

= Peter Dawson (politician) =

Peter Dawson (April 11 , 1892 ? March 24 , 1963) was a Canadian minister , politician and member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta .

Dawson was born in 1892 in Scotland . After attending schools and briefly working as a labourer and an apprentice to a butcher in Maybole , Dawson immigrated to Canada at the age of 18 with his brother , James Dawson . Shortly after arriving , he took up residence in Ontario where he worked in the automobile profession for 7 years until moving west to Alberta in 1918 .

Following his decision to settle in Calgary , he found employment as a butcher and interest in missionary work . His residence in Calgary , however , didn 't last long , as 5 years later , he moved to the nearby capital city of Edmonton , where he attended Prebysterian schooling . Ordained as a minister of the United Church in 1927 , he soon was called in 1928 to Sedgewick , where he remained for two years , before getting called to Champion . Although not intending to have a career in politics , a group of citizens persuaded him to run in the 1935 election , in which he defeated United Farmers Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Oran McPherson by 66 % of the vote .

In 1937 , Dawson was appointed Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta . During his 26 @-@ year tenure , from 1937 until his death in 1963 , he witnessed and presided over many events , such as the first instance of crossing the floor in Alberta and naming a fellow MLA for remarks made at a provincial official . He also witnessed 2 royal visits to Alberta from two different monarchs , King George IV in 1939 , and Queen Elizabeth II 20 years later , in which he presided over the installation of a fountain in the Legislature 's rotunda . After dying in office in 1963 , Dawson was honoured with a state funeral , attended by many prominent citizens of Alberta .

= = Early life and career = =

Dawson was born in Slateford , Ayrshire , Scotland , on April 11 , 1892 to John and Jane Dawson (née McMurray) . Along with a twin sister who died at the age of 5 months , Peter Dawson had 8 other siblings . John Dawson died in 1900 , when Peter was only 8 years old . Prior to his death , he had worked as a police constable and blacksmith .

Peter Dawson attended public schools and attended the Carrick Academy in Maybole . After finishing school , he worked as farm labourer and a butcher 's apprentice back in Scotland , shortly before coming to Canada . In 1911 , Dawson and his brother , James sailed on the SS Ionian departing from Glasgow and arriving in Halifax 9 days later . After his arrival , Dawson settled in Ontario and worked at an automobile manufacturer , Tudhope @-@ Anderson in Simcoe County . 7 years later , in 1918 , he moved to Calgary , Alberta , where he found work for " several years " as a butcher .

After 5 years in Calgary , he decided to relocate to Edmonton , where he enrolled in a Prebysterian seminary , Robertson College . He then studied arts and theology at the United Theological College , which would later become the St. Stephen 's College , on the University of Alberta campus , where he was the first president of the student council , as well as , in 1927 , one of the first graduates . He was ordained as a United Church Minister later in the year at Knox United Church in Calgary .

= = Politics = =

Dawson , initially having no interest in politics , ran in the 1935 election as a Social Credit candidate for the riding of Little Bow , at the request and pressure of a citizens ' group . He would go on to handily win the seat , defeating United Farmers of Alberta candidate and former speaker Oran McPherson by 66 % of the vote . Dawson would continue to get re @-@ elected seven consecutive times in that riding , which he held for over 30 years .

= = = Speaker of the Legislative Assembly = = =

Dawson was elected as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1937 . In February of the same year

, as Speaker @-@ Designate , Dawson arranged the Opening Session of the Legislature to be broadcast over CJCA radio , given the large number of public wanting to attend the session . Dawson and his family frequently took up residence at the Speaker 's suite during the time while the Legislature was in session , therefore creating him readily accessible as speaker . He was also responsible for many other things , amongst those , though not a part of his official duties , writing the Speech from the Throne , which he compiled from various information from the government departments , which was later read by the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta to open each session .

Dawson 's time as speaker saw many firsts in Alberta legislative history , such as , in 1937 , when Social Credit MLAs and former cabinet ministers William N. Chant and John Hugill left their respective party caucus to sit as independents . This was first instance of crossing the floor in the province 's legislative history . In June 1939 , Dawson played a major role in ceremonies at the Legislature during royal visits of King George VI and Princess (later Queen) Elizabeth . He , along with his wife , acted as their hosts during their respective visits .

He was re @-@ nominated as speaker by Premier William Aberhart in 1941 and subsequently in 1945 , 1949 , 1953 , 1955 , and 1960 , these times at the nomination of premier Ernest Manning . The 1945 nomination was seconded by Leader of the Opposition J. Percy Page , making this the first instance that a nomination had been supported by the Official Opposition . In a 1949 session , Dawson ruled comments of Alberta Liberal Leader James Harper Prowse , made during a debate on child welfare , unparliamentary . Prowse had remarked : " Members of the Government , not content with hiding behind the skirts of unfortunate women , now cloak themselves behind the diapers of more unfortunate babies . " Dawson had also deemed other terms , such as " trickery " and " deaf " unparliamentary during his time as speaker .

He was chosen to chair a committee set up in 1951 to revise the rules of the Assembly . During a session on March 21 , 1952 , Dawson was pushed to name MLA for Banff @-@ Cochrane Arthur Wray after Wray made remarks towards a provincial official at a committee meeting . Ehen asked by Dawson to take back the remarks , Wray refused , prompting Dawson to name him and order his removal from the chamber . A unanimous motion was later passed to have Wray suspended for two sitting days , or until he was ready to withdraw his remarks and issue an apology to the chamber . Wray returned on 4 days later , issuing an apology and revoking his remarks .

