

= John Robert Boyle =

John Robert Boyle , KC (February 1 , 1870 or February 3 , 1871 ? February 15 , 1936) was a Canadian politician and jurist who served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta , a cabinet minister in the Government of Alberta , and a judge on the Supreme Court of Alberta . Born in Ontario , he came west and eventually settled in Edmonton , where he practiced law . After a brief stint on Edmonton 's first city council , he was elected in Alberta 's inaugural provincial election as a Liberal . During the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway scandal , he was a leader of the Liberal insurgency that forced Premier Alexander Cameron Rutherford from office .

Though initially left out of cabinet by Arthur Sifton , Rutherford 's successor , Boyle was named Minister of Education in 1912 . He served in this capacity until 1918 , during which time he alienated many non @-@ English speakers by insisting on a unilingual English school system . In 1918 he was made Attorney @-@ General . He retained his seat in the legislature after the Liberal defeat in the 1921 election and briefly served as leader of the Liberal opposition , but was appointed to the bench in 1924 . He was still a judge when he died in 1936 .

= = Early life = =

Boyle was born in Sykeston , Ontario on either February 1 , 1870 or February 3 , 1871 , of Scottish and Irish descent . His father died in 1884 , and Boyle had to leave school to support his family ; he eventually completed high school at Sarnia Collegiate Institute in 1888 and 1889 . Following graduation , he taught school for three years in Lambton County . In 1894 , he came west , though accounts vary as to exactly where he settled and for what purpose : he either studied law in Regina , taught school in Pilot Butte , or settled in Edmonton .

Sources agree that he was in the Edmonton area by 1896 , and that he taught school there before being called to the bar in 1899 . In either 1892 or 1902 he married Dora Shaw , with whom he had three children (Helen , Frederick and Jean) . He partnered with Hedley C. Taylor to form Taylor & Boyle , which was later known as Boyle , Parlee , Freeman , Abbott & Mustard ; the firm was a forerunner of the present day Parlee McLaws . Boyle was made King 's Counsel in 1913 .

He ran in the 1904 Edmonton municipal election to elect the first Edmonton City Council (Edmonton had hitherto been a town) . He finished second of seventeen candidates in the aldermanic race , and was elected to a two @-@ year term . He resigned in 1906 , before the completion of his term .

= = Provincial politics = =

= = = Early provincial career = = =

In 1905 , Boyle ran in Alberta 's inaugural provincial election as the Liberal candidate in Sturgeon , where he defeated Conservative Frank Knight by a wide margin . Boyle served as Deputy Speaker in the 1st Alberta Legislative Assembly . (To focus on government affairs , Boyle resigned as Edmonton alderman on May 7 , 1906 and a by @-@ election was held to fill his empty seat .)

During his first term , Boyle supported the selection of Edmonton (over rival Calgary) as the new province 's capital , and supported the Liberal government of Alexander Cameron Rutherford in its decision to borrow money to finance the creation of Alberta Government Telephones (abandoning its usual " pay as you go " approach) . Boyle predicted that " Alberta , the first to undertake [a provincial government telephone system] will become a model for every province in the Dominion . " He also sided with the government in its rejection of Conservative demands that it build and operate railways , as he felt that doing so would not be viable as long as the trunk lines were in private hands . He enthusiastically backed private construction of railways , however , and greeted the announcement of the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway ? which was to run northward from Edmonton to Lac la Biche and later Fort McMurray ? with what historian L. G. Thomas describes as

" an extravagant eulogy ... [speaking] of Lac la Biche as another Lake Louise , of Pullmans running from New Orleans to the Arctic circle , and of northern Alberta as a second Cobalt region . "

= = = Alberta and Great Waterways Railway scandal = = =

The Rutherford government was comfortably re-elected in the 1909 election ; Boyle himself was acclaimed in Sturgeon . Shortly after the elections , rumours began to spread that all was not well with the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway (A & GWR) , to which the government had given loan guarantees and on whose behalf it had sold bonds in the London bond market . When the new legislature convened in February 1910 , Boyle tabled a list of eleven questions for the government about the A & GWR . Rutherford , Minister of Railways as well as Premier , duly answered them in writing . Boyle found these answers unsatisfactory , and on February 21 gave notice of a motion to expropriate the A & GWR 's bond money ; he held that the government had raised more money for the A & GWR than was needed for construction . He also alleged that S. B. Woods , deputy to Attorney General Charles Wilson Cross , had removed key components from the government 's files on the A & GWR , in advance of their having been inspected by Boyle and Conservative leader R. B. Bennett .

Boyle 's resolution rapidly divided the Liberal members between insurgents , led by Boyle and William Henry Cushing (who resigned his position as Minister of Public Works over the A & GWR issue) , and loyalists , led by Rutherford and his remaining cabinet ministers , especially Cross . In the ensuing debate , several charges were levelled against Boyle himself : Agriculture Minister Duncan Marshall accused him of being motivated by his rejection for the position of A & GWR solicitor . Boyle admitted applying for the position , but denied that it had anything to do with his attacks on the government . The Edmonton Bulletin accused him of approaching two Liberal members who were also hotel keepers , Lucien Boudreau and Robert L. Shaw , and offering them immunity from prosecution for liquor offenses if they helped bring down Rutherford 's government and replace it with one , led by Cushing , in which Boyle would be Attorney General .

Though Rutherford survived a motion of non-confidence (moved by Ezra Riley and seconded by Boyle) by three votes , he was successfully pressured to resign by Lieutenant Governor of Alberta George Bulyea . It had been expected that Cushing would replace Rutherford if the latter was defeated , but Bulyea and other prominent Liberals did not have confidence in him , and instead selected Arthur Sifton , Alberta 's Chief Justice .

