Lord Bennett

ROY ST. GEORGE STUBBS*
Winnipeg

The final curtain has been rung down on the remarkable career of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Bennett, and he must now submit himself to the verdict of history. It is too soon, as yet, to pass a final judgment on his life and works; but sufficient facts may be sifted from the record for the interim judgment to be attempted at this time. The task, an impossible one to discharge to universal satisfaction, must be approached cautiously, in the certain knowledge that any one man's assessment of Bennett's career will be carried to appeal.

Since Confederation Canada has had twelve prime ministers, of whom eight have been lawyers.[1] Richard Bedford Bennett is among the eight—and not least of them in ability and achievement—who found the bar an avenue to political fame. He was prime minister of Canada from 1930-1935 and leader of the Conservative party from 1927 until 1938, when he retired from Canadian public life to settle in England, where, in 1941, he was raised to the peerage. During his career of fifty years in politics, he became in turn a member of four legislative bodies: the Legislature of the Northwest Territories, the Legislature of Alberta, the Dominion House of Commons and the House of Lords — which must surely be something of a record.

As a leading actor in the drama of Canadian history, R. B. Bennett will be viewed by each succeeding generation from a different level. As C. H. Firth says: "The point of view of history is continually changing and the relative importance of facts alters with it. For each age looks upon the past from a different altitude, and with fresh eyes, demanding from him who tells the story the

*Roy St. George Stubbs, B.A., LL.B., of Stubbs, Stubbs & Stubbs, Winnipeg, a frequent contributor to this and other periodicals.

[1] Articles have already appeared in the Canadian Bar Review on four of the eight. See Doull, Sir John Thompson (1947), 25 Can. Bar Rev. 451; Roy, John A. Macdonald: Barrister and Solicitor (1948), 26 Can. Bar Rev. 415; Hutchison, Sir John J. C. Abbott: Barrister and Solicitor (1948), 26 Can. Bar Rev. 934; Riel, La Carrière Légale de Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1949), 27 Can. Bar Rev. 395.

answer to new questions."[2] Students of politics in each age will be bound to ask new questions about so dominant a political figure as Bennett, and their assessment of him will depend on the answers they get to their questions. The assessment of those who are attracted to Bennett more as a vivid personality than as a politician will not be subject to the same variations. Thus it is as a personality that he may be presented with the greatest assurance at this time.

The art and craft of biography has not yet reached maturity in Canada. Our biographers have a tendency to play the part of the advocate rather than the judge. They prefer to paint their portraits to the rule of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who alleged that it was his duty to discover only the perfections of those who sat for his brush, rather than in accord with the homely demand of Cromwell, who said to the young artist, "If you leave out the scars and wrinkles, I will not pay you a shilling". Bennett deserves to be portrayed with his scars and wrinkles showing. His brilliance can well stand the strain of a few faults and peculiarities of temperament. To shelter him from frank criticism does his memory no justice; it but reduces his stature by inferring that he was not built on a scale generous enough to bear the weight of criticism.

A reader has the right to ask the man whose words he is reading, in order that he may assess them at their true value, What is your point of view? The point of view from which this sketch of Lord Bennett is written is this: Society owes no greater obligation than the obligation she is under to the few liberal thinkers of every age and generation who have originated and stimulated thought. From this point of view, Bennett could not be awarded the highest palm. But he was such an excellent example of his type, and always exactly what he professed to be, with no trimming of sails or shifting of ballast before the gales of expediency, that—from any point of view—he must be awarded a palm at least from the top of the tree.

Although he had a complex personality, and acted in the day-to-day affairs of life from mixed and variable motives, Bennett had a ruling passion in whose light he resolved most of the major decisions of his career. He was inclined to look upon the large issues of life from one window, and above that window was written the one word "Ambition". It was this fact that made his strength and his weakness of one piece, and kept both in constant harmony with his strong, positive nature. Ambition is as ambition does.

[2] In C. H. Williams (ed.), The Modern Historian (1930) p. 49.

It is not always a grievous fault. The man of ambition may be a destroyer or he may be a creator. Pericles was no less ambitious than was Alexander, although they faced in different directions. Bennett was ambitious in no paltry sense of the word. At the centre of his ambition was his instinct for public service. Disraeli, as a young man who judged himself by what he felt capable of doing, advised a friend to keep his letters, for he had made up his mind to become famous and they would be valuable one day. Like Disraeli, Bennett was ambitious because he felt that he had every right to be ambitious. He was sure that he had within himself the capacity for great things, and his power of performance was equal to the central ambition of his life, the ambition to be Prime Minister of Canada.

As a student at Dalhousie Law School, Bennett used to declare, and to himself the declaration was not so much a boast as the plain statement of an inevitable fact, that someday he would be Canada's first minister. Mr. Justice W. H. Trueman, late of the Manitoba Court of Appeal, was one year his senior at Dalhousie. One day Bennett proposed to Trueman that they should attend together a political meeting to be addressed by Sir John A. Macdonald. Trueman accepted his invitation and they drove several miles by horse and buggy to the meeting. On the return journey, Bennett was full of the speech they had heard. His mood was serious as he turned over Sir John's words, and he was silent with his thoughts, until he said suddenly, "I'm going to be Premier of Canada". At the time his companion treated this remark as one would expect such a remark to be treated. But in 1930, just after Bennett had been elected Prime Minister, when he was passing through Winnipeg on his way to Ottawa, Trueman called to see him at his hotel, and, as they were chatting over old times, Trueman asked, "Do you remember the night we heard Sir John A. Macdonald speak, the night you told me you would be Prime Minister? Well, you made it, all right." "I said I would, didn't I?" replied Bennett, and his tone implied that he was disappointed that he had not been taken at his word forty years before.

"Men are by nature Greeks or Romans", said Lord Tweedsmuir. On this broad classification, Bennett was by nature a Roman. He was Roman in his instinct for power and avidity for fame; in his love of order and respect for authority; in his impatience with criticism and his lack of respect for opinions of which he did not approve; in his sturdy reliance upon himself and ready acceptance of conventional patterns of thought and behaviour.

These are the traits of a strong man who believes that it is his duty to spend his strength in the service of others. Held in strict control, they are traits that may result in much good; carried too far, they lead to dictatorship and a denial of personal freedom to all who do not conform to the standards of the man. Bennett's sternest critics assert that he did carry them too far, and it must be confessed that he laid himself open to the charge. But, in returning a verdict to the charge, history will surely be kinder to him than some of his contemporary critics.

