokens of congratulations and good wishes from a large circle of friends.

* * *

Mr. Scott was born in Prescott on the 24th of February, 1825. His father, the late W. J. Scott, M.D., belonged to an old Irish family, resident in the County of Clare, and his mother, Sarah Ann Macdonell, came of a race of staunch Catholics, who came to Canada in order to seek that religious liberty denied them in their own land. Mrs. Scott was born in Dublin in the year 1833—daughter of the late John Heron—the eldest of a family who were gifted with great musical talent and who, for many years, charmed the English-speaking world on both sides of the Atlantic, with their exquisite voices, and particularly in their rendering of Irish ballads.

Mr. Scott visited Ottawa as early as 1846 (it was then Bytown), and finally settled there in 1848—he has therefore seen the marvellous growth of the small town, and its development into a large and prosperous city. He was Mayor in 1852, and was first elected member of the Canadian Legislature in 1857. From Confederation (1867) to November, 1873, Mr. Scott was a member of the Ontario Legislature. In 1871 he was elected Speaker by a unanimous vote; was subsequently Commissioner of Crown Lands in the Blake and Mowat administrations. In January, 1874, was appointed Secretary of State in the administration of the late Alexander Mackenzie. From 1878 to 1896, Mr. Scott was leader of the Opposition in the Senate, and on the formation of the present administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier was again appointed Secretary of State.

In the year 1863 Mr. Scott had the satisfaction of carrying through Parliament a measure placing the Separate School system of Ontario on an acceptable and permanent basis. The Bill was

first introduced in the session of 1861, but met with such determined opposition that little progress could be made. In the session of 1862 the Bill improved and extended was the first public bill introduced, yet owing to the factious resistance that met the measure at every stage it had to be again dropped though it had passed the second reading stage.

In the following year, 1863, after numerous divisions on the several amendments, proposed with the object of weakening its efficiency, had been voted down, the bill was finally carried through both branches of Parliament to the great satisfaction of the Catholic minority of the province. Among the many assurances of approval received by Mr. Scott during his advocacy of the measure, the following are interesting as showing the warm appreciation by the Catholic Hierarchy of Mr. Scott's successful efforts in placing the Catholic schools of Ontario on a sound and permanent basis.

* * *

MY DEAR MR. SCOTT:—

TORONTO, March 18, 1863.

"I now heartily thank you for your noble efforts to settle finally our school difficulty. I do hope that your bill will become law, and exonerate us from the very disagreeable difficult duty of fighting a religious battle on the political arena of the hustings.

Please to accept, my dear Sir, the expression of my high esteem and regard."

Yours sincerely,

JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH,

Bishop of Toronto.

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After the bill had been finally passed through both Houses the following telegram was received from the Bishop of Toronto:—

MONTREAL TELEGRAPH COMPANY,

QUEBEC, May 6, 1863.

By telegraph from Toronto.

To R. W. SCOTT, M.P.,

Please accept assurance of perpetual gratitude of Catholics of Canada.

BISHOP LYNCH.

BISHOP'S PALACE,

KINGSTON, 24th April, 1863.

MY DEAR MR. SCOTT:—

Allow me to congratulate you on the great success of your Separate School Bill.

Had an adverse majority prevented the passage of your bill, even then you would have had an undoubted right to the love and gratitude of every Catholic parent who is desirous of procuring for his children the inestimable blessings of a religious education.

Now that God has been pleased to bless your honest endeavors and crown with full success your persevering labors, you will be long remembered by a grateful people as the friend of true education, and your name will be handed down as that of the successful advocate of the parents' rights to have his children educated and instructed in accordance with the dictates of his conscience.

Thanking you for this signal service rendered to the Church and to society,

I remain,

My dear Mr. Scott,

Very sincerely and gratefully yours,

E. J.

Bishop of Kingston.

* * *

In the year 1878, Mr. Scott carried through Parliament the Canada Temperance Act which proved a good workable measure in those districts wherever there was a strong public sentiment supporting it.

