



**GALT, GEORGE FREDERICK**, businessman, athlete, and office holder; b. 1 March 1855 in Toronto, son of Thomas Galt, a lawyer, and Frances Louisa Perkins; grandson of John [Galt\\*](#); m. first 3 Sept. 1883 Margaret Smith (d. 1915) in Montreal, and they had one son and four daughters; m. secondly 17 Jan. 1917 Muriel Julyan Maunsell, granddaughter of George Joseph [Maunsell\\*](#), in Winnipeg, and they had one son and one daughter; d. there 15 April 1928.

George F. Galt was born into a powerful family. His father would become chief justice of Ontario in 1887. His uncle Sir Alexander Tilloch [Galt\\*](#), a prominent Lower Canadian politician and businessman, and his cousin Elliott Torrance [GALT](#) would play an influential role in the commercial development of the Canadian northwest. Galt was educated at the grammar school in Galt (Cambridge, Ont.), but at age 15 he left to pursue a career in business. From about 1871 to 1882 he worked for

various Toronto firms, including that of Perkins, Ince and Company, wholesale grocers, and held positions as a salesman, commercial traveller, and clerk. According to all reports, he was of almost abnormal physical strength and he quickly made a name for himself in amateur athletics, particularly in rowing. In the 1870s and early 1880s he stroked for the Argonaut Rowing Club of Toronto; in 1880 and in 1881 his team won the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen's competitions.

In 1882, with his cousin John, Galt moved to Winnipeg, where the two men set up the tea-importing and wholesale grocery business of G. F. and J. Galt, later G. F. and J. Galt Limited. The company prospered and would establish branches or agencies in Toronto, Prince Albert (Sask.), Calgary (where Daniel Webster [Marsh\\*](#) was an agent), Edmonton, and Vancouver. By 1897 it was estimated as being worth from \$75,000 to \$125,000. It went on to develop the highly successful Blue Ribbon Tea Company and followed the lead of the Salada Tea Company Limited [see Peter Charles [LARKIN](#)] in offering packaged teas.

The Galts quickly became members of the Anglo-Saxon elite in Winnipeg. A founder of the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange in 1887, George was elected its first vice-president. Before he was 35, he had already served a term as president of the Winnipeg Board of Trade, in 1888-89. His reputation as a sound financial manager soon placed him on the boards of other organizations. He held office as president of the Northern Trusts Company (1904-5), vice-president of the Great-West Life Assurance Company, and director of numerous prominent financial institutions, including in 1910 the Canadian Bank of Commerce. He became a member of the Hudson's Bay Company's Canadian committee advisory board [see Sir Augustus Meredith [NANTON](#)] at its inception in 1911.

Along with another former member of the Argonaut club, Galt had founded the Winnipeg Rowing Club in 1882; he would serve as its captain, president, and coach. Galt stroked the Winnipeg crew to

victory at the North American championship in Pullman (Chicago) in 1889. He served as a member of the Central Olympic Committee in 1908. The following year he was elected vice-president of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen. In July 1910 the Winnipeg crew won the prized Stewards' Challenge Cup at the Henley Royal Regatta, the first time the cup had been taken out of England. The following year Galt retired as president of the Winnipeg club. Later, he would be a founder of several other sporting clubs in Winnipeg and a designer and sailor of yachts. An avid duck hunter, he owned several marshes in Manitoba and entertained governors general Lord [Byng\\*](#) and Lord Willingdon [[Freeman-Thomas\\*](#)] and the Prince of Wales at his lodge on Lake Manitoba.

Galt was an Anglican and a Conservative. During World War I, in an effort to eliminate the existing chaos and profiteering in the acquisition of war materials, Prime Minister Sir Robert Laird [Borden\\*](#) created the War Purchasing Commission. In May 1915 he named Galt to it, along with Hormisdas [Laporte\\*](#) and chairman Albert Edward [KEMP](#). Galt was no doubt chosen because of his business success, his Conservative leanings, and his ties to western Canada. The commission oversaw war appropriations, called for tenders, and awarded contracts for military supplies. Galt served in Ottawa for four years, refused remuneration for this work, and declined a knighthood.

Among his benevolent and philanthropic works Galt was a member of the Order of S t John of Jerusalem in England, in which he had been created a knight of grace on 29 July 1913. In 1914 he and John Galt had donated \$5,000 each to the Manitoba Patriotic Fund and during World War I he acted as president of the Manitoba section of the Red Cross Society. He had served as treasurer of the Winnipeg General Hospital and was president of its board of directors when he retired in 1921, having contributed 31 years of service to the institution. After a four-month illness Galt died at his home in Winnipeg at age 73 and was buried in St John's cemetery. The Winnipeg Rowing Club presented the George Frederick Galt Trophy to the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen in his memory. It is still a prestigious national award. As an influential businessman and a determined athlete, Galt was one of the builders of Winnipeg during its heyday as an industrial and grain-trading centre.