

THE HALIFAX HERALD Aug 6, 1938

Veteran Journalist of Province Passes Away

W.D. Taunton, known as writer of "Secret History of the Week", dies at Halifax.

Nova Scotia today mourns the loss of one of its oldest and most widely known newspapermen W. D. Taunton, for 57 years associated with the weekly and daily press in the province. He died at 10 o'clock yesterday morning in his 82nd year at the Victoria General Hospital.

Was known as "I.C.R."

Beginning as a boy in the composing room, he was associated with the mechanical and editorial departments of publications in Charlottetown, Annapolis, Pictou, New Glasgow, Chatham, New Brunswick, and in Halifax. Perhaps he was best known, of late years, as the writer of ' Secret History of the Week", under the pen-name I.C.R.

Diligently he promoted the welfare of Nova Scotia through his writings here and in the United States newspapers which he represented, and staunchly supported the principles of Liberalism which at times he believed his party, with which he had become associated under the late Hon. W. S. Fielding, had deserted.

During his last illness, he spent much time in Indian Harbor and it was there that it became apparent the end was near a few days ago. Typically, he had chosen to spend the declining years of his life in a fishing village in Halifax County, among people whom he had known politically and personally for a lifetime.

Born on Island

Mr. W. D. Taunton was born in Prince Edward Island on October 20, 1857, and to the end of his life, though he spent practically all of his later years elsewhere in Canada, he referred to that province as "home".

In the afternoon, while attending Prince of Wales College, he learned to set type in the newspaper, the Examiner owned by his uncle, the Hon. Edward Whelan, one of the Fathers of Confederation, and he often recounted stories associated with the famous figures in Island history. He remembered, too, when, as a boy of 7, he saw the first Charlottetown Conference where Maritime Union was considered and at which the plan for a confederation of all provinces was presented by the delegates from Central Canada.

Famous Classmen

In Mr. W. D. Taunton's class at Prince of Wales were such men as Jacob Gould Schurman, late a United States Ambassador to Germany, the late Rev W. B. King, the

late Cannon Harris of Mahone, and Hon W. S. Stewart, a former judge whose death brought a tribute from Taunton's pen.

Like many other Charlottetown boys of the 1870's, Mr. Taunton's eyes were turned toward the sea and he ventured abroad on sailing craft putting out from Island ports. He recounted more than one such voyage with gusto and particularly used to mention a trip to France to Bordeaux not long after the Franco-Prussian war. His shipmates were many and he afterwards told of attempting to keep track of them. After nearly 50 years he finally discovered one R.A. Stoddard of Pueblo Colorado, by that time a doctor, but when Mr. Taunton knew him, a boy from Dayspring, Lunenburg County.

For 57 Years

The lure of printers ink, absorbed in Charlottetown had never quite left him so he is next discovered in New Glasgow working the Plain Dealer. That was in 1881. In 1882, he went to Chatham, New Brunswick, on The Advance, published by the Snowball family. A year later he was back in Pictou, in partnership with Charles Macdonald, K. C. publishing the Pictou News. In 1886, he was on the Annapolis Spectator, then owned by the late J.B. Mills, KCMP, and after a short stay he was back in Pictou County on the Enterprise and Vindicator. In 1889, he went to Montreal to the staff of The Herald published in that city and he remained there for three years when he returned to Nova Scotia to join The Halifax Chronicle and the (then) Halifax Echo. He stayed on the staff there as news editor until 1908 when he entered the service of the Dominion Government as a member of the Marine Department staff.

In 1923, Mr. Taunton retired from that post and became editor of the Atlantic Leader, when that ceased publication he continued writing the column, Secret History of the Week for The Halifax Herald, a task he carried on through illness and health until his last days.

Political Work

An interesting raconteur, Mr. Taunton delighted in political reminiscence and recalled particularly the days when he had campaigned with Hon W. S. Fielding, Hon. A.G. Jones, Hon. Frank Forbes, Hon D. C. Fraser. In 1894 and in 1896 playing a prominent part in the staging of the victorious sweep of the Liberal forces in the latter year, a part which was now forgotten when the opening came in the Marine Department.

Even later he also took part in politics assisting by his writing and in other ways, the man who was the idol of his life, the Hon W. S. Fielding through the dark days of the 1911 defeat in Queens County, and through to the end of his life.

A staunch Laurier Liberal, he remained with Sir Wilfred through the campaign of 1917 realizing the necessity of Canada's utmost participation in the war but not agreeing that Union Government was the way it should be achieved.

Made them Famous

It was during his election campaigning that Mr. Taunton first became familiar with Peggy's Cove, Indian Harbor, where he died. Glen Margaret, Dover and Prospect. He made many personal friends there, and it was due to his efforts often in the face of opposition, that Peggy now is world-famous as a beauty spot. Month in and month out, stories concerning its strange attraction appeared in the columns not only of the Halifax newspapers but of others throughout the province, in the Boston Herald and the New York American, for which he was correspondent. He aroused curiosity concerning them and that brought it's result, an increasing influx of Summer visitors.

