

A VISIT TO LORD HALDANE.

At the request of a friend at the Toronto Bar, I am writing for the CANADIAN BAR REVIEW a short sketch of a luncheon I had at the home of Lord Haldane a year ago last June. A recent graduate of Toronto, setting out on a trip to the Old Country, I was given a letter of introduction to Lord Haldane by Dr. W. P. M. Kennedy, who had been instructing me in Constitutional and Federal law during the past two years. This I presented with trepidation soon after reaching London, and within a few days received an invitation to Queen Anne's Gate.

On my arrival I was shown upstairs into a sunny room overlooking Birdcage Walk and St. James Park.

Bright chintzes covering comfortable chairs and dark shelves of books made this at the same time a library and a sitting room. At the end of a few minutes (which to me in my nervousness seemed a much longer period) a door in the corner of a book-lined alcove opened and Lord Haldane entered the room.

His appearance and movements were those of a sick man and so pronounced were those evidences of indisposition that it was almost the first thing he mentioned, and he attributed it to the strain of work on the *Tiny Township School Case*. However he never referred to his health again and his cheerful manner and bright conversation belied his condition. Until we descended to the dining-room Lord Haldane chatted about Professor Kennedy for whom he showed a warm personal regard.

I shall not describe the luncheon itself; it is sufficient to recall the wonder evinced by continental guests of the late Lord Haldane—that such a famous philosopher, statesman and lawyer should also be such an excellent judge of wine and cigars. As soon as we were seated, the footman placed a third chair at the table upon which leaped at once a small terrier. The twinkle in Lord Haldane's eye made it evident that a favoured member of his household had joined us.

Of the many things that were discussed during this delightful meal, one or two stand out prominently. The *Tiny Township School Case* which had been occupying his attention for the past month, was a topic not lightly dismissed. I can remember Lord Haldane saying that this, among other problems presented by the B.N.A. Act, could not be solved satisfactorily by decisions of the Courts. The

best solution for these vexing questions could only be obtained by Canadians themselves working in harmony. From this he passed on to ask many questions (which I was unable to answer) concerning leaders of the Canadian Bar who had often appeared before him in the Privy Council, and in whom I learned from the questions put to me he took a personal as well as a professional interest. He recalled the fact that much of his own practice, when at the Bar, had been in Canadian appeal work. I have learned since that Lord Haldane's first appearance before the Privy Council was in 1883 when he, a then unknown Junior, appeared for the Province of Quebec on an application for special leave to appeal. His success in this application was soon followed by a brief for the Province of Ontario, and from then on he was retained in numerous Canadian cases until the responsibilities of Cabinet Office intervened.

Lord Haldane's interest in our Dominion was by no means limited to constitutional questions. His visit to this country in 1913 was still fresh in his memory. The Canadian Pacific Railway by which he crossed Canada in that year had excited in him wonder and admiration by the length of its line and the magnitude of its operations. Searching questions which he asked me about present conditions, political and economic, disclosed an insight into, and appreciation of, Canadian problems which could only be the results of the closest interest in Canada as it is to-day. To give but one example of Lord Haldane's method of inquiry—he asked me to tell him exactly what steps he would have to take in order to enjoy a glass of beer in Ontario under our Government Control Act. Here I was able to satisfy his curiosity; his only comment on the procedure was emphatic in its brevity—Absurd!

Towards the end of the meal he asked me what I had studied during my University course beyond Law, and was, I felt, disappointed to learn that it was economics and not philosophy. Soon, too soon, the luncheon was over. In spite of his recent illness Lord Haldane's presence was required at the House of Lords. He accompanied me to the door and in wishing me good-bye desired that I should convey his kindest regards to Professor Kennedy.

This brief sketch does not contain anything beyond what is commonly known of the late Viscount Haldane. I have written it to add to the testimony of many others older than myself this slight piece of evidence of Lord Haldane's interest in Canada and Canadians, and also of the fact that "his kindness to younger men was inexhaustible."

Toronto.

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