As a lawyer, and as a man of affairs, Lord Bennett was a supreme success. As a statesman, he met with a full and ample measure of success. As a human being, truth demands that he be set down as only a qualified success. He was too busy making his way in the world to cultivate the art of living; he was too successful in the large undertakings of his career. As a philosopher once asked: "Do not the keener disappointments of life flow from attainment rather than failure?" One glorious failure, one goal beyond his grasp, would have put an edge on Bennett's zest for living. Unless hard work and unbroken good fortune gave it to him, he did not get much pleasure out of life. Goaded as he was by a restless ambition, it is doubtful if Bennett ever could have put his hand on his heart and said with Shakespeare's Henry the Sixth:

> "My crown is in my heart, not on my head;
> Not deck'd with diamonds and Indian stones,
> Nor to be seen: my crown is call'd content;
> A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy."

Of United Empire Loyalist stock, Richard Bedford Bennett was of the ninth generation of his family to be born on the continent of North America. His birthdate was July 3rd, 1870, and his birthplace, Hopewell, New Brunswick. He was the son of Henry J. and Henrietta (Stiles) Bennett. His father was a sea captain and shipbuilder, who was prosperous in a modest way during his early career but fell upon lean times with the passing of sail.

To say that Bennett was poor is not to say that he suffered the blight of poverty. Although a rigid economy was imposed on the family household by a limited income, he knew the virtues of those who are obliged to dwell with poverty — thrift, patience and determination. He was well-equipped to face the task of making his own way in the world. His mother was a superior woman who gave him every advantage that love and commonsense can give. She had been a schoolmistress and she saw that

he never wanted for intellectual nourishment. Both his parents expected great things from him and confirmed, or perhaps planted, in him his high faith in his own future.

Bennett was raised in the best traditions of the United Empire Loyalists, in a family environment in which "everything was orthodox from preachers down to pies". This environment set a seal upon him he never broke, although he strained it almost to breaking during his regime as prime minister. He became a conservative in his cradle — if, indeed, the subtle forces of heredity had not cast him in the conservative mould even before his birth. "Conservatism", as Lord Hugh Cecil says, "may be understood in two senses. It may mean the tenets of the Conservative Party, or it may mean a natural disposition in the human mind not by any means confined to those persons who vote on the Conservative side in party politics."[3]

Although Bennett pitched his political tent squarely on the Conservative side of the street, it was in Lord Cecil's second sense that he was so uncompromisingly conservative. The distinguishing characteristic of the conservative mind is its affection for the old and established and its distrust of the new and untried. The true conservative looks upon a novel and uncertain idea as an unripe intellectual apple. The fruit of the tree of knowledge, in his opinion, should be tasted only when it has matured. Conservatism in this sense was a natural disposition of Bennett's mind. He believed instinctively that the conservative way is the only true way. From his political philosophy followed logically the conviction that government should be in the hands of an aristocracy of talent; that, as Plato put it, the best government is government by the best men; that some few are born into the world to be leaders and that the many, in their own best interests, are destined to follow the guidance of these favoured few. He never doubted that his place was with the few who are born to accept high responsibility. And he regarded responsibility as a sacred trust which he must never allow to rest lightly upon his shoulders.

He began the task of developing himself for the burdens ahead at an age when most boys have not put away their marbles. He was a serious student from his first day in school. "Studies", says Bacon, "serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament is in discourse; and for ability is in the judgment and disposition of business." Bennett probably got little pure delight

[3] Conversatism (Home University Library, 1928) p. 28.

from his studies. He pursued them to some degree for ornament, for he was not above making a parade of his learning in discourse. But the driving purpose of his studies was to sharpen his abilities to their keenest edge.

After passing through public and high school, and completing a course at normal school, he took a position as school teacher at Douglastown, New Brunswick. Teaching to his mind was only a stopgap and, when he had laid aside a little money, he entered Dalhousie Law School. He was then nineteen years of age.

In his first days at Dalhousie he was so poor that he had only the barest necessities of life. At the suggestion of Dean R. C. Weldon, who liked his earnest approach to his studies, he was appointed librarian of the Law School library to enable him to supplement his meagre resources. Dean Weldon was the first of the good friends who gave Bennett a helping hand at a crucial period of his career.

Mr. R. B. Graham, K.C., lately police magistrate in Winnipeg, was a classmate of Bennett at Dalhousie. In recalling their student days, Mr. Graham says that "R. B." was wrapped up completely in his studies, that if he had any life apart from the law school, none of his classmates shared in it. As a young man, Bennett was not a good mixer with persons of his own age. But, although he held himself aloof at law school, he was always ready to help his fellow students with their work. Like most of us, he was pleased when he was consulted about problems his acquaintances found difficult to master. Though he had taught school for only two years, his personality had already become subdued to the dye he had been working with and his manner had taken on a strong flavour of the schoolmaster. Mr. Graham was once Bennett's senior, and once his junior, in moot court. "R. B. worked so hard on these cases, and he expected me to keep pace with him", says Mr. Graham, "that he almost strained my affection for the law."

While at Dalhousie, Bennett never missed an opportunity to perform in mock parliament. Here was a training ground for his latent political powers, a forum in which he could strengthen his command over the spoken word. Mr. Graham recalls him as a powerful debater rather than a polished orator. "His strongest asset", he says, "was the great talent he had for condensing his ideas into few words, a talent which stood him in good stead because of the time limit of five minutes placed on speeches."

I am indebted to Dean Horace E. Read of Dalhousie Law School for the following note on Bennett's career as a law student: "In his First Year Law the record shows that Bennett came

second in his class. He led in the examinations in Criminal Law, Contracts and Torts and won a prize for leading each of the last two. In his Second Year he won a prize for leading in Partnership and he also led Conflict of Laws. He stood about fourth in his class. In his Third Year he won no prizes."

Bennett graduated from Dalhousie with the degree of LL.B. in 1893. Upon his call to the bar of New Brunswick, he was invited almost at once into partnership by Lemuel John Tweedie, K.C., who had a thriving practice in Chatham, and who had been looking about for a good junior to share his burdens so that he could give more of his own time to politics. Tweedie was Premier of New Brunswick from 1900 until 1907, when he became Lieutenant-Governor of his province, a position he held until 1912.

Bennett fitted easily into life in Chatham. Though still young, he soon became a leader in the community. Significantly, he took a prominent part in church work and worked strenuously for the temperance cause. He was elected a member of the first town council in Chatham. And, all the time, he was studying to add to his knowledge, and speaking to improve his command of language — as a preparation for the future. Then as later he was aided by a remarkable memory. It is said of him that while still a law student he memorized many of the classic judgments of English law. Certainly he could memorize a page of print almost as fast as the average person could read it. His method of studying was to learn a thing once and hold it forever in his powerful memory. The facts he had learned early in life were to be at his ready command during his strenuous days as prime minister.