To the last, he considered this one of his principal triumphs and he planned to carry on the same work for other centres in Western Halifax County, particularly Prospect with which he had had intimate associations for more than a generation. Here too, he saw opportunities for a business to replace that lost when the fisheries waned.

Sincere sympathy is extended to his family in their bereavement. His wife who was the former Ellen Cassidy of New Glasgow, predeceased him about two years ago. He is survived by four daughters Nellie Davis, wife of WB Williams, Halifax, Annie Major, and Gwendolyn Elizabeth of Halifax, and Unity Dorothy wife of Raymond Garred of Montreal, also three sons, George, Courtney and Herbert Taunton, all of Halifax. One brother and two sisters predeceased him many years ago. Mr. Taunton was a son of John P. Taunton and Unity Kinsman Hughes, who's father was Rev Robert Hughes, a brother of whom was Admiral Sir Richard Hughes. His uncle was Hon. Edward Whalen, one of the fathers of Confederation. Sir Collingwood Hughes, Baronet of Norman Court, Southsea England, and Professor H. A. Taunton of Charlottetown are cousins.

Monday afternoon the funeral will be held at 2:30 o'clock at the residence of his son-in-law, WB Williams 139 Spring Garden Road. The Very Rev Dean A.F. Cecil Whalley, will officiate and interment will be made in Camp Hill Cemetery.

Lost to Province

SENATOR WILLIAM DUFF - W.D. Taunton passing is a distinct loss to Nova Scotia journalism. but his record is an inspiration for all those who desire to establish a name for themselves in newspaper work. There are those who sometimes resented his frank criticisms, but in spite of the fact that I on a number of occasions was the subject of his candid expression of opinion I realized that as a journalist, he had a perfect right to express his views. For a number of years I wondered who 'ICR' was although when I became aware of his identity I was surprised to find that he and I had campaigned together in the interests of the Liberal Party in Justice Macleans re-election for Attorney-General in 1909, and it was only after Mr. W. D. Taunton had both criticized and complimented me in his ICR column that on one occasion he referred to an experience that we had had in that election. Mr. Tuanton was an old-fashioned Liberal, a great supporter of Mr. Fielding and his views, and in my opinion, regardless of what criticism has been leveled against him, he never departed form his Liberal principles . His Long

and profitable connection with journalism should be an incentive to all young men anticipating a career in this field.

Clear Thanks

“THE MAN ABOUT TOWN” in the Berwick Register I deeply regret the passing of WD Taunton, through which Nova Scotia loses one of her most outstanding journalists. Active in the journalism of the Maritimes during a long life his popularity was widespread and his name a household word in a multitude of homes. A brilliant writer and clear thinker he spoke the language and voiced the sentiments of the average man as few writers could.

His ‘ICR’ column and other features in The Herald were widely read and popular and his monument is already erected in the hearts of his many readers and multitude of friends.

Outstanding Ability

C.J. CRAGG Bridgewater I cannot adequately express my regret on receipt of the news of the death of WD. Taunton this morning. He was a journalist of outstanding ability whose contributions to the press were eagerly read by the public. A man of strong convictions, he was never afraid to express them in his writings which carried much weight with a large number of readers. His knowledge of political and historical incident was extensive and very reliable. I have intimately known Mr. Taunton for many years and as a newspaperman of long standing I deeply regret his loss to the public and to me a life-long friend.

Many Kindly Deeds

Rev. JOHN J LANIGAN, P.P. Prospect I offer my sincere sympathy to the family of WD Taunton. Mr. Taunton was well known throughout the Province as an outstanding newspaperman and a shrewd and tactful political campaigner especially so in the western part of Halifax County. His kindly deeds to the children and Sisters of Charity of Prospect will long be remembered by them and by the people there.

Able Journalist

DON F FRASER New Glasgow. The regretted death of WD Taunton removes one of the best known journalist in Nova Scotia. My first acquaintance with him dates back almost half a century when as a boy I observed his battling to keep alive a conservative weekly in Pictou County. He would write the copy, set the type, feed the press, fold and address the papers. He was familiar with all parts of the business. He was a kindly man and his friendliness to me, a mere youngster, was so pronounced that I sympathized with him in his struggles, despite that the Eastern Chronicle for which I gathered local news persistently and needlessly used to jump on him and his paper with all fours.

