

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

"TO CLUTCH THE GOLDEN KEYS"

The Distinguished Career

of

Edmund James Flynn

Recalling the remarkable career of a son of Gaspesia as Professor and Dean of Law, Laval University, as Member of the Legislative Assembly of Québec for Gaspé, as Cabinet Minister and Premier of Québec, and as Judge of the Superior Court and Court of King's Bench.

1847 - 1927

KEN ANNETT

THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF EDMUND JAMES FLYNN

FOREWORD

Though the generation that knew Horatio Alger as the personification of "the local boy who makes good" has given way to one tuned into the exploits of Superman and the heroics of Star Wars, both would tend to agree that the scenario of this recall, the extraordinary career of a Gaspesian fisherman's son who rose to be Premier of Québec, is utterly fanciful. That the life of that son of Gaspesia, Edmund James Flynn, would lead him from his home in the village of Percé, through posts of ever increasing responsibility and distinction to that of Premier of Québec is surely worthy of honour in his native land. In attempting to recall his long, eventful career, GASPE OF YESTERDAY is very aware that to do it justice a biographical volume would be required. It can only be hoped that the highlights of the Edmund James Flynn's accomplishments in Law, Politics and on the Bench, presented here, will provide inducement to the reader to make a more detailed study and gain greater insight into the life and time of this distinguished Gaspesian.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Edmund James Flynn was born at Percé in 1847, son of James and Elizabeth Tostevin Flynn. The family names of Flynn and Tostevin were well-known and of long-standing in Gaspesia. When the Gaspé Land Claims Commission held hearing in Gaspesia in 1819-20. Mrs

Mauger Tostevin, a family with deep Gaspesian roots as noted in the volume, THE QUIET ADVENTURERS IN CANADA, by Mrs. Marion J. Turk.

EDUCATION

It is evident that Edmund James Flynn was a lad of unusual promise in his native Percé from the decision of his parents, made, doubtless, at a considerable sacrifice, to send him away for secondary and college education at the renowned Séminaire de Québec. His studies there won for him admission to Laval University, located then in the old walled city of Québec. He graduated from Laval's Faculty of Law.

EARLY CAREER

The landmark year of Confederation, 1867, found Edmund James Flynn as the Secretary-Treasurer of the municipality of Percé. From 1867 to 1869 he also held several responsible Court posts in Gaspesia - as Assistant Registrar, Assistant Prothonotary and Assistant Clerk of the Court of Queen's Bench. He also served as Registrar of the Circuit Court. The experience that he gained and the wide contacts that he made with his fellow Gaspesians would prove to be invaluable to his future political career in the District of Gaspé.

In 1873 he was admitted to the Québec Bar. His legal practice, based in Québec City, would be, successively, as partner in the Law firms of REMILLARD AND FLYNN; DROUIN, FLYNN AND GOSSELIN; FLYNN AND FLYNN. His practice of Law would extend over more than

MARRIAGES

In May, 1875, at Notre Dame Church, Québec, Augustine Côté, the daughter of Augustin Côté, proprietor of the JOURNAL DE QUÉBEC and his wife, Emilie Lemieux, became the bride of Edmund James Flynn. More than three decades later, after the death of his first wife, he married again with Marie Pouliot, widow of the late Eugène Globensky. This marriage took place in Montreal in January, 1912.

CAREERCHRONOLOGY

The career of Edmund James Flynn was such a full and complex one in terms of his activity in a number of functions that the following attempt is made to present its highlights, chronologically, in tabular form:

- 1874..... Assistant Professor of Law, Laval University
Secretary of the Faculty of Law. 1874-1880.
- 1875..... Liberal candidate for election in Gaspé. Defeated.
- 1877..... Liberal candidate for election in Gaspé. Defeated.
- 1878..... Awarded a Doctorate in Law by Laval University.
Professor of Roman Law, Laval University. 1878-1927
Elected as Liberal Member of Legislative Assembly for
Gaspé, succeeding the Hon. Dr. Fortin.
- 1879..... With four colleagues, Members of the Assembly, joined
the Conservative Party ranks - a move that caused the

- 1881..... Re-elected as Conservative Member in Gaspé.
- 1884..... Commissioner for Railways in the Cabinet of the Conservative Government of the Hon. John Jones Ross - 1884-1886.
- 1885..... Solicitor-General in the Cabinets of Premiers Ross and Taillon - 1885-1887.
- 1886..... Re-elected as Conservative Member in Gaspé.
- 1890..... Federal Conservative candidate in Gaspé - Defeated.
- 1891..... Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Cabinet of the Hon. Charles Boucher de Boucherville - 1891-1892.
Appointed as a Member of the Council of Laval University, in which he served from 1891 to 1927.
- 1892..... Won election as Member for Gaspé and Matane. Resigned his Matane seat in the same year.
Was Commissioner for Crown Lands and Receiver-General in the Cabinets of Hon. Boucher de Boucherville and Hon. Louis Olivier Taillon - 1892-1896.
- 1896..... PREMIER OF QUEBEC AND COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC WORKS.
- 1897..... Re-elected as Member in Gaspé.
- 1899..... Named Queen's Counsel - Q.C.
- 1900..... Elected as Member for Nicolet.
- 1907..... Chosen as Bâtonnier of the Québec Bar. Served 1907-1909
- 1908..... Federal Conservative candidate in Gaspé. Defeated.

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- 1914..... Appointed as Judge of the Superior Court for the District of Beauce - served 1914-1920.
- 1915..... Appointed as Dean of Law, Laval University - 1915-1921. Named as a Governor of Laval University - 1915-1927.
- 1920..... Appointed as Judge of the Court of King's Bench. Served in that high post for the next seven years.
- 1927..... Died at Québec on June 7th., 1927 in his 80th year.