Soon after his arrival in Chatham Bennett was given his first case. It was not a big case, but it gave him great satisfaction, for he was determined to be a court man. Not for him the sanctuary of an office chair; he must be on the active battlefronts of his profession. The first record I can find of him in the law reports is under date of April 17th, 1895, when he appeared alone for the appellant in the case of *Swim* v. *Amos*.[4] This case concerned a servant who had been wrongfully dismissed from his employment, and the presiding judges held that he was entitled to recover on the quantum meruit for services rendered by him in part performance of the agreement under which he was hired. Bennett was on the wrong side of this argument, but the next day he appeared before the same court for the respondent in *Fairweather* v. *McFarlane*[5] and got judgment without being called on. He must have

[4] 33 N.B.R. 53.
[5] *Ibid.* 181.

been in fair practice at this time for he has a third case reported in the same week.[6] He was forging ahead at the New Brunswick bar but a wider horizon was opening up for him.

Out in Calgary, then in the Northwest Territories, Senator James Alexander Lougheed found himself with more work than he could handle. Lougheed was not an easy man to satisfy and his search for an assistant took him to see Dean Weldon of Dalhousie Law School. He presented the Dean with a list of the virtues he expected to find in the young lawyer he hoped to attract to Calgary. The Dean shook his head; the order was too large. Then he had a second thought: "There is a young man up in Chatham who went through Dalhousie a few years ago with a very good record. His name is Bennett. He would be the man for you, if you can get him."

Bennett was alive to a good opportunity and he accepted Senator Lougheed's offer. He went to Calgary in 1897, at the age of twenty-seven. It was a good time for a young man to take the classic advice of Horace Greeley, for the West was at the dawn of a great promise.

Calgary was a rough and ready frontier town, bursting its garments at the seams with steady growth, when R. B. Bennett became junior partner in the law firm of Lougheed & Bennett. Calgary did not take him to her heart immediately. Although he won admiration for his sincerity, and respect for his capacity for hard work, he did not fit comfortably into the life of the frontier community. He was a non-smoker and a confirmed teetotaller. Moreover he had a crusading complex and tried to convert others to the temperance cause. With his serious manner and sober habits, he was a natural target for Bob Edwards, Calgary's first man of wit. Typical of the many shafts that Edwards launched at Bennett is the following item from the files of the Eye-Opener, the newspaper that Edwards published fitfully for twenty years — "when he could keep away from what he called 'convivial occupation' or could raise the money to pay his printer's bill":[7]

> 'What', thundered R. B. Bennett, during the recent temperance address at Red Deer, 'could be more terrible than to feel the wild desire for strong drink surging through every vein?' (Footnote — The knowledge that you haven't got the price.)

Law, as practised in the West in the days when Bennett was called to the bar of the Northwest Territories, was a strenuous pursuit. Writing in May 1884, in the law journal which he est-

[6] *Snowbell* v. *Donovan*, *ibid.*, 184.
[7] Stubbs, Lawyers and Laymen (1939) p. 180.

ablished and edited, John S. Ewart gives a suggestion of how some counsel then behaved in the courts in Winnipeg: "The occurrence of rows in Court is becoming too frequent, and like continued turbulence in school, the fault may primarily be with the parties to the quarrel, but more justly laid to lack of discipline. When such epithets as 'jackanapes', 'jack-in-the-box', 'contemptible cur', 'blackguard', are freely thrown across the court room, it is time that the press speak out. . . . Do the judges think that 'the boys will get better as they grow older?' and are they trusting to time to quiet the turbulent spirits? Are they prepared to allow themselves to be insulted until human nature changes? If not, they must put aside some of their good nature and come down with heavy and vigorous hand sharply upon all transgressors of propriety, and save our courts from sinking beneath the level of the bar rooms."[8]

Although the situation in Winnipeg, in the days when Ewart felt compelled to write these words, was not the same as in Calgary at the turn of the century, there were points of similarity between the two times and places. A manly fortitude and the ability to take care of one's self were part of the necessary equipment of an advocate in Bennett's early days in the West. Bennett, quite able to look after himself in any courtroom contest, was not a man with whom many cared to take liberties. Although he did not have the exuberant wit of some of the advocates he encountered, he had a natural dignity and a power of expression that overawed opposition of the rougher sort.

Bennett entered upon his legal career in the West under good auspices. His senior partner was one of the most highly regarded men in the Northwest Territories, with a well-established practice. The work was there, and Bennett had the industry and ability required to handle it. His early career in the courts may be traced through the law reports. The first reported case of his that I am able to find is *In Re McCarthy*, which was heard on September 28th, 1898.[9] Bennett had obtained from Mr. Justice Scott an ex parte order for the taxation of two bills of costs rendered to his client by a firm of solicitors more than twelve months before the application for the order was made. The plaintiff, McCarthy, moved to have the order set aside and succeeded with costs against Bennett's client. Bennett did not give up the battle. *In re McCarthy* must have been a minor *cause célèbre* in Calgary

[8] Manitoba Law Journal, Vol. 1, May 1884, p. 70.
[9] 2 Terr. L.R. 346.

in 1898. It was before the court three times.[10] Reading between the lines of the three reported decisions, one gets the impression that Bennett was a fighter, who left no stone unturned in his clients' interests.

Law reporting was not an exact science in Western Canada in those days. Much was left to chance and the personal tastes and opinions of the lawyers who elected to act as "heralds of the law". Thus Bennett appeared in an earlier case than *In Re McCarthy*, but it found its way into the law reports later. This case, *Cragg* v. *Lamarsh*,[11] was heard before Mr. Justices Richardson, Rouleau, Wetmore and Scott sitting en banc. Bennett was for the respondent. The appellant made no appearance. The court, accepting Bennett's argument, decided that a notice of appeal from a conviction is insufficient if not addressed to any person.

Law reporting in Alberta was placed upon a firm foundation when the Alberta Law Reports were established in 1908. By that time Bennett was a leading counsel in Calgary. He had been given silk in 1905, the year the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were formed.

He appeared as counsel in several cases reported in volume 1 of the Alberta Law Reports. One of these, *Rex* v. *Clarke*, has a certain interest today for the sidelight which is thrown on the history of the West by the remarks of Chief Justice A. L. Sifton, the presiding judge. Bennett was for the defence. In passing sentence upon the accused for fraud, the Chief Justice remarked: "The case that we have now been considering for some 10 days differs very much from any other style of case that we have been accustomed to in this country up to the present time. Usually the Courts have been called upon to deal with criminal offences or criminal charges more appertaining to a newer state of civilization. It is only of late, and, with the advancing population probably, that a case of this kind would be likely to arise."[12] Crimes of violence and passion were giving place to crimes of a more devious variety. The West was growing up.

