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### Hon. R. B. Bennet

(Continued from page 5)

a star. I notice there are a great many more stars than suns here to-night.

"It is very difficult to make any observations that would be of interest to you without trenching on political matters in the circumstances under which we have gathered together; but I could not help but think, as Mr. Stewart and Mr. J. A. MacDonald were speaking, of the experience I have had in life in various parts of Canada, how little in fact we do realize just what a country we have. I was born in New Brunswick. I went to Dalhousie. I went West. I used to be associated in the younger years of my life as one of the legal advisers of the Canadian Pacific Railway. I had large business interests in British Columbia which used to take me there every month, and I saw something of the development of that country. When I went to Calgary it was a community of less than 4,000 people. There were wooden sidewalks and unpaved streets. It has grown to be a city of 75,000. When I went West the Province of Alberta was but the district of Alberta, the Saskatchewan and the Assiniboia were the Northwest Territories. Manitoba had the city of Winnipeg and a few scattered settlements. We had a small population beyond the lakes and mountains; but we developed very rapidly. Many of you who had the privilege of buying town lots out there know how easily they disappeared over night. Those were the boom days. Then we came down to a more stable and steady development, with the result that this year, by present appearances, there will be something like 400,000,000 bushels of grain produced by less than 2,000,000 people. It is almost unthinkable that such development could take place so quickly. We produced nearly three-quarters of a billion of dollars of new wealth in those Western Provinces last year. And I attribute much of it to the fact that young men and women from these provinces and from Ontario and Quebec went West and settled. They brought with them the virtues of their ancestors—the virtue chiefly of work. The great solvent of all difficulties is work; and in an age where work was not the pastime and enjoyment that it once was, they found that by hard work much could be accomplished.

Stresses Homely Virtues. "I always flatter myself that perhaps I have worked harder than most men in my life. But I rather liked it. I confess I get more enjoyment than anything out of the transaction of business. There is a tendency in these young men. So far as my observation leads me to a conclusion and my experience would be a guide, I think the old homely virtues of toil and thrift and hard work will still bring the results they did half a century or a century ago. "As I come back to these provinces I wonder if you realize just how I feel. I do not differentiate very greatly between the Island and New Brunswick because they were all part of one province one time. My first Canadian ancestor sleeps in Nova Scotia soil. It is a very strange feeling that comes over one to come back to these Provinces. During the life of my mother I never spent a Christmas away from home. It is always a pleasure to think that I have never been away from my mother in my life on Christmas; and if I have had any success in life it is owing, a great deal of it, to my mother. I was going through the library at St. Francis Xavier the other day, and I came upon Grace's History. I recalled the fact that my first knowledge of English history was acquired at my mother's knee. Those were the days when hope was strong and life was young, and the ambitions of life were all before one. Two weeks ago, and go over to the old community where I was born, and see the scattered homes, and the graveyard where four generations of my forebears sleep; to go through the old villages, and across to Nova Scotia; to Digby and along the South Shore, to towns that were founded 175 years ago, down to Lunenburg and Liverpool, to Truro, and over to Cape Breton, where everybody seems to be a "Mac"; something, mostly MacDonald—it is an experience that moves one very strangely."

Mr. Bennett quoted feelingly the words of the poet James Montgomery: "There is a land, of every land the pride, Beloved by heaven o'er all the world beside; Where brighter suns dispense serene light, And milder moons emparadise the night. A land of beauty, virtue, valor, truth, Time-tutored age, and love-exalted youth. Where shall that land, that spot of earth be found? Art thou a man?—a patriot?—look around! Oh, thou shalt find, however thy footsteps roam, That land THY country, and that spot THY home!" "Those words came to my mind down in Cape Breton. Somehow, as I said this afternoon, we are a clan-like people in the Maritime Provinces—clannish in the best sense of the term. It matters not what may be our religious or political or racial differences; we all have a great regard for one another at the testing time when we have calamities and troubles and difficulties. All that is of great value.

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#### National Problems.

"This country has great difficulties. Mr. Stewart has touched the fringe of them, because he had not time to deal with them as adequately as he could. We have religious differences that do not manifest themselves in some parts as they did; these things disappear, but they do not disappear in all parts of the country. There are differences of racial origin, differences of attitude of mind towards problems that arise from day to day, differences of urban and rural populations due to the vastness of our area and the lack of a common Canadian spirit between all sections of this Dominion. As the Rector of St. Francis Xavier said to me: "After all, it is worth while developing, as we can, the soul of Canada, the common ground upon which we all can meet." It is not easily done. Government is difficult for that reason. Yet, as I said so often, the courage and enterprise of our people have conquered many things, and I feel quite certain that we shall be able to work out our great destiny within this Empire and interpret our civilization to all the world, and particularly to our friends to the South. The interpretation of our civilization to all mankind becomes a matter of ever-increasing importance for our consideration.