On February 9 , 1956 , at the opening of the Second Session of the 13th Legislature , Dawson accepted a new Mace from the Civil Service Association of Alberta on the occasion of the province 's 50th anniversary . On the occasion of another royal visit in 1959 , this time of Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth , Dawson had a permanent fountain in the rotunda of the Legislature installed . Upon Dawson 's 25th anniversary as Speaker , John Wingblade , MLA from Wetaskiwin presented him with a silver @-@ banded gavel on behalf of all members . He continued to serve in the position of Speaker until his unexpected death in 1963 , right before the 1963 election . He had served for 26 years in total as Speaker preceding his death , the longest one has ever served in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta .

= = Church career = =

During his time in Calgary , Dawson became interested in missionary work . After being ordained as a minister in 1927 , his first call , in 1928 , was to Sedgewick , Alberta , where he remained for two years before being called to the United Church in Champion on October 10 , 1930 , mostly conducting services in schoolhouses . Later , in 1954 , he came to Carmangay , Alberta in 1954 to serve as a resident minister . He conducted services in various places in Alberta during his 30 years as a minister , ranging from schoolhouses to churches . In some services , he also participated in duets and sometimes made solo performances , with a strong baritone voice . On top of his duties as Speaker and MLA , Dawson continued his service as a minister . He retired as an active minister in 1960 , after 33 years of service .

= = Personal life = =

In Calgary , on December 26 , 1923 , Dawson married Hildegard " Hilde " Christina Hallonquist , whom he had met while serving as a missionary during the summer of that same year . Hilde was the daughter of Swedish immigrants Johannes and Hanna Hallonquist . Her father , Johannes , or John , as he was more commonly known , worked helping new Swedish families who had just immigrated to Canada settle in the Manitoba area , and later became a foreman for the Canadian Pacific Railway . Peter and Hilde had two sons , Earland " Earl " McMurray (1928 ? 2008) and David Gilmour (born 1933) . Both went on to be successful professional engineers in Ontario .

In his spare time , Dawson enjoyed a wide range of recreational activities , including golf , curling , badminton and tending the gardens at his home in Vulcan . He was a vital part in the planning and establishment of Little Bow Provincial Park , near Champion . Also an active member of the Grand Lodge of Alberta , a fraternal association , he served in the office of " Worshipful Master " of Champion Lodge in 1947 , grand chaplain of the Grand Lodge in 1949 and 1950 , and finally , Grand Master in 1954 and 1955 . Additionally , Dawson also was active in Shrine and Scottish Rite Lodges . Dawson and his wife moved to Vulcan , Alberta in 1960 , purchasing their first house ever during their marriage .

Dawson received many honours during his time as speaker , including a life membership in the Alberta Legislative Press Gallery Association , in which he had served as an honorary president . One year after his death , in 1964 , the Vulcan Senior Citizens Centre was named " Peter Dawson Lodge " in his memory , after receiving many entries in a contest to name the facility .

= = Death and funeral = =

On March 24 , 1963 , after a speaking engagement in Red Deer , to the Masons at Lodge Perfection , Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite , titled " We know not the hour ! " , Dawson suffered a heart attack in the Speaker 's Suite in the Legislature Building . Attended by health minister Joseph Donovan Ross , he was rushed to the University of Alberta Hospital , when he died on the way , becoming the only speaker in the history of the Alberta Legislative Assembly who had died while still in session . His death was announced the next day by Clerk Raymond A. A. Crevolin . After paying tribute to Dawson , the session was quickly adjourned .

In the morning of March 28 , his body lay in state in the chamber , the first lying @-@ in @-@ state of a Speaker ever held . Several hundred people gathered in the chamber to pay their last respects . After lying in state , his body was taken to Robertson United Church for the state funeral , with several church , judiciary , and government officials from across the province in the general attendance of about 300 , with Premier Manning acted as an officiating clergy , delivering the eulogy . Notably in attendance , along with Premier Manning , were Lieutenant Governor J. Percy Page and Edmonton mayor Elmer Roper . His body was later transported by train to Vulcan , where , after a second service , he was interred in the Vulcan Cemetery . Soon after his death , Hilde Dawson moved to Lethbridge . Upon her death on June 15 , 1987 , she was interred beside her husband .

= = Legacy = =

Upon his death , Premier Manning stated on Dawson : " In his passing not only Alberta , but all of Canada has lost one of its outstanding figures . The reputation he built with his fair judgments and honest ability won him the confidence and respect of all members of the Assembly and extended beyond the borders of Alberta . " Former Mayor of Edmonton and MLA Elmer E. Roper said : " I doubt if there has ever been anyone who occupied the Speaker 's chair in Canada who was more fair and efficient in chairmanship over an assembly than the late speaker " Dawson 's son , David recalled his father 's personableness in that he " talked easily with complete strangers " and his ability to start up a conversation with anyone he met , regardless of where . Future Lieutenant Governor and MLA for Calgary Grant MacEwan compared sitting in the Assembly under Dawson " like attending the school of a strict but well @-@ qualified and kindly teacher . "