

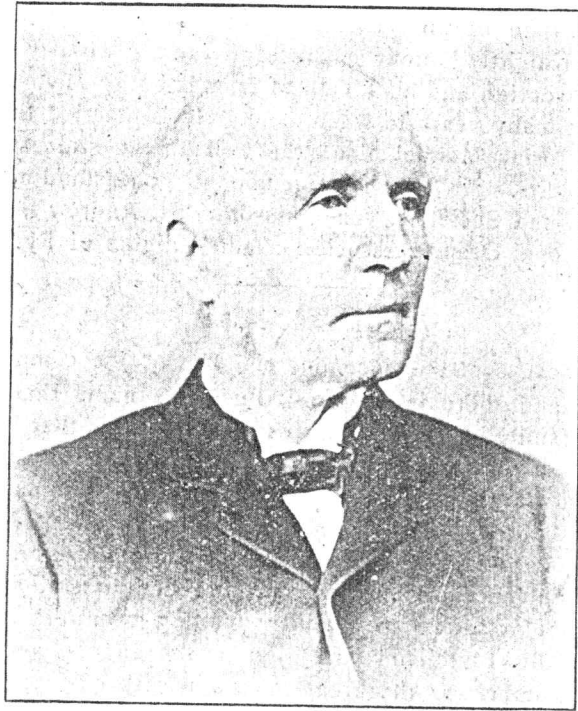
SHEA FAMILY

IN the political, social and commercial life of the commonwealth of Newfoundland there is no more illustrious name than that borne by the Shea family of St. John's. It is a patronymic that is racy of the soil, that has associated with it the names of men who took leading rank in some of the most remarkable epochs in our history, periods which marked the deviation from the uncouth though ardent times of arbitrary legislative powers exercised by the nominees of the Crown; to the full effulgence of the years marking the possession of complete colonial autonomy, down to the ultra modern twentieth century, with the name of Newfoundland writ high in the august company of the sister states comprising the great commonwealth of free nations composing the present day British Empire.

In a biographical sketch, necessarily abridged and circumscribed by limitations of space, it were difficult to deal at length and with exactness with the several worthy personages comprised within a family whose talents and attainments merited them prominence and fame of international repute, and whose records in all the notable activities of colonial history place them in a position of preeminence. It would however be safe to assert that all that makes for nobility of character, all the endowments of head and heart that contribute to genius, all the shining talents that enrich the mind of the statesmen were centered in and were personified by the one great character—the late Sir Ambrose Shea; and in this assertion there is nothing derogatory of the other gentlemen of excellent qualities and evident talent

who have borne, or who bear the name. Of remarkable personality Sir Ambrose Shea was a man who at first glance impressed one with the idea that he was possessed of more than ordinary gifts. He was, and his public career amply proves that his surpassing talents were always at the service of the country he loved so well.

Sir Ambrose was born at St. John's in 1817 and at an early age showed that precociousness that marked him to possess natural abilities of no mean order. In his early teens he began taking a leading part in matters of public import and by the time he had reached man's estate



LATE SIR AMBROSE SHEA

was distinguished for his capacity as a man of affairs and admired for his eloquence as a public speaker and for personal traits that constituted him a leader in society life. One of such splendid attainments as he possessed, could not but play an active role in the political boards and early in life (1848) he was elected for Placentia and St. Mary's District, to the Legislative Assembly, thus beginning one of the most brilliant careers in the history of the country. The voice of the polished orator, the gifted statesman, the versatile executive officer could not be dispensed with in our legislative halls, hence we find that this talented son of Newfoundland, was next returned for St. John's District (1852), St. John's West (1855), Burin (1859), Placentia and St. Mary's (1861-65), Hr. Grace (1873-74-78-82), and for St. John's East

(1885). Sir Ambrose Shea from 1853 to 1859, was the Confederation Conference Executive 1865-9 and was appointed Governor of New given a demonstration of witnessed in the city of St. Bahama Islands by the Bri



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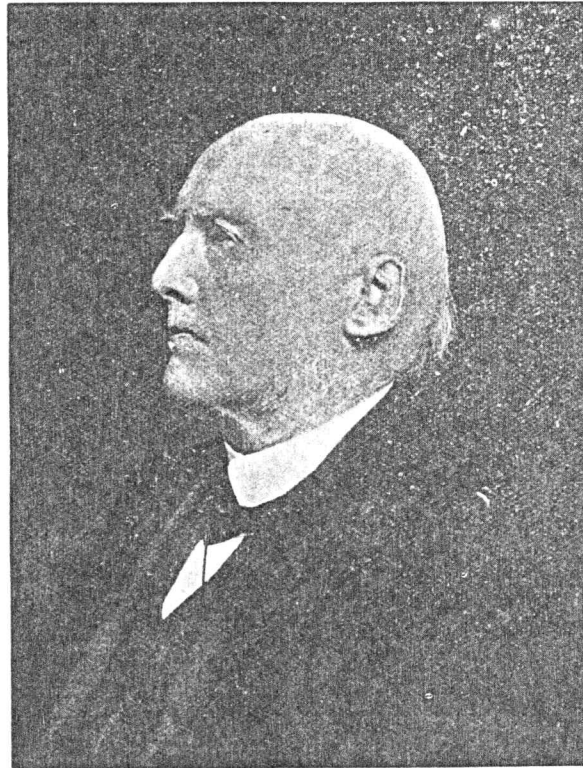
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(1885). Sir Ambrose Shea graced the Speaker's Chair in the Assembly from 1853 to 1859, was the Delegate from Newfoundland in 1864 to the Confederation Conference in Canada, was a member of the Carter Executive 1865-9 and was Knighted by the Sovereign in 1886. He was appointed Governor of Newfoundland in that same year and was later given a demonstration of welcome, the like of which has never been witnessed in the city of St. John's. He was appointed Governor of the Bahama Islands by the British Government and his wise administrative



LATE SIR E. D. SHEA

acts, almost metamorphised that Dependency, changing it from a position of almost penury to one of affluence. Sir Ambrose died in London, England, in 1905, full of years and honors, the remains were brought to St. John's, lay in State in the Legislative Council and public honors were paid to all that was mortal of a gifted son, a sterling patriot and an ornament to the country which gave him birth. Sir Ambrose for years held the agency here for the Allan Line of Steamships, later identifying the business, (which included in it the general trade of the country), with his nephew, Hon. George Shea, and only resigned from this, when delegated to the Bahamas as the representa-

tive of the Sovereign. Sir Ambrose was well known and highly esteemed in London, Ottawa, Washington and other international capitals and in Diplomatic Circles was a favorite because of his ability as a Statesman, because of his charm of character and deportment and because of the other inherit graces that go to combine the gentleman, with the scholar and polished man of affairs. His brother, the late Sir Edward Dalton Shea, was a man also gifted with talents of a particularly brilliant order and for years held some of the highest offices in the gift of the Commonwealth, including the Presidency of the Legislative Council



HON. GEORGE SHEA, M.L.C.

and the Administratorship of the Government. Hon. George Shea, son of the latter and nephew of the late Sir Ambrose, is a gentleman gifted by nature and education with the highest qualifications. For many years he represented the District of Ferryland in the Assembly, as well as St. John's East, was Mayor of his native city of St. John's for a period and now occupies a seat in the Colony's Legislative Council. Hon. George Shea is a man possessed of rare natural talent, is a polished fluent speaker, has histrionic ability of the highest order and is a vocalist and musician of a fame that is more than local. Yet an active man there is no doubt but that he will round out the span of his life as worthily and as honorably as his sire and uncle whose names will be honored and revered for long years to come.

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