The Act has for many years been in force in 25 counties in the Maritime Provinces, and in two counties in Manitoba. In the year 1881, Mr. Scott received the following letter of approval from the late Cardinal Manning:—

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,

WESTMINSTER, S.W., April 12, 1881.

MY DEAR MR. SCOTT:—

I thank you much for the papers you have sent me showing your successful progress in the Temperance Legislation. We owe you our hearty thanks; for the example of the Dominion has more weight in the Mother Country than any other part of the Empire. We are making way slowly, because much hindered by burning questions which take precedence; but we have gained much. Thank God the League of the Cross is spreading and saving many.

May God strengthen you in defending Catholic education. What Pius IX, used to call "the anti-social and anti-Christian revolution" is aiming full at religious schools. Society without religion will raise a generation without faith, and the roots of the Christian world would be cut through.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) H. E.,

Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

* * *

Mr. Scott has followed closely the life of the Catholic Church in Ottawa during the last half century. He was present at the consecration of the first Bishop of By-town, in 1848—the saintly Mgr. Guigues—of whom he was an intimate friend, and we may add, a great admirer. He read the address of welcome to the present able Archbishop when in the year 1874 he was appointed to the diocese, and also had the privilege of reading the congratulatory address presented to him on the occasion of his silver jubilee in 1899. Mr. Scott has been intimately connected with more than one parish in Ottawa; he saw the beginnings of St. Patrick's parish and lent important aid in the erection of its church in the earlier years before the edifice had assumed its present handsome proportions and appearance. For many years Mr. Scott took an active interest in the success of the Ottawa University and was able to obtain for the institution important amendments to the original charter.

PRESS EDITORIALS.

The *Catholic Record*, 26th Sept., 1908.

HON. R. W. SCOTT.

The time has come when the venerable Secretary of State, the Hon. R. W. Scott, will lay aside the cares of office. General regret will be expressed that Mr. Scott's increasing age has rendered this change advisable, but it will be pleasant to reflect that his sage council will remain a valuable asset to the Senate of Canada. We hope the time will come when the life of this remarkable man will be written and scattered broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion. We entertain this hope because the study of such a life would tend to promote in the young men of our generation ideals which would redound to the good of Canada. Going back over the half century and more during which the retiring Secretary of State had been an active figure in Canadian public affairs one can recall many incidents which will but increase the admiration entertained towards him now that he is in the autumn of life. In every phase of his character he was the embodiment of all that was good and great. If we may study his career as a Canadian we will find that all the strength and vigor and acquirements of his character were employed unsparingly in the promotion of everything which tended to advance the prosperity and happiness of his country. Considered as an Irishman who will say that he has not ever been an ardent lover of his country? In weal or woe his heart was always with her. His tongue and pen were ever unstintedly at her service, and his purse was always open to give freely when the cry of distress reached his ears. His son, the present Mayor of Ottawa, has taken for many years a resolute part in the promotion of Home Rule for Ireland. May we not say that he is but following the footsteps of his father. As a Catholic, Mr. Scott's whole life has been a model one. In the wide dominion cannot be found, we venture to say, one who has been more ardent in his attachment to the mother Church. It has been to him the beacon light guiding all his life's actions and we need not wonder that the Hon. R. W. Scott is held in admiration not only at the capital but in all parts of the Dominion. There will come to him, we doubt not, as the declining

years are upon him, that peace of mind which is the portion of a well-spent life. He has given of his best to his faith and to his country, and as the years go by the example he has given us will count for much.

The *Daily Witness*, Montreal, 6th March, 1908.

The story that Mr. Scott is about to resign is, we are sure the whole country will be pleased to know, entirely without foundation. He is one of the most valued and least assailable of those who have sat in the councils of the nations. He belongs to that aristocracy of man who combine length of days with continued vigor of mind and body, the fruits of a virtuous and abstemious life, and he adds to the honor conferred by blameless public service the standing that ripening wisdom and experience bestow. The country owes a good deal to Mr. Scott, and will yet owe him more. He has been the trusted friend of Mackenzie, Blake and Laurier. He has conferred upon us some of our greatest laws, and is now engaged on real and pregnant service of the same sort. We may well hope that he may long wear the armor of active political service. He is only eighty-three; Lord Strathcona is eighty-seven, still serving as actively as ever, the admiration, for vigor and wisdom, of all the world, young and old. Of both it may be said that stern self-discipline has made them examples of what man may look to be who does not injure himself.