= = = Minister of the Crown = = =

Sifton left all major figures of the A & GWR affair , including Boyle , out of his first cabinet , and instead appointed fellow judge Charles R. Mitchell Attorney General . However , in 1912 he decided that enough time had passed for old wounds to heal , and re-appointed Cross as Attorney General . At the same time , he brought Boyle into his cabinet as Minister of Education . The law required that members newly admitted to cabinet resign their seats in the legislature and immediately contest a by-election ; Boyle was re-elected in Sturgeon by a safe margin .

Boyle 's time as Education Minister was tumultuous : many teachers enlisted to fight in World War I , and many others left the profession for more lucrative opportunities elsewhere . In its members ' handbook , the Alberta Teachers ' Association describes Boyle 's efforts to remedy this situation as " heroic " , citing in particular his convincing the legislature to set a minimum teachers ' salary of \$ 840 per year . Another of Boyle 's tactics to alleviate the teacher shortage was to make it easier for teachers qualified in Quebec to teach in Alberta . However , this liberalization was subject to applicants ' English proficiency : Boyle insisted that all instruction in Alberta schools be delivered in English . A Québécois teacher who passed an English language proficiency exam would be granted a temporary teaching license , which could be upgraded to a full Alberta Teaching Certificate with five months ' study at a normal school . Boyle 's insistence that Alberta was English offended not only the province 's French Canadian minority , but also its Ukrainian-speaking population ; an

editorial in a Ukrainian newspaper maintained angrily that " the minister of education lies when he says that Alberta is an English province . Alberta is a Canadian province , where everyone has equal rights , including the Ukrainians . " During a by @-@ election in Whitford Boyle accused the Conservatives of promising Ukrainian language schools to court the immigrant vote .

In 1918 , new premier Charles Stewart , who had succeeded Sifton when the latter entered federal politics in 1917 , fired Cross and appointed Boyle Attorney @-@ General . The following year Boyle introduced legislation formally making English Alberta 's only official language . At the time , he boasted that in the past election " my majority came from English electors " in contrast to a Conservative who supported " Russian schools for Russian people " . As Attorney @-@ General , he also supported unsuccessful legislation to allow Imperial Oil to construct a pipeline in Alberta ; in response to bipartisan opposition calling for pipelines to be common carriers , he said that to adopt such a course would be to tell oil companies that they " were free to spend vast sums in exploration work but if oil were found , they were not to pipe it out . "

One of Boyle 's chief responsibilities as Attorney @-@ General was to enforce Alberta 's recently enacted prohibition . This proved difficult , as the law was widely disparaged ? not least by judges , who reputedly presided over liquor trials while hungover . In 1921 , Boyle estimated that bootleggers were profiting from prohibition to the tune of C \$ 7 million . He was denounced by supporters of prohibition for his ineffectiveness at enforcing it , and by its opponents for " arrogating to himself the powers of a czar . "

In the 1921 election , Boyle both sought re @-@ election in Sturgeon and election in the new multi @-@ member constituency of Edmonton . He was defeated in the former but victorious in the latter , making him one of two members from the 1st Alberta Legislative Assembly to be elected to the 5th ; the other was Cross , Boyle 's predecessor as Attorney @-@ General and rival from the Alberta and Great Waterways Affair . Provincially , the Liberals were soundly defeated by the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) , which , contesting their first election , won 39 seats to the Liberals ' 14 .

= = = Leader of the Alberta Liberals = = =

Late in Stewart 's term as premier , there had been speculation that he would resign due to ill @-@ health , and Boyle was among the candidates mentioned as possible successors . When Stewart did resign , immediately following the 1921 election , Boyle was selected to replace him . In the assessment of Lakeland College historian Franklin Foster , Boyle " showed vigour " in the legislature , where he presented a strong opposition to the new UFA government of Herbert Greenfield . Even so , he showed some private courtesy : when John Edward Brownlee , Greenfield 's Attorney @-@ General and his strongman in the legislature , missed a session due to illness , Boyle assured him that the Liberals would not attack the government too vigorously in his absence .

As leader of the Alberta Liberals , Boyle corresponded extensively with Liberal Party of Canada leader (and Prime Minister of Canada) William Lyon Mackenzie King ; according to Foster , Boyle 's letters to King were " a mixture of useless information and pleas to be rescued by an appointment to the bench . " It is possible that one of his letters had some impact on history , however : in 1924 , while Greenfield was attempting to negotiate control of Alberta 's natural resources from King 's federal government , Boyle sent King a letter warning him that the UFA was doomed in the next election unless " something extraordinary happens . That extraordinary thing which Greenfield wants to happen now is obtaining from you the natural resources at once . " King drew out negotiations until Greenfield returned to Alberta empty @-@ handed ; soon after , Greenfield was forced from office by his own backbenchers , and replaced by Brownlee .

= = Judicial career and later life = =

In 1924 , Boyle was appointed to the Supreme Court of Alberta , and resigned from the legislature . He was succeeded as Liberal leader by another former Attorney @-@ General , Charles R. Mitchell . As judge , Boyle once refused to issue an injunction to end a coal miners ' strike that had turned violent , because he believed that the Alberta Provincial Police could contain the violence if properly

instructed (another judge later issued the injunction) . It was also before Boyle that the statement of claim was filed in MacMillan v. Brownlee , the case that forced Brownlee to resign as premier .

Boyle was a member of the Presbyterian Church , the Masonic Order , and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows . He was still sitting as a judge when he died February 15 , 1936 , on his way to Jamaica . The Edmonton neighbourhood of Boyle Street and the village of Boyle are named in his honour ; perhaps ironically , the latter lies on what was once the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway line .

= = Electoral record = =