Some inkling of the extent and rapidity of the growth of the West may be gathered from an article that Bennett contributed to the London Times of May 15th, 1939: "During the 42 years", he wrote, casting a retrospective glance over his career, "that have elapsed since I left New Brunswick in Eastern Canada to make my home at Calgary in Western Canada I have witnessed

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[10] See also 4 Terr. L.R. 1 and 9.
[11] 3 Terr. L.R. 91.
[12] 1 A.L.R. 358.

great changes in the Dominion. The outstanding material advance of the country has been the settlement and development of the Prairie West. In 1897 the total population of Canada was only 5,122,000, while at the present time it exceeds 11,000,000, or an increase of over 120 per cent. But the increase in population of the area comprising the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan has been from 376,000 in 1897 to approximately 2,500,000 in 1939, or nearly 700 per cent."

During his career of thirty-seven years of active practice at the bar, Bennett's great cases were numerous. In the opinion of a former associate, his greatest forensic triumph was the famous case of *Rex and The Provincial Treasurer* v. *The Royal Bank of Canada et al.*[13] A company sold bonds in London to finance the construction of a railway authorized by the legislature of Alberta. The funds thus raised were credited to a special account in the Edmonton branch of the Royal Bank, but control of their disposition was retained by the Bank's head office in Montreal. The railway was never built and the legislature passed an act which provided that the deposits should form part of the general revenue fund of the province of Alberta. The Royal Bank, concerned about its obligation to protect the rights of innocent investors, would not release the funds. Judgment was obtained against the bank, for whom Bennett appeared, from the trial judge, Mr. Justice Stuart, for something over six million dollars and interest. Here were stakes worth fighting for. The interest on the principal sum alone would have justified an appeal to the court of last resort. After the Supreme Court of Alberta en banc had affirmed the trial judge, Bennett took an appeal direct to the Privy Council on behalf of the defendants and carried the day. The Privy Council held that the right of the lenders to claim the return of their money was a civil right outside the province of Alberta and provincial legislation could not be validly enacted in derogation of it.

Bennett himself thought that his greatest forensic achievement was his victory before the Privy Council in the case arising from the appointment of Hon. David Lynch Scott as Chief Justice of Alberta.[14] This case is not a great landmark of the law but it provides an interesting footnote to the history of the West. The courts of Alberta were reorganized in 1919, provision being made for a Trial Division and an Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Hon. Horace Harvey was then Chief Justice of the

[13] [1913] A.C. 283.
[14] [1923] 3 W. W. R. 929.

Court as it had been constituted on the formation of the province. In 1921, while Bennett was Minister of Justice, letters patent were issued to Hon. D. L. Scott nominating him Chief Justice and President of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, under the style of Chief Justice of Alberta. Letters patent were issued at the same time to Hon. Horace Harvey nominating him Chief Justice of the Trial Division. Chief Justice Harvey asserted the right to be styled Chief Justice of Alberta and, on a reference made by the Governor-General in Council to the Supreme Court of Canada, his right was upheld. On behalf of Chief Justice Scott, Bennett carried an appeal to the Privy Council and the decision of the Supreme Court was reversed.

The judgments in these two cases — the *Royal Bank* case and the reference concerning the Chief Justice of Alberta — were not in harmony with the provincial rights tendency prevailing in the Privy Council. They are an eloquent testimony of the influence which Bennett, with his sound knowledge of constitutional law and his forceful personality, was able to assert in that tribunal.

In glancing through the early law reports, one is struck by the number of cases Bennett carried to appeal. Like the fighter he was, he did not surrender at the first expression of judicial opinion against him. Sometimes he went beyond the trial court on pretty narrow ground, as in the case of *Rex* v. *Canadian Pacific Railway*.[15] Here his client was convicted under the Lord's Day Act on an information alleging that the offence was committed at Pincher Creek. No evidence was given at the trial that Pincher Creek was in the province of Alberta. Bennett took certiorari proceedings to quash the conviction and was told by the court en banc that it could take judicial notice of the facts of local geography. Technical points as well as broad principles of jurisprudence were grist to his legal mill.

In considering Bennett's career at the bar, these most excellent words of Judge Robert N. Wilkin come to mind: "The standard of a lawyer's success is not, Did he win? but, how well did he present his case? If he has analized the facts and the law thoroughly and presented his arguments clearly and courageously, the responsibility for the decision rests not with the lawyer but with the court."[16] Bennett did not always win, but he never appeared in court without making the most of his brief. No litigant who had him as counsel could ever have said honestly that his

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[15] 1 A.L.R. 341.
[16] Eternal Lawyer (1947) p. 234.

case was not thoroughly prepared and clearly and courageously presented.

He was perhaps a better lawyer than he was an advocate, and he was not as great a lawyer as he might have been. His talent for the law was never developed to its maximum because he did not give the profession the devotion it demands. When he first started practising in the Northwest Territories, he appeared in the trial courts in both civil and criminal cases almost daily. On the criminal side, he sometimes opposed Paddy Nolan, K.C., who, he once told the writer, was the greatest jury lawyer he had ever known. Although he could not match the wit and eloquence of Nolan, his powerful cross-examination and clear exposition of facts sometimes gave him the verdict—even before the unsophisticated juries of that generation, who found Paddy Nolan almost irresistible. As Bennett's private interests grew, he found he had less time to devote to trial work. Finally he had to give it up, except for an occasional appearance in an important case, and to confine himself to briefs before appellate courts. He appeared before the Supreme Court in eleven reported cases during the ten years from 1910 to 1920. Although this is a good record for a lawyer practising in the West, it is insignificant when compared with that of some eastern lawyers, say Eugene Lafleur, K.C., who had more briefs before the Supreme Court in a single year than Bennett had in ten. During Bennett's last few years in practice, only a very exceptional case could attract him into court. By that time he had so many demands on his time that he had only the barest margin to devote to work at the bar.