Toronto *Globe*, September 18th, 1908.

THE PASSING OF SENATOR SCOTT.

At eighty-three, full of years and honors, Senator Scott retires from administrative work, while retaining his membership in the second Chamber. His Parliamentary career has lasted from 1857, with a single break, one year past the half-century mile post. In the Parliament of Canada he represented the city of Ottawa from 1857 to 1863; in the Ontario Legislature he represented the same constituency from 1867 to 1873; since 1874 he has been a member of the Dominion Senate. During nearly twenty years of that long interval he has held various portfolios as a Minister of the Crown.

It goes without saying that Mr. Scott must have the qualities that go to the make-up of a practical legislator; he could not otherwise have maintained himself so long in public life. With two statutes that are still in active operation he stands inseparably connected: The Roman Catholic Separate School Act, passed by the Parliament of the old Province of Canada in 1863, and the Scott Act, passed by the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada in 1878. The first was the result of a successful attempt to systematize and amend the legal enactments that purported to confer on the Roman Catholic citizens of Ontario the privilege of having separate schools maintained out of their own rates, and sharing in the grants made out of the Provincial revenue; the second was the result of an attempt, equally successful, to replace the ineffective local option law known as the Dunkin Act by a prohibitory measure at once more drastic and more enforceable.

During the first Ontario Parliament Mr. Scott was a supporter of the Sandfield Macdonald Administration, but after its downfall in 1871 he took office under Mr. Edward Blake as Commissioner of Crown Lands. From that time he has been a steadfast Liberal, maintaining through all kinds of political vicissitudes his loyalty to the party of his mature choice. In 1874 he was appointed a Senator, with the portfolio of Secretary of State in the Mackenzie Administration. From 1878 he led the Liberal Opposition in the Senate to 1896, when he resumed the Secretaryship of State, this time as a member of the Laurier Ministry. Into his well-earned retirement he carries with him the esteem of the third generation of contemporaries, and a reputation unsullied by even the suspicion of scandal.

Toronto *Globe*, 26th Sept., 1908.

The retirement of Hon. R. W. Scott from the office of Secretary of State closes the public career, save for membership in the Senate, of a man, now in his 84th year, who has been connected with the public life of Canada almost continuously since 1852. Such a record is equalled by no other man at present in Parliament, and probably has not been surpassed in the history of this country. Of late years Mr. Scott has not been much in the public eye, though he has been a hale and active figure around the capital. His good health is in large measure due to his simple life—early to bed and

early to rise, and plenty of fresh air, being rather old-fashioned maxims which he has enforced in daily life. His long connection with Parliament has made him an authority on matters of administration, and he has helped many younger men to avoid the shoals that await the inexperienced.

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From Ottawa *Evening Journal*, Sept. 18th, 1908.

In the retirement of Hon. R. W. Scott the Dominion Government loses a minister of high character, of a great knowledge of public affairs and of indefatigable industry. His has been a long and at times arduous public service and he has deserved well not only of his party but of the people of the country at large. The people of Ottawa, of which he has been a life long citizen and one time mayor, are indebted to him in some measure for his initiative in the movement which led to the choice of Ottawa as the Capital of the country. They will unite in wishing that he may be long spared to enjoy that leisure which he has so richly earned.

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St. John *Sun*.

HON. R. W. SCOTT.

The retirement of Hon. R. W. Scott from the position of Secretary of State in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's ministry brings to an honorable end an active and fruitful political career over half a century long.

And through all these years Mr. Scott has kept himself unspotted from the world of politics—has won the affectionate respect of friend and foe as a courtly, kindly gentleman, clean and true and public spirited. Always active for the common good, there stand to his credit two measures of prime importance—the Canada Temperance Act, which will long perpetuate his name as the pioneer in local legislation, and the Separate School Law of Ontario, which, enacted in 1863, solved a most difficult problem very satisfactorily.