"Let us never forget that the basis of all this lies in our maintaining, if we can, the spirit of democracy. We take so glibly of democracy these days, of government of the people, for the people, and by the people; yet we know how little it is regarded in real practice. The truth is that the perils of democracy were never more apparent than today. Great writers and thinkers in days gone by believed it could not succeed as a form of government, and the reasons they brought forward were very strong. Democracy may be crystallized in three words that were used by the French Revolutionists: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Now Liberty is not necessarily the product of Democracy, for very frequently where you have the rule of the majority, liberty may be very much curtailed. There is always the danger of liberty degenerating into license. Liberty, of course, in all its attributes, may not be enjoyed by any people, because the price of civilization in all governments, and in democracies especially, is that each individual must make a sacrifice of his or her individual rights. As I would choose freely to do, because I must make some sacrifice of my individual freedom that all may enjoy liberty. The by-laws of your city, the statutes of your legislature and the laws of the Dominion, the laws administered by our Courts, are based on the fact that the enjoyment of freedom and liberty means that every individual in the commonwealth must make some sacrifice. Questions of decency, questions of morals, questions of conduct—all these come into consideration.

#### The Peril of Apathy.

"While the dangers of democracy are great, some of them may be made greater by our negligence. Perhaps the greatest of all dangers is the absolute indifference or apathy on the part of the electorate in dealing with public questions. At the last election we polled 3,085,000 votes; at the election before, 3,157,000. There were fewer people voted in 1926 than in 1925. Apathy; that is the general tendency of the democracy of today. In this country the difficulty of getting people to the polls on election day is very great. A man or his wife will not go and vote unless they are brought in a particular kind of car. Frequently they will not go unless it is in a six-cylinder car rather than in a nosy two-cylinder Ford. The only way we can overcome the danger is by each of us taking an individual interest in all that concerns the welfare of the body politic; and that can be done by each of us determining that we ourselves will do our best to stimulate an active and intelligent interest in matters of that kind."

Mr. Bennett went on to enumerate other dangerous tendencies in democracy. One of these was the temptation to take extreme views, to see no good in any question except the side that we espouse. "This leads to bitterness and animosity. Another evil is that if irreverence with regard to maintenance of law. Mr. Bennett instanced how the prohibition law was disobeyed, sometimes openly, sometimes clandestinely. Democracy is the rule of the majority, whether we like it or not. It is a poor citizen who breaks any of the laws of his country. What we can do and should do, in the case of laws that we believe are not in the best interests of the community, is to take the steps to see that they are repealed. He condemned the hypocrisy of people who will insist that the prohibition law must not be repealed, and who, the next day are themselves breaking the law. His remarks, he said, had no personal application to this Province; but he had seen much of this evil elsewhere, and human nature is the same the world over. There is a danger also to democracies in the tendency to corrupt practices in securing the support of the masses in the ultimate result the life of the state is determined; not by the mass mind, but by the individual mind. It is not what some-

body else is going to do, but what we are doing. It is our influence and our vote that determines the issue of public questions. A nation is but a multiplicity of individuals, and it is the individual that counts; not what we think about Charlotte-town in the abstract, but what each individual thinks with respect to his Province.

"There is no such thing as equality with respect to the mind of the individual. There are only two places in which men and women are equal; one is in death, and the other is in the polling booth. That is a thought that should profoundly influence us in our attitude towards the democracy that we are building up.

"I am not pessimistic about democracy. It is the only form of government thus far that gives an opportunity for self-expression. It has high ethical and educational value among the whole of the people. But the world is very old, and democracy is so very young; and the perils and dangers are great. We may, I am sure, do something to overcome them as the days go by. To do this we must be prepared to do our own thinking, and bear our share of the problems that confront us. It is not Bennett's view of any particular problem that counts so much; it is what you are going to do about it, what your reaction is to it, what your influence is with respect to it. We cannot shift the burden of our individual responsibility on any one else, and remain a democracy."

#### The Conservative Policy

After expressing appreciation of the splendid organization of Queens County Liberal Conservative Association, Mr. Bennett said he trusted that any Liberal friends present would not accuse him of endeavoring for a moment to forget the amenities of the occasion if he pointed out that the history of the Conserv-

ative party is the history of Canada. When the policies of the Conservative party ceased to be applied, Canada did not get along very well. Starting with Confederation and coming down to the present day, there has been no departure from the great policies of the Conservative party. The history of the Liberal party, it must be admitted, has been otherwise. The Liberal party did not keep its promises when it came into power, and that is probably the greatest cause for joy that any of us can have in this country. In 1896, they advocated "Free Trade as it is in England"; yet when Laurier and Fielding came into power they found that the government of this country was not quite as easy in practice as it was in theory. So they stuck to the policy of their predecessors.