R. B. Bennett was active in the affairs of the Canadian Bar Association from its formation in 1914, under the impetus of Sir James Aikins, until he left Canada for England. His contribution to the Association was recognized in 1932 by his election as Honorary Life President. He served the Association as its national president during the 1929-1930 term. It was while he held this office that he achieved his life's ambition by leading the Conservative party to victory at the polls. In 1930, when he was at his meridian, at the head of his profession and at the head of the government of his country, he made an important decision, which he announced at the annual dinner of the Association. He determined to say farewell to the practice of law, to devote all his time and energies to his first love, politics. "This is my valedictory at the Bar", he said. "I say that somewhat sadly, for life for me has been very pleasant in the practice of my profession, which has done great things for me. I shall endeavour to

discharge my duties to it. When I reflect upon the reluctance of our great men at the bar to go on the Bench I recall a conversation I had with a great English judge not long ago during which I realized that he had left a practice worth $150,000 a year and had accepted only $25,000 on the Bench. He gave me his reason for his action: 'It is one of the traditions of our profession that when we have attained to eminence we then shall serve our day and generation on the Bench'. I hope some such sentiment as that will fill the hearts and minds of Canadian lawyers in their endeavours to attain to great place in the practice of their profession so that when they have achieved it they too may be willing to submit to material sacrifice and render service to the state that has done so much for them." [17]

When Bennett spoke these words there was before his mind the vision of serving his day and generation in politics for the time that remained to him. Since his earliest years he had felt a call to public life, and at sixty, when he became prime minister, he was going to answer that call with a whole-hearted devotion and an undivided loyalty. Regard him, as some do, as the supreme autocrat in Canadian politics, if you must; argue, as some do, that many of his political beliefs should never have seen the light of the twentieth century, if you will; but grant him sincerity of purpose. His approach to public life was always: What can I take to it? not, What can I get out of it? Someone has defined a statesman as a politician whose principles are capable of reaching beyond the next election. He could have had Bennett in mind, for Bennett's desire for office never led him to forget his principles.

Leslie Roberts, in a facetious but illuminating sketch written in 1929, when Bennett was leading the opposition in the House of Commons, said: "Bennett at heart is an evangelist. He is one of those to whom an espoused cause is something to die for, right or wrong, and he would go to the stake in the name of Protection, the Conservative Party, or the Eddy newsprint and match company tomorrow morning if need be." [18]

One advantage that Bennett had should not be overlooked. He was a man of great wealth—the wealthiest man ever to be Prime Minister of Canada. He earned part of his wealth by his own exertions; part he acquired by the easier and shorter route of inheritance, through a connection he made early in life. Harry Shirreff and his sister Jennie were among the first friends he made

[17] Proceedings of the Canadian Bar Association, Vol. 15, 1930, p. 113.
[18] These Be Your Gods (1929) p. 69.

during his student days at Dalhousie. After training as a nurse, Jennie Shirreff worked in the household of E. B. Eddy, a wealthy manufacturer of Hull, Quebec, whom she married in 1894. When Mrs. Eddy and Harry Shirreff died, Bennett became heir to a controlling interest in the vast Eddy enterprises. If, as the philosopher tells us, wealth makes the practice of virtue easy, it makes the practice of political virtue especially so. Remove the necessity for the peccadillos of politicians and you lay your axe to the root of the tree.

Bennett retired from the practice of the law, but he did not lose his interest in the profession. He gave an earnest of his intention of keeping a watchful eye on the welfare of the profession in his presidential address to the Canadian Bar Association in 1930. As Prime Minister, how could he render better service to the profession than by seeing that a strict supervision was exercised over the selection of judges? "It would be both untimely and unfair", he said, "if I were to qualify the generality of this statement [that Canadians are entitled to the very best judges available] by suggesting that members of the Bar have secured elevation to this higher sphere of service through reasons other than their own true worth. If this is so, we can but regret it, and accept the fact as a warning of the need for greater vigilance in the future, and I, speaking as a member of the Bar and as a member of the parliament of this country, condemn any departure from the only just test of selection, and state unequivocally that so long as I have power to influence it, the appointment of our judges will be made with regard only to their real qualifications for the exalted position they must occupy in the proper administration of our laws, and upon which, in my humble opinion, in no small degree depends the maintenance of our Canadian civilization." [19]

It would be incorrect to contend that all appointments to the bench during Bennett's term as Prime Minister were made on a strict basis of professional merit. He knew what was needed. But, as President Roosevelt once said, politics is a struggle to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal. Bennett was not able to wipe out the line, but his appointments to the bench do not suffer by comparison with the appointments made during the regime of any other Prime Minister of Canada.

His attitude towards this vexed questions was well put by Andrew D. MacLean, at one time his secretary: "In choosing men for appointment [said Mr. MacLean in 1934] he would like

[19] Proceedings of the Canadian Bar Association, Vol. 15, 1930, p. 181.

to make merit the chief consideration. Instead, he has found that party, race, religion, occupation and geographical location of the nominee are more important than his qualifications. He dislikes this deference to political sentiment, and has said so repeatedly. Appointments made by the party for party reasons are anathema to him. He wants a man of integrity, of capacity, and if such a man happens to be a political enemy, that makes no difference."[20]

In 1943, thirteen years after his retirement from practice, as a tangible proof of his continuing interest in the profession, Bennett made a substantial gift of bank stock to the Canadian Bar Association, which, in harmony with his wishes, was utilized to establish the Viscount Bennett Trust Fund for the purpose of stimulating legal scholarship in Canada.

R. B. Bennett's approach to politics was always direct, leaving no doubt where he stood on any important issue. He seldom indulged in the indecisive language of politics, which Walter Bagehot tells us is so much in favour with the public, who like a cabinet minister to talk something like this: "It has during many years been maintained by the honourable member for Montrose that two and two make four, and I am free to say, that I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of that opinion, but, without committing her Majesty's Government to that proposition as an abstract sentiment, I will go so far as to assume two and two are not sufficient to make five, which, with the permission of the House, will be a sufficient basis for all the operations which I propose to enter upon during the present year".[21]

In his direct approach to practical problems, Bennett presented a marked contrast to his great opponent of the political arena, the Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King. Bennett may be compared to an oak, who stood four-square to all the political winds that blew, or was torn up by his roots in the attempt: King to a bamboo, who bent gracefully before the storms of politics until they had blown themselves out, when he sprang back gracefully to his former position. As Professor J. A. Corry well said in 1946: "It might even be suggested that Mr. Mackenzie King has been able to govern long in Canada because he has been content to govern little. Other leaders like Mr. R. B. Bennett with more positive ideas could not win, or could not hold, the majorities needed to support their programme."[22]

Bennett and King, who were so different in many respects, had one thing in common—they were both bachelors.

[20] R. B. Bennett (1934) p. 76.
[21] Selected Essays (Nelson's Classics) p. 31.
[22] Democratic Government and Politics (1946) p. 387.

The "ifs" of history are a fascinating study, though one that may not yield much profit. If Cleopatra's nose had been an inch longer, the course of history might have followed a different channel — for then Caesar and Anthony would not have fallen victims to her charms; and English literature would have been impoverished, for Shakespeare and Shaw would not have spent their genius upon her. If Bennett and King had been married men, would Canadian history be materially different than it is? That question is worthy of thought.

