

Name: Hazen, John Douglas (Hon. Sir)

Riding: York, County of Sunbury, County of

Party: Conservative

Date Elected: GE 18 Feb. 1899. GE 28 Feb. 1903. GE 3 Mar. 1908. BY-EL Mar. 1908 (By ACCL).

Positions Held: Founder and Leader of the Conservative Party of New Brunswick, 1899 - 10 Oct. 1911. Leader of the Opposition, 1899 - 24 Mar. 1908. Premier of New Brunswick, 24 Mar. 1908 - 10 Oct. 1911. Appointed Attorney General, 24 Mar. 1908 - 10 Oct. 1911. Appointed Chief Justice of the New Brunswick Supreme Court, Appeal Division, 6 Nov. 1917 - 31 Jan. 1935.

Cabinet Shuffle:

Retired: Resigned seat in Legislature and as Premier, 10 Oct. 1911. Retired from federal politics at the dissolution of Parliament in 1917. Retired from the Supreme Court Bench, 31 Jan. 1935.

Defeated: BY-EL 4 Jul. 1885.

Died: Died at age 77 on 27 Dec. 1937 at his residence in Saint John, NB, after a long illness. Buried in Fern Hill Cemetery, Saint John.

Notes: Born on 5 Jun. 1860 in Oromocto, Sunbury County, NB. Of Puritan pre-Loyalist ancestry. In 1876 Hazen enrolled at the University of New Brunswick and distinguished himself as a scholar. In 1877 he received the Honor Certificate in Classics, he received the Junior Class Scholarship for English in 1878, and received the Honor Certificate in Metaphysics in 1879. He graduated with his B.A. the same year. He then studied law and was admitted as an attorney on 28 Jun. 1882 and as a barrister on 28 Jun. 1883. He then practiced law in Fredericton with the firm of Fraser, Wetmore, Winslow. From 1882 to 1890 Hazen was appointed Registrar of UNB, after which term he was elevated to the university's senate. He later received his B.C.L. from UNB in 1890. The same institution bestowed an honorary L.L.D. upon him in 1908.

For his earliest political experience, the young and ambitious Hazen entered the Fredericton municipal scene. After serving as an alderman for three years, he was elected Mayor of Fredericton in 1888-1889. He had unsuccessfully sought a seat in the Legislature in 1885. When his uncle died, Hazen relocated to Saint John in 1890 to manage his family's wealth and estate. Also continuing his law practice, Hazen was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1894.

For Hazen the seduction of politics was irresistible, and he soon threw his hat into the federal ring, being elected the Member of Parliament for Saint John in 1891. That year he earned praise from Sir John A. Macdonald for his effective presentation of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne in Mar. 1891. During his early federal career, Hazen fought adamantly for local and Maritime interests. In 1894, for example, he threatened to resign his seat unless Prime Minister Sir John Sparrow Thompson pledged to immediately increase the volume of freight being shipped from the port of Saint John. The government relented, and Hazen's prestige as a dynamic young Conservative grew. He remained in Parliament until the dissolution in 1896.

An individual of well-rounded proportions, Hazen was also an avid enthusiast of flowers, and served as President of the Saint John Horticultural Society for many years. He also served as President of the NB Barristers Society, and the Saint John Law Society.

In 1899 Hazen re-entered provincial politics, contesting the general election as an opponent of the firmly entrenched Liberal Government. On polling day the Liberals won all but six seats in the Legislature, and Hazen took over as Leader of the Opposition from A.A. Stockton (q.v.). Immediately Hazen entered upon one of the most important periods New Brunswick political rejuvenation, and single-handedly laying the foundation of the modern Conservative Party. Hazen approached his task as not only the parliamentary leader of the opposition, but as the leader of an opposition party. Over the next four years he travelled widely, bringing his "unquestioned integrity and his eloquent oratory" to every corner of the province. With his "immense personal dignity"

Hazen's popularity grew by the year.

For the 1903 election he formulated not just a list of grievances but a positively defined platform of reform under which the Opposition could campaign. He was personally involved in selecting Opposition candidates to ensure a sense of unity to his all-party coalition. On election day, Hazen's Opposition Party won a surprising ten seats. The Liberal Government enacted some of Hazen's proposed reforms, and the Conservatives cleverly took credit in the press. By the 1908 election, the twenty-five year old Liberal government was coming apart amid exposure of political corruption. By luring some prominent Liberals and Independents to his team, Hazen was able to carry the 1908 election with 31 seats.

While building his Conservative Party, Hazen also ably discharged his legislative duties. During the 1905 Session, Hazen criticized the Legislative Library's lack of resources, stating that the Library was the "last place that any person would go to for the purpose of obtaining information about the province." By highlighting the distressed state of the Library, Hazen was instrumental in establishing a special collection of New Brunswick-related material at the Library.

In addition to becoming Premier in 1908, Hazen also assumed the role of Attorney General. As historian Arthur Doyle contends, Hazen's administration was described as "progressive, responsible and honest." By all accounts he could have remained Premier for a generation had the call of federal politics beckoned. In 1911 he resigned from the Legislature and entered federal politics once again.

Regarded by his peers as the "grand old man of the Conservative Party," in Ottawa Hazen continued to pull strings in New Brunswick. His inner circle of advisers kept him abreast of New Brunswick issues and through these advisers he made his views known. There continued to be few political decisions made in his home province on which he had not exercised influence.

In federal affairs, Hazen quickly became one of the leading members of Sir Robert Borden's Privy Council, and a personal confidant of the Prime Minister. He was appointed Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and Minister of Naval Services on 10 Oct. 1911. In this capacity he accompanied Borden to England on a number of occasions and was a Member of the Imperial War Conference and Imperial War Cabinet during the Great War. He served as Chairman of the Canadian delegation of the International Fisheries Commission in 1917-1918. He retired from politics and left his cabinet positions on 12 Oct. 1917. For his years of service to the Crown and to Canada, Hazen had the Order of K.C.M.G. upon him as he was knighted in 1918.

Following his departure from politics, Hazen was appointed the Chief Justice of New Brunswick's Supreme Court, Appeal Division. He remained a highly regarded member of the Bench until his retirement in 1935.

Despite being of an era of widespread political corruption, no breath of suspicion ever hovered over Hazen's public or private career. He is remembered chiefly as the founder of the modern Conservative Party in New Brunswick. In death, as in life, Hazen remains one of the most respected political figures in the province's history.

For more information see also: "Premiers of New Brunswick" (971.5 D754 NB Coll.); "The History of New Brunswick Provincial Election Campaigns and Platforms, 1866-1974" (329.023 W899 NB Coll.); "Front Benches & Back Rooms" (320.9715 D754 NB Coll.); "Prominent People of the Maritime Provinces" (Ref 920 P965.5); "Prominent People of New Brunswick" (Ref 920 M163 NB Coll.); "Canadian Directory of Parliament" (Ref 328.71 C212C); "150 Years: The Development of the New Brunswick Legislative Library, 1841-1991" (027.57151 N534E NB Coll.); University of New Brunswick Register, 1924" (378.715 N532R NB Coll.); "Promises, Promises..." (324.9715 G233 NB Coll.); W.S. MacNutt, "Hazen, Sir John Douglas" in "Encyclopedia Americana" Vol. 13 (1970-1984), p. 903; and the New Brunswick Pamphlet Collection.

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