"We will leave out the ethical side of the question; but as a practical matter I am always glad that they forgot their promises and adhered to the Conservative policy. We can say that, at any rate, without being offensive to our Liberal friends; and I feel I owe that courtesy to the committee responsible for this gathering tonight. The difference between ourselves and our great competitors in Parliament is the distinction felt by those who go to an art gallery in Europe and look upon a great painting, and then come back home and go into a little village gallery and see the same thing; but it is marked "Copy." The real difference between us is that we realize that there is one masterpiece, and the rest are miserable copies. The real policy, the policy of the master, is the policy found in the original gallery; but the copies, numerous as they are, are only copies. So I sometimes think that if we look at it carefully we should rejoice that our opponents saw fit to carry into effect, not their promises, but their convictions; and, convictions, have sometimes been known to re-

sult in a disregard of promises." (Applause.) Mr. Bennett depicted the Liberal ship of state tossed to and fro on contending seas, without chart or compass, staggering under a great load of canvas, with a light deck load, and not much cargo. The Patriot editor will probably explain when the port will be reached and what the result of the voyage will be.

He spoke eloquently of the great background of tradition which we have inherited as Canadians from the sturdy pioneers. There are problems and difficulties still before us; but difficulties were always made for Lower Provinces men to overcome. The obstacles now are surely no greater than they were in the days of Tupper and Sir John McDonald. We shall get around them; and if not we shall go over them.

#### Mr. Bennett's Task

Mr. Bennett appreciated the sympathetic attitude of his fellow Canadians in the task he had undertaken as leader of a great party in Canada. "No man has been more kindly treated by his opponents and by the great mass of the people. It is late in life for me to have undertaken such a task. If I had my own way I should not have thought about it. It was my holiday this year, in which I was engaged. I had much leisure for travel, for seeing the world, for mingling with my fellow men, for understanding something of world problems at first hand. That leisure is now denied me. This is my holiday this year. It has been a somewhat difficult task to sever one's business interests and those relations and associations that go back many years. It is not easy, my friends. But after all, I feel amply compensated for any effort I may make. "Do you realize what a compen-

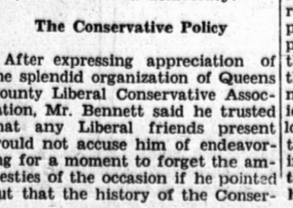
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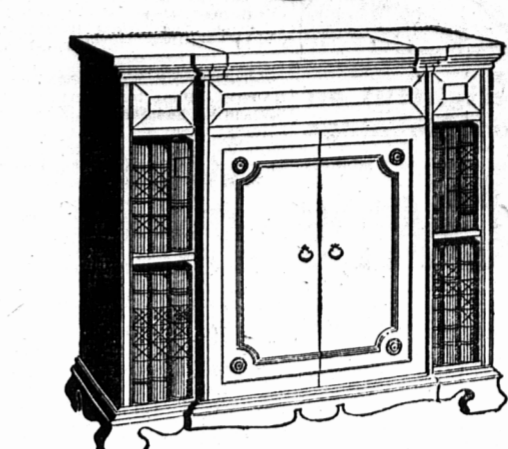
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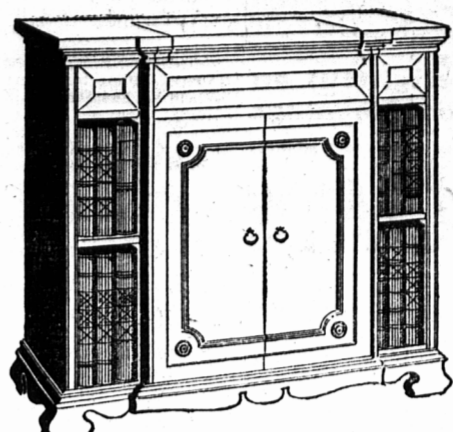
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ABRAM'S VILLAGE. Twenty members and four visitors met at the home of Mrs. Necephor Gallant on August 9th. There were members received. Reports of committees were heard, and delegates appointed to attend the Convention. Mrs. Frank C. Gallant invited the members to meet at her home for the September meeting. After the closing of the meeting a candy treat was enjoyed.

ELDON. Institute held an Ice Cream festival, and at the July meeting a financial statement of same was read. This meeting was held in the Belfast Hall with ten members present. The next meeting will be at the home of Mrs. Frank Halliday. A picnic is to be held for the school children on Aug. 10th.

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