The unit of society is not the individual but the family. The problems of the community are the problems of the family written larger, and the problems of the country are the same problems written still larger. The bachelor in political life is under a handicap. He has skipped a grade in his education; he lacks experience in dealing with the practical problems of life on the first level. Would not Bennett and King have taken a fuller understanding to politics had they been family men?

R. B. Bennett entered the legislature of the Northwest Territories in 1898 and continued in his seat until the formation of the province of Alberta in 1905. There were men of outstanding ability in this legislature, one of whom was Bennett's equal, if not his master, in debate. This man finished his career, full of years and honours, as Sir Frederick Haultain, Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, but has yet to be accorded recognition for the part he played in the development of the Canadian West. He and Bennett, although both Conservatives, did not always see things in the same light, and their skirmishes in debate enlivened many of the sittings of the legislature. Haultain's touch, though, was lighter than Bennett's and his imagination much livelier.

Anyone interested in judging the level of debate in the old legislature of the Northwest Territories should take down the files of the Regina Leader for the last few days in April, and the first few days in May, 1902, and follow the debate then staged on the question of provincial autonomy, to which Bennett and Haultain, Dr. T. A. Patrick and A. L. Sifton, among others, contributed.

Bennett's speech in this debate found him at the top of his form. I quote his closing paragraph as an example of his style: "When the Attorney-General moved his resolution in May, 1900, in closing he pointed to that table and said there sat around that table the Fathers of Confederation, and tonight when the question of the division of the area of these Territories is before us let the ghosts and memories of those great men rise up before us

and let their aspirations be with us. It was no local considerations that influenced Tupper, Macdonald, Brown and Tilley. Let us remember this and with a broadminded desire to do justice to all men let us ever remember that this country was not given to us pioneers to work out its future for our own ends but as a great inheritance and legislating today we are legislating for posterity. Let us not be influenced by considerations of a great, overwhelming, overshadowing province. Let us be national in our aspirations and not sectional in our ambitions. Let us remember that we are all Canadian subjects of a great sovereign."

R. B. Bennett's speeches were characterized more by strength of intellect than by imaginative fire. He presented his ideas in forceful and ample language, but his speeches offer few passages of surpassing grandeur or beauty of expression. He was not a lord of language in the same sense as were two previous prime ministers of Canada — Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen. He never clothed a great theme in such appropriate dress as could Sir Wilfrid Laurier and he never used words to such excellent purpose as the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, whose sheer magic with language is a delight even to those who cannot subscribe to his politics. Cicero, when asked which of Demosthenes' orations he considered the best, replied: "The longest". The same answer could be made to a similar question asked of Sir Wilfrid's or Mr. Meighen's speeches, but not, with an easy conscience, of Bennett's.

When the legislature of the Northwest Territories ceased to be, R. B. Bennett waited four years before taking his next step on the way to his final goal in politics. In 1909 he was elected to the legislature of Alberta. The highlight of his career in the Alberta House was a speech he made on May 2nd, 1910, while leader of the provincial Conservatives, attacking with "unmerciful analysis and criticism"[23] the railway policy of the Rutherford government. He spoke for five hours, virtually destroying the government. His speech led to what came to be known as "the Waterways Scandal". The Liberal party was split in two. Premier Rutherford was forced to resign office and was succeeded by Hon. A. L. Sifton, who retired as Chief Justice of Alberta to return to the political arena. A royal commission was appointed, an interesting sidelight of which is the fact that Bennett appeared before it as counsel for the insurgent Liberals.

Bennett's career in the Alberta legislature came to an end when he resigned his seat to contest the riding of Calgary East

[23] The Canadian Annual Review (1910) p. 511.

in the Dominion election of 1911, when he was returned by a majority of nearly 3,000. He did not again offer himself as a candidate in 1917. In the election held four years later, he was defeated by a Labour candidate by 16 votes, the only election he lost during his long career in public life. He was elected for the constituency of Calgary West in 1925, and again in 1926.

He held Cabinet rank on two occasions before taking office as Prime Minister. For six months, in 1921, he was Minister of Justice in Mr. Meighen's government, and he held the post of Minister of Finance during the short-lived Conservative regime that presented Canada with the constitutional crisis of 1926. Following the election of 1925, King attempted to carry on a government without commanding a majority in the Commons. Finding the task too much, he asked the Governor-General, Lord Byng, for a dissolution. Lord Byng, without a full appreciation of his position as Governor-General, refused to dissolve Parliament and invited Mr. Meighen, as leader of the opposition, to form a government. Mr. Meighen, for reasons which have never been made clear, accepted office. Almost immediately, he lost a want of confidence vote and had to request a dissolution from Lord Byng. At that hour the fortunes of the Conservative party were at ebb-tide.

R. B. Bennett was chosen leader of his party, in succession to Mr. Meighen, at the National Conservative Convention held in Winnipeg in October 1927. He was selected from a field of six on the second ballot. His appointment as leader was popular with political friend and foe alike. The editorial comment of the Manitoba Free Press was representative of Liberal reaction: "One thing, however, that is not in question", said the Free Press, "is that if abounding energy, assiduity in the discharge of the duties of his position, and enthusiasm, together with considerable ability to inspire it in others, can ensure success, Mr. Bennett will command it. Yesterday he pledged himself to give all that was in him to the service of his country: and this pledge he will no doubt keep. No party leader, having regard to health, vigor and freedom from conditions that result in personal worry, was ever better equipped than Mr. Bennett."

During the election campaign of 1930 he introduced a more vigorous note into his speeches than Canada had heard for some years. One statement he made, which his political opponents were later to recall to his embarrassment, will still be remembered: "Farmers of the Western plains, tell me, when did free trade fight for you? When did free trade fight for you? I will make

tariffs fight for you. I will blast a way into the markets of the world, that hitherto have been closed to you. I will end unemployment or perish in the attempt." At the polls he scored a sweeping triumph over the Liberals, even carrying twenty-five seats in their stronghold of Quebec. Mr. Mackenzie King said generously that he had "gained the greatest personal victory in the history of Canadian public life".

R. B. Bennett became Prime Minister of Canada during a period of economic depression. No holiday task awaited him. Mr. King was quite content to take his place on the left of the speaker. As Reginald Hardy, in his *Mackenzie King of Canada*, frankly admits: "Indeed, it was a good time to hand over the reins of government and sit in the seats of the critics. Mr. Bennett, in winning the election, inherited all the trials and tribulations of the depression years. He found himself saddled with a situation which was beyond the control of any Canadian government." [24] That about stated the position. The task of curing the economic ills of the world was beyond the control of any Canadian government. But R. B. Bennett, to his credit, faced up to the task courageously. In his first years as Prime Minister, he attacked the problem with old-fashioned political remedies, and had about as much success as attended the efforts of Mrs. Partington when she tried to sweep the tempest from her door-step with a broom.

