

Bell Daily Sun May 31, 1895

THOMAS RITCHIE.

ANY description of the mammoth establishment of which Mr. Thomas Ritchie is the head would be incomplete were it not accompanied by a few words relating to that gentleman himself. At the outset it may be said that though no man in Belleville



MR. THOS. RITCHIE.

is better known, there is no man of whom less is known that may be gathered from himself. Modest and retiring to a degree, he literally fulfills the injunction not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing, and as a result many of his good deeds must forever remain unchronicled. It is known, how-

ever, that he is one of the most public-spirited men in the district, and to him and his efforts are due a great deal of the prosperity with which Belleville has been blessed. To him was largely due the erection of the great bridge connecting the mainland with Prince Edward county, and indeed it has been stated that but for him the project would never have been completed. He is president of the bridge company, and has done much in other ways to promote the welfare of the city, notably in the erection of the fine new hotel which is destined to do so much in advertising the advantages of Belleville as a place of resort for tourists. Mr. Ritchie has frequently been solicited to accept honors at the hands of his fellow-citizens, and were he to offer for the highest office in the gift of the people serious opposition would not be thought of. He prefers, however, to lead a peaceful private life, and seeks no reward save that which comes from a consciousness of duty well per-

formed. Mr. Ritchie first saw the light of day in what was then called Bytown (now Ottawa), in the year 1838, being the son of the late Robert Ritchie, who, having served with distinction as an artilleryman in the historic campaigns of Sir John Moore, was sent to this country by the Imperial Government to fill the position of ordnance store keeper and barrack-master at Ottawa, failing health rendering him desirous of leaving the more active duties to younger men. Leaving the service in 1857, he became a resident of Belleville, where his son George had established himself in business as a dry goods merchant. That gentleman died in 1872, when the subject of this notice, who had been associated with him in the business, became the head of the firm, but with his native modesty he retains the original firm name till this day. Mr. Ritchie has always been of a studious nature, and in early life took the arts course at Toronto University and the theological course at Knox College, after which he became actively identified with the work of the ministry in connection with the Presbyterian Free Church. Circumstances, however, led Mr. Ritchie into mercantile life, but he has always maintained his interest in religious and educational projects, and is one of the most constant and liberal subscribers to the circulating library of the city, and was the founder and has for years been the president of the Mechanics' Institute. He also took a leading part in the formation of the Board of Trade and for half a decade has held the position of president of that body. During the visit of Lord Aberdeen, the Governor-General, to this city during last summer, it fell to Mr. Ritchie to be his host, and the occasion has ever since been one of mutual satisfaction. In fact, in a sketch of this kind it is out of the question to attempt to mention all the various ways in which Mr. Ritchie has worked towards the advancement of all laudable projects. It is, therefore, sufficient to say that no worthy object has ever found him unwilling to lend a hand, and all such have found in him a steadfast and staunch friend at all seasons and under all circumstances. He is a citizen whom all delight to honor, and all know him as a thoroughly upright man and a lover of humanity. Nature has formed but few such men, and when they are found it is the privilege of all to honor them.