The friendship then established happily continued when he moved to larger fields. He served this newspaper to which he was attached faithfully and ably. Perhaps his best journalistic work was in later years, when connected with the Herald and The Mail. Readers of these papers will miss his entertaining feature contributions and his recollections of Nova Scotia as retold over the nom de plume of 'ICR'. The passing of Will Taunton means the personal loss of a very old and much enjoyed friend. He was interested in the progress of this Province and few writers had the intimate knowledge and acquaintanceship of so many public men.

Veteran Journalist

F.J. MacPHERSON Bridgewater Bulletin It is with extreme regret that the Bridgewater Bulletin learns of the passing of that veteran journalist, W.D. Taunton known far and wide as "I.C.R." and whose weekly letters in the columns of the Halifax Herald held such a widespread interest. It was a great pleasure for the Bulletin man to call at The Herald editorial room when Mr. Taunton was able to be at his desk. It was with reasonable pride he told of his publicity on behalf of Peggy's Cove, and whose articles were mainly successful, through the columns of the Halifax Herald, in arousing the interest now enjoyed by one of Nature's barren spots by the sea. He seemed like one greatly inspired when relating anything pertaining to the sea. His early experience before the mast and association with the men who go down to the sea in ships gave him a grasp on sea stories that in their reproduction always gave a thrill to the landsman. He had great sympathy for the inshore fisherman with whom he associated at every opportunity, and on many occasions his pen told of their hardships as though he had a part therein. He did what he could to bring their problems into the limelight, hoping for a Moses to lead them out of their bondage.

The Bridgewater Bulletin will miss Mr. W. D. Taunton during the sessions of the Provincial Legislature for as "Gallery Boy" he contributed an appreciated feature to its columns.

To the family I wish to express my sincere sympathy in the loss of a worthy sire.

Death regretted

D. A. MacNEILL, Glace Bay Gazette. I greatly regret to hear of Mr. W. D. Taunton's death which is a loss to Nova Scotia journalism. His work on the Halifax Herald especially of late year, attracted province-wide attention and was eagerly followed in this district. I recollect his early connection with the Annapolis Spectator and later with other provincial journals which always showed the hand of the competent newspaperman.

Fearless For Right

DR. H. R. GRANT, Secretary Nova Scotia Social Service Council. I wish to pay my sincere tribute of respect to the memory of W. D. Taunton. For more than 25 years it was my privilege to enjoy his kindly personal friendship. He stood fearlessly for the right along social and moral lines and as a journalist he was ever ready to give support to all undertakings for the betterment of the Province.

Vigilant Friend

N. S. Sanford. Daily News Amherst Journalists in general will regret the passing of WD Taunton, for he was one of the few remaining of that vigorous type of an earlier generation who delighted in discussion and even controversy . He had a clearness of style that made his articles appealing whether one agreed with him or not. He had an exceptional background in experience and his wide range of personal friendships enabled him to write with conviction. He will be particularly missed by the fisherman of the province who found him in a vigilant and ever loyal champion and friend. band I regret hes passed.

Missed by Many

C. F. BLACKADAR, Halifax It is with very great regret that I read of the death of W. D. Taunton, historian, gentleman and journalist. I was engaged with and under Mr. Taunton for a period of five years and always found him a very considerate superior officer always willing to afford the benefit of his knowledge to the beginner and tolerant of shortcomings. His knowledge of political history was deep, and his column in the Herald and The Mail will be much missed. During his association with the Chronicle and Echo he served under Editors W. S. Fielding, Robert McConnell, James McQuinn W, E, Maclellan and A. F. Macdonald. So far as I know the only survivors of his time outside of myself are James Hickey and John M. Baxter, James L. Gowen a great friend and associate passed away a year ago. Mr. Taunton will be missed by many many friends. Age had forced him into retirement but he never lost his interest, and his writing on men and events improved as the years went on. He was an ardent Liberal - and he styled himself a W. S. Fielding Liberal - said statesman being the real example of real Liberalism. Mr. Taunton was completely sold on Peggys Cove and justly so and it was due to him that the charms of that beautiful place became more than locally known. As one of the "thinning band" I regret he has passed.

THE HALIFAX HERALD Aug 8, 1938 Many Attend Funeral of Journalist

Friends, relatives and associates in the field of journalism gathered yesterday afternoon to pay their final tribute to W. D. Taunton whose death on Friday at the age of 82 years ended a brilliant and successful career.

Mr. Taunton who in late years was associated with the Halifax Herald had given 57 years of fruitful service to the weekly and daily press of the province and was one of the best-known and most widely read newspaperman in the Maritimes.

The funeral service was conducted at the home of his son-in-law W. B. Williams, 139 Spring Garden Rd., by very Rev. A. F. C Whalley of All Saints Cathedral.

The house was filled with sorrowing admirers who listened with verent attention to the impressive service. Interment was in Camp Hill cemetery where Dean Whalley also officiated.

The collection of floral offerings was a particularly large and beautiful one and messages of sympathy to the bereaved family were numerous.