When it became evident that his best efforts to end unemployment and bring prosperity to the country were unsuccessful, he revealed his true greatness as a statesman by standing up in the House of Commons and admitting that he had failed.

During his final year in office he introduced some excellent social legislation, which came to be known as Bennett's New Deal. Many Conservatives were not in agreement with him when he brought down this legislation. They thought he had become "the wolf of Radicalism in the sheep-skin of Toryism", to borrow the apt phrase current in the days of Lord Randolph Churchill. But surely he wants a sense of history who contends that Bennett was stepping out of character as a Conservative in his attempt at social reform. Was he not following the precedent of the Tory Party of Great Britain, which placed upon the statute books during the past century many measures of social amelioration, such as the Factory Acts, in the face of bitter opposition from the Liberals?

His New Deal met an unhappy fate. Five important measures were held by the Privy Council to be ultra vires. Commenting

[24] (1949) p. 141.

on the decisions of the Privy Council, Professor Alexander Brady makes this significant statement: "These decisions signalized the fact that, despite the new and grim necessities of Canada in the thirties, the constitution as interpreted by the Judicial Committee for more than forty years still stood. Economic life was divided between the Dominion and the provinces, and the major responsibility for labour and social legislation lay with the provinces." [25]

On a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada on the question whether the Dominion Parliament had legislative jurisdiction to enact the Weekly Rest in Industrial Undertakings Act, the Minimum Wages Act and the Limitations of Hours of Work Act (measures passed in conformity with conventions of the International Labour Organization to which Canada's representatives had agreed), a court of six was evenly divided. "If" there had been no appeal to the Privy Council from the Supreme Court at that time, would the history of Canada have turned a different corner? In the light of present dominion-provincial relations, that question is worthy of some thought.

Bennett's popularity and prestige were at their peak when he assumed office as prime minister. Almost immediately, they began to fall, slowly at first, and then more rapidly as he approached the end of his five-year term of office. His own personality must be held accountable. Deadly in earnest, he spent no time in cultivating the graces of politics. He acted at times as though he had a supreme indifference for the opinions and feelings of others. If a simple explanation would clear the air of doubt and suspicion, he could not be counted upon to give it. Sometimes he seemed deliberately to invite opposition, as when he made an unfortunate reference to the opinions of editorial writers earning a few dollars a week. He was never on the best of terms with that influential section of society—the pressmen, who forgive much and overlook more if they have a fellow-feeling for a man. Consequently he always had a bad press, a factor that played a considerable part in the gradual undermining of his popularity. Because he would spare no time for the amenities of political life, while he had work at hand, he gave offence to many faithful party followers. He was a glutton for work. Union hours had no place in his schedule. It was not unusual for him to put in a working day of fourteen, or even sixteen hours. His industry was a reproach to all who took political responsibility lightly.

His conduct could never be predicted with any degree of certainty. Although as a man of extremes he could be ruthless to

[25] Democracy in the Dominions (1947) p. 53.

anyone who stood in his light, he was also capable of the most exceptional generosity. Once his vigorous prosecution of a young man for forgery resulted in a long prison term for the accused. Some time later he learned that the young man had been the sole support of his widowed mother, and he made her an allowance that brought her the assurance of comfort for the rest of her life. On another occasion one of the early judges of the West died leaving his widow with scant provision for her future. When he learned of her condition Bennett provided her with a generous allowance. On yet another, he provided funds for a promising young man to complete his medical course. When the young man got on his feet he returned the money. Bennett sent it back to him, with a note suggesting that he make use of the money to start some other deserving person on his career. It may be argued that Bennett did not miss, from his ample store, anything he gave away. The fact remains that he did give it away — and in such a quiet, unobtrusive manner that it never came to the public's attention.

The adjectives most freely applied to him by his political enemies were pompous, ponderous, platitudinous and pedantic, autocratic and dictatorial. These are the terms of reproach usually applied to the true-blue Conservative by those of a different political faith, but it may be confessed that they do suggest his shortcomings. His chief failing as First Minister was his desire to dominate every department of government. Turn over the pages of Hansard for the years 1930-1935 and you will find him making frequent invasions into the provinces of his ministers. Certain of his own strength, he was willing to carry the whole burden of government himself. It must be granted that his performance in Parliament was remarkable. On one page of Hansard you will find him giving an authoritative discourse on the sub-soil of Winnipeg; on another he is displaying a most amazing knowledge of the history and development of the Welland Canal; on still another he is speaking with an easy familiarity of a road lost in the hinterlands of Alberta. Andrew D. MacLean once said admiringly: "Waken Mr. Bennett out of a sound sleep, and he will rub his eyes, and then be able to give a most creditable speech, on any subject you may suggest, for his knowledge is immense".[26] There will be general agreement with that statement.

Arch Dale, the brilliant cartoonist of the Winnipeg Free Press, who found in Bennett the perfect target for his talent, had many a cartoon that depicted him in his principal weakness. In

[26] *Op. cit.*, footnote 20, p. 110.

one of the most popular of them, five men are seated around a council table in earnest debate; two call boys are in the room ready to answer their commands — and on all seven pairs of shoulders are the face and features of Bennett. As an added touch there are two pictures on the walls — one showing Bennett in a Napoleonic pose, and the other in the rôle of The Thinker. The title of the cartoon, "My Government", was hardly needed to make its meaning clear.

When Bennett faced the electorate in the fall of 1935, his defeat was as decisive as his victory had been five years before. When he fell, he fell like Lucifer, never to hope again. But as the brilliant pen of Professor A. R. M. Lower has written: "The victory was not a tribute to Mr. King, it was not a proclamation in defence of Liberty, it was not even a pronouncement on the issues of the day. Liberalism, as it emerged in Canada after 1935, was the counterpart of Baldwin Conservatism in Great Britain, of Le Front Populaire in France and of Rooseveltian Democracy:—it represented the huddling together of frightened people, uncertain of their way in a chaotic world." [27]

After his defeat in 1935, Bennett's life was anti-climatic. He continued as leader of the Conservative Party until 1938, when he retired from Canadian politics, to carry out a plan, maturing in his mind for a long time, of settling in England to live out the last years of his life.