RETROSPECTIVE

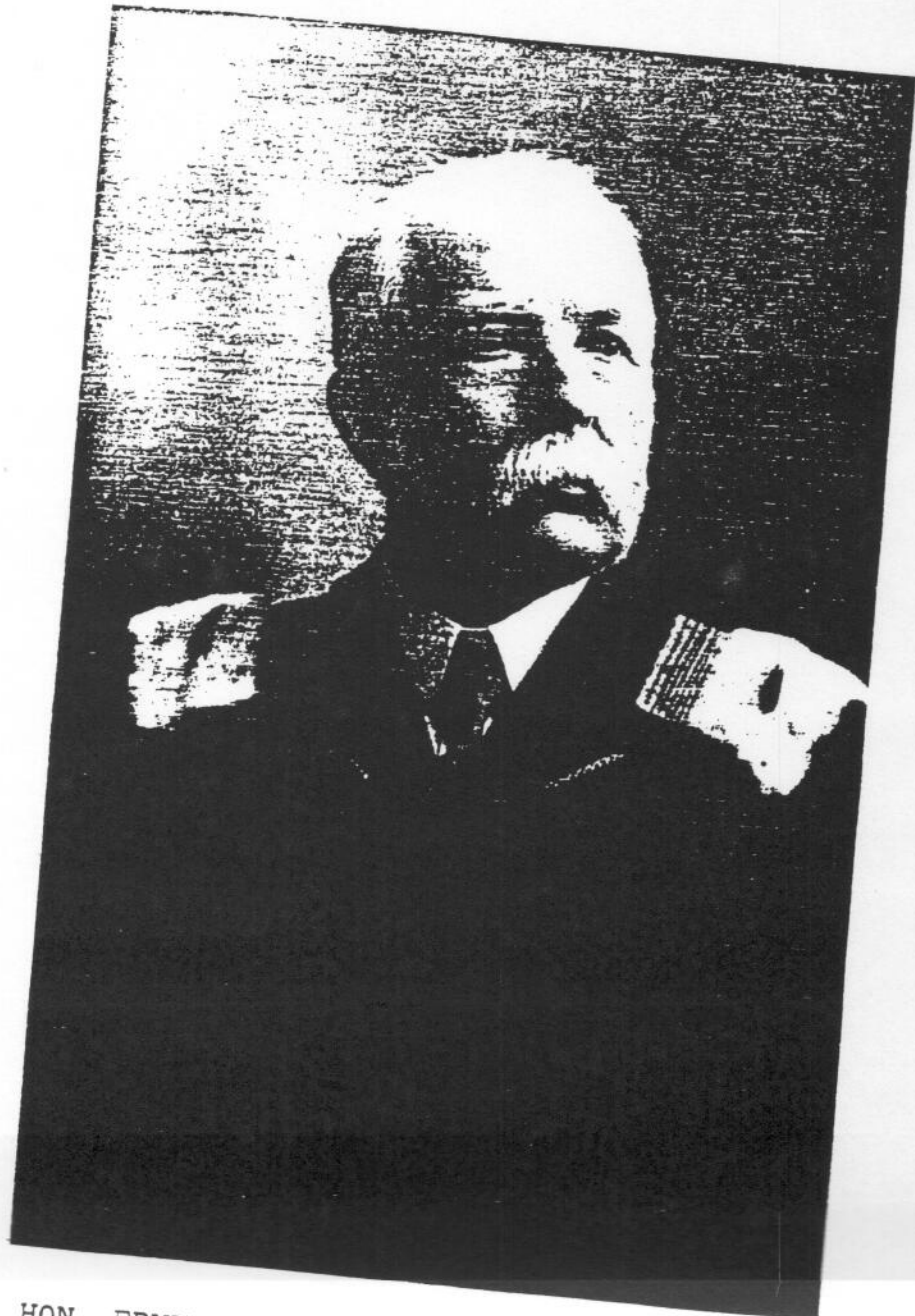
Edmund James Flynn was known to his contemporaries as a sage scholar, a judicious administrator of public affairs, a conscientious politician, and a man who ever promoted the welfare of his country and, in particular, his native District of Gaspé. He had great mental qualities and his clearheadedness was enhanced by his power of decision and action. He is remembered as a superb debater in the Legislative Assembly where he served so long and well. From the time of his maiden speech in the House, that won for him the attention and praise of the Press of the time, he was marked for greatness. Above all, he was known as a man who was prepared to stand or fall by his honest, personal convictions.

As the life and career of Edmund Edward Flynn coincided, for the most part, with the era known as Victorian, it seems fitting to conclude this recall with the following extract from IN MEMORIAM of Alfred Lord Tennyson

IN MEMORIAM
PENNYSON

"...DOST THOU LOOK BACK ON WHAT HATH BEEN
AS SOME DIVINELY GIFTED MAN,
WHOSE LIFE IN LOW ESTATE BEGAN;
AND ON A SIMPLE VILLAGE GREEN;
WHO BREAKS HIS BIRTH'S INVIDIOUS BAR
AND GRASPS THE SMIRTS OF HAPPY CHANCE
AND BREASTS THE BLOWS OF CIRCUMSTANCE
AND TRAPPLES WITH HIS RIDING BEAR;
WHO MAKES BY FORCE HIS MERIT KNOWN
AND LIVES TO CLUTCH THE GOLDEN KEYS,
TO MOULD A MIGHTY STATE'S DECREES,
AND SHAPE THE WHISPER OF THE THRONE;
AND MOVING UP FROM HIGH TO HIGHER,
BECOMES ON FORTUNE'S CROWNING SLOPE
THE PILLAR OF A PEOPLES' HOPE
THE CENTER OF A STATE'S DESIRE:..."

2.



HON. EDWIN