Ottawa Citizen, Sept. 16th, 1908.

A picturesque and notable figure will retire from public life in Canada in the person of Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State. He has been identified first with municipal and later with Federal politics in Ottawa for half a century, and whatever criticisms may have been directed against him by opponents as a supporter of cabinet policies with which they did not agree, he has personally always enjoyed the respect of the citizens of the Capital and of the members of both houses irrespective of political views. Himself the first mayor of Ottawa he lived to see his son successfully aspire to the same honor. As Secretary of State he has perpetuated traditions of that office as a careful and safe administrator who entertained a high sense of responsibility and seldom if ever allowed himself to be swayed by partisan considerations in dealing with national interests. He has honorably earned retirement, though still a remarkably hale and hearty man for his years, and his fellow citizens of the Capital will unite in wishing him many more years of life as a spectator beside the political arena in which he was so long a conspicuous figure.

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London Advertiser, Sept. 15th, 1908.

THE CABINET CHANGES.

Hon. R. W. Scott, at the great age of 83, lays down the cares of office with the unbounded respect of Canadians of all parties. The veteran is one of the few links with the pre-confederation times, having entered the Legislature of the united provinces in 1857. He was speaker of the first Ontario Legislature in 1871, and commissioner of crown lands under Blake and Mowat until 1874, when he entered the Mackenzie administration as secretary of state. He was called to the senate in the same year. In 1896 he was reappointed secretary of state, and since 1902 has combined with it the Liberal leadership in the Senate. No public man has been more devoted to his duties, and his energy of mind and body has been the marvel of his associates. Even in his eighties he has not lagged superfluous. He has been faithful to his long trust,

and in every post has acquitted himself with credit and honor. His record has never been tarnished by the breath of scandal. He may now repose upon his well-earned laurels.

Mr. Scott's successor, Mr. Charles Murphy, is not well known in this part of Ontario, but in the Ottawa district his reputation is high as a public speaker and as a lawyer. He should consider it his duty to form the acquaintance of the people of Western Ontario when opportunity offers.

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London Advertiser, London, Saturday, March 23.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

OTTAWA, March 22, 1901.

In the Senate Chamber, next to Hon. David Mills, on the right, sits Hon. R. W. Scott, who is entitled to quite a little array of honorary terminals—K.C., LL.D., and P.C., the latter denoting his Privy Councilorship. Mr. Scott's hair and beard are attractively clean snow-white. He is tall, alert in step and in movement when he rises in the House; and while suave in manner and disposition, he does not allow his debating antagonist to get easily away either with or from him. He reminds one of that class of English public men who long retain their strength and vivacity and undiminished interest in public affairs.

No other public man is alive to-day who has occupied so many important positions, or who has been in so many parliaments; for besides having been in the Ontario Legislature and the Dominion Parliament, he sat for six years in the old Parliament of Upper and Lower Canada, previous to Confederation. Among his principal legislative achievements is the separate school law of Ontario, which he prepared and carried in 1863, as a private member. The Canada Temperance Act, otherwise known as the Scott Act, was framed by him and carried through Parliament, chiefly owing to his exertions.

Such are a few particulars of the career and achievements of one who has been long and honorably connected with the parliamentary and practical development of Canada, from its day of small things up to its present position, in which it is beginning to command the attention of the world.

Ottawa Free Press, Ottawa, October 6, 1908.

THE RETIRING SECRETARY.

The retirement of Hon. R. W. Scott from the position of Secretary of State, which is now understood to be but the matter of a few days, is an important event in the history of Canada. Identified with the public life of this country for over half a century, Mr. Scott may well be styled the Nestor of Canadian politics. Though always an ardent Liberal, his sympathies have been so broad, his energy has been so emphatic, and his courtesy has been so unflinching that he has won the esteem of Canadians of both parties, of all races and of both creeds. The representative of the English-speaking Catholics both in the Government of Hon. Alexander Mackenzie and of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, he has, while always the valiant champion of the interests of his compatriots and co-religionists, invariably taken the stand on public affairs that the Cabinet was called upon to administer the affairs of the country in the interests of the whole people and not of any particular nationality or religion. Always at his post, never taking a holiday, ever attentive to the needs of the nation, he has been an ideal administrator, and he will carry with him to his well-earned rest the wishes of the great majority of the people of Canada that he may live for many years yet to do service for the country in the Senate, and to place in permanent form his recollections of men and affairs in Canada from 1840 to 1908.