The Hon. R. J. Manion, who succeeded him in the leadership, has discharged the obligation a man who takes a large part in public affairs owes to his own and succeeding generations by writing an autobiography, in which he makes an interesting comparison of the prime ministers of Canada he knew: "Of the five prime ministers known by me", says Dr. Manion, "Sir Wilfrid Laurier was probably closer to Sir John A. Macdonald, who was my ideal as a leader. Sir Robert Borden was the soundest. Arthur Meighen was the ablest debater that the House had in my time, or perhaps at any time since Confederation. R. B. Bennett was the most brilliant. And Mackenzie King was the best politician — if by that term one implies a skill in winning elections." [28]

At a dinner in honour of R. B. Bennett, held in Toronto before he left Canada for England, Mr. Meighen, in his admirable way, compared Bennett with the two most individual and outstanding men who have ever guided the destiny of Canada: "Mr. Bennett may forgive me, and he may not—there are some

[27] Colony to Nation (1946) p. 519.
[28] Life is an Adventure (1936) p. 289.

things for which he has never forgiven me — but platitudes of affection do not appertain to him. He is not, as Laurier was, so spontaneously affable a personality, so universally gracious and engaging that one likes him, sometimes follows him, though he believes him wrong. He is not, as Macdonald was, so intensely human and companionable as to be loved even for his faults. He is, as everyone knows, a different stamp of man altogether. He is a product of this generation rather than of the last. He is a man of affairs, a man who has been in contact with realities, and hard realities, from his earliest years to this very hour. On the rough, ruthless battlefields of life, he has triumphed, and he depends, and does not fear to depend, upon his achievements for his following and his fame." [29]

One can appreciate Bennett's desire to settle in the gracious land of England, but one can hardly forgive him his desertion of his own country — for desertion it most surely was. His limbs were forged in Canada. He was Canadian in the bone and blood of him. So far as a man who is not open stock, but the only one of his pattern, can be, he was typical of many of the characteristics that we have come to regard as distinctively Canadian. Canada treated him generously. She gave him the career he wanted, and justice to her demanded that he should not forsake her in the twilight of his life.

As one who knew him well and admired him greatly says: "The tragedy of his life was his desertion of Canada at a time when his personality, his power, and his capacity for forthright speech would have been of supreme national service. He, who was a child of the tempest, was buried with the rites of the English Church as a country squire in a quiet churchyard. A great Nonconformist, he should have found his last resting place on a stormy headland in New Brunswick and gone to his death defending all the freedoms and ideals and hopes which in the perils of the conflict joined Canada and Britain and the Commonwealth together in a steadfast unity of purpose and a community of unquestioning sacrifice."

"If" Bennett had continued as leader of the opposition in the House of Commons during the war years might not the history of those years be different? Can it be doubted that on the issue of conscription he would have presented an opposition so formidable to Mr. King's policy that some modification of it would have been necessary?

Mr. H. R. Milner, K.C., of Edmonton, offers an interesting

[29] Unrevised and Unrepented (1949) p. 160.

explanation of Bennett's motive in retiring to England: "He was a convinced Imperialist and extremely fond of England, where he had spent a good deal of time, and looked on that country as, to coin an old phrase, his spiritual home. It was, to him, the center of the Empire. To anyone who has not been brought up in the Maritime Provinces that may today be difficult to understand, but it must be remembered that when Bennett was growing up the connection between the Maritime Provinces and Great Britain was very close. The day of the 'deep sea' skipper was not forgotten. The Bennetts themselves were seamen and the affinity between the Maritime people and those on the other side of the ocean was closer than between the Maritimes and the people of Ontario."

More mundane reasons have been assigned for Bennett's settling in England. One frequently heard is that he desired to acquire a title. If this was the true reason, his desire was gratified. In the King's birthday honours of 1941, he was raised to the peerage, and took a significant title: Viscount Bennett of Mickleham (his English home), of Calgary and of Hopewell. "Titles distinguish the mediocre, embarrass the superior and are disgraced by the inferior", said George Bernard Shaw, and as a superior man Bennett did not need a title, but he set a strange value on such distinctions and few will seek to deny him the gratification he felt on his elevation to the peerage. But how much more commendable from the Canadian point of view was the example of that great liberal editor, John Wesley Dafoe, who could not be persuaded to accept a title on any terms.

Viscount Bennett settled on the estate of Juniper Hill, in Surrey, and one can well appreciate his thinking that he had found a suburb of Paradise. Juniper Hill was his first permanent home of his own. His life in Canada, after he left the home of his parents, had been a succession of hotels and boarding houses.

Viscount Bennett was not content to lead a life of leisure in the land of his adoption. Like Ulysses he found it dull to rust unburnished, not to shine in use. He attended the House of Lords regularly, becoming the unofficial voice of Canada in that chamber. During the war years he served as chairman of the Canadian Red Cross Overseas and, for a time, assisted his friend, Lord Beaverbrook, in the Ministry of Aircraft Production.

During his strenuous days in politics and at the bar, Viscount Bennett never gave more than a passing thought to his health. For years he lacked the minimum requirement of exercise and

fresh air. Nature had endowed him with a constitution capable of withstanding these years of neglect, but there is a limit to even a strong man's strength. There were signs that his health was failing during the grim years when bombs were falling in Britain. Finally he was put under doctor's orders to husband his strength, but he found it no easy task to reverse the habits of a lifetime even in the interests of his health.

He died from a heart attack on June 26th, 1947 — a few days before his 77th birthday.

For all his wealth and power and fame, the central fact of his life was a great loneliness. Napoleon's soldiers, who followed him through victory and defeat, were said to have worshipped even the shadow that fell from his shoe-laces. There were times when Bennett would have given all his worldly possessions to have been able to inspire an equal measure of devotion in his friends and followers. With all the ardour of his intense nature, he wanted to be loved, but he lacked the qualities that attract love. He had too much of the iceberg, and not enough of the volcano, in his make-up. Living at the centre of great affairs, he could not relax under the burdens of duty and descend to the common level of life. But, most fatal of all his faults, he had that flaw which is never overlooked by the ordinary man — he did not have a reliable sense of humour. He could not be depended upon to see the point of a joke, especially if it were one at his own expense. One dash of Irish wit would have redeemed him from failure in his relationships with his fellowmen.

In those distant days in Calgary, Bob Edwards once wrote in the Eye-Opener: "That solitary figure toiling up the heights is R. B. Bennett". He was a solitary figure at the beginning of his career, and a solitary figure he remained to the end. The happiest years of his life were his first years in Calgary, when he set out in earnest to realize his worthy ambitions. When his goal was in sight he learnt the truth of Stevenson's dictum that to travel hopefully is better than to arrive. When, at the age of sixty, he did arrive, he had few with whom to share his success.

. . . if we are wise, the differences in other men's judgments will teach us to be diffident—James Anthony Froude, The Dissolution of the Monasteries (1857).