

SIR GEORGE WILLIAM ROSS



PREMIER of ONTARIO
MINISTER of EDUCATION
NEWSPAPERMAN

Sir George William Ross was born to Scottish immigrant parents near Nairn, Ontario in 1841. A Gaelic speaker, Ross was strongly influenced by the traditions of his Highland heritage. In 1857 he began his career as a teacher in Middlesex County, determined to create the best educational opportunities for children to ensure a successful and prosperous Ontario into the future. Ross purchased the Strathroy Age newspaper in 1867, which he ran until 1869, doing the “work of several men rather than the work of one”. After engaging with the major political events of his time journalistically, Ross entered politics directly. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1872, the campaign for which included a number of heated debates in Mount Brydges and Strathroy. In 1883 Ross became the second Minister of Education, introducing 68 new features into Ontario school systems. These included the implementation of kindergarten, the admission of women to the University of Toronto, the compulsory study of Canadian history, and the Canadianization of textbook publishing. In 1899 Ross was named as the fifth Premier of Ontario, holding the position until 1905. Knighthood was conferred upon George Ross by King George V in 1910. The impassioned and productive career of George Ross came to an end when he passed away while serving as the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate in 1914.

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