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The Daily Witness, Saturday, July 13, 1901.

A HOT WEATHER MINISTER.

The Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State, once more enjoys the distinction of managing every department of the federal service here. He is "minister of everything from Railways to Finance," his colleagues in the government being all away on holidays. There are not many men in public life to-day who have retained confidence in a public position for as long a term of years as Mr. Scott. He was elected to the Assembly of the old

province of Canada forty-four years ago, and has held one position after another in a representative capacity ever since. He was Commissioner of Crown Lands for Ontario just thirty years ago, and left the local legislature in 1874 to accept a portfolio in the Mackenzie administration at Ottawa. Though now in his seventy-seventh year, he is as active on his feet as a boy, and through the careful manner of life he has led enjoys better health than many a man of middle age. He seems to simply delight in work, and is never in merrier mood than when ploughing his way through a mass of business from half a dozen departments that would drive a less experienced mind distracted. It is said that the Secretary of State will have the offer of the Lieutenant Governorship of Ontario upon the expiry of Sir Oliver Mowat's term at Government House, Toronto.

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The Citizen, Ottawa, Monday, July 19, 1907.

HONOR TO WHOM HOHONOR.

Ottawa is proud to honor in Hon. R. W. Scott one of her oldest, most distinguished and loyal citizens. What the city owes to his loyalty to her interests has been recently retold in the published record of his services in connection with the selection of a seat of government for Canada. The feelings of pride in the Capital which he cherishes are perhaps not so widely known, but those who enjoy the privileges of personal acquaintance with the Secretary of State understand the love he bears for the fair city which he did so much to upbuild. Mr. Scott is often called a stay-at-home. How few of those who lightly apply the term realize that the loadstone of his life is affection for Ottawa? Often has he been heard to exclaim, while gazing out in rapture from his office window upon the city and its verdant environs on a sunny summer morning, "Why do people go away from Ottawa for holidays? Where will they find finer scenery or purer air?" It is fitting that the city should honor with highest regard one who loves the city so well. In wishing long life and continued health to Honorable Richard William Scott *The Citizen* is constrained to observe that no man of his time

gives such promise of achieving great longevity in the plentitude of mental powers. Mr. Scott has contributed to the literature of Ottawa's semi-centennial—a pamphlet rich in historical record and containing a wealth of personal reminiscence pertinent to the events which preceded the holding here of Canada's first Parliament. His speech at the City Hall to-day in response to the address of welcome to Ottawa's old boys will be one of the prime features of the celebration.

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The Citizen, Ottawa, Monday, August 26, 1907.

“An important historical document” is the *Montreal Gazette's* characterization of Hon. Mr. Scott's address to the Queen, adopted by the Ottawa city council and forwarded on behalf of the citizens to Her Majesty, setting forth the claims of Ottawa to be selected as the site of the Capital. Of the brochure—the Choice of the Capital—issued by the Secretary of State during Carnival week, the *Gazette* says:—

In a pamphlet of timely interest Hon. R. W. Scott has recalled the discussions that agitated “the Canadas” for some sixteen years—becoming more and more intense and sometimes bitter during the latter half of that period—as to the selection of a permanent capital. As Mr. Scott can fairly claim to have contributed some cogent reasons towards the determination of the selection that proved permanent, and was in public life during the latter years of the controversy, this account of events “quorum pars magna fuit” may be considered both opportune and valuable. It is opportune because the present year contains the jubilee or 50th anniversary of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria's choice of Bytown, or Ottawa, as the capital of the united Canadas; and it is valuable, because it is the fullest accessible record of a memorable and significant controversy.

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