

Burns Club, Victoria, B. C.
January 26, 1948.

By Hon. R. G. Macdonald

COUNTRY OF OUR ADOPTION

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Mr. Chief Justice,
Honoured Guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

I consider it a great honour and privilege indeed to be called upon to propose a Toast to this great Country of Our Adoption--Canada. And I think probably those of you who, like myself, were born and raised in the Old Land, will agree with me when I say that we are very fortunate indeed to be able also to call ourselves citizens of this Dominion.

In the short time at my disposal, I shall endeavour to confine my remarks principally to our own Province---British Columbia. I believe that nowhere in the world can be seen^a more favourable combination than we possess in British Columbia today.

Resources --- Climate --- Scenery --
and Land and Water Transportation.

In reference to Resources-----

--we possess undoubtedly the finest softwood timber anywhere in the world.

In Agriculture, our farmers have been successful in open competition against the world, not only with grain, but also with livestock and in milk production.

Our Mineral resources, although hardly scratched yet, produced, last year, approximately \$109 Million in new wealth.

We have fish in abundance.

We enjoy the finest climate on the North American Continent.

As to Land & Water Transportation, Vancouver, is the terminus for 3 great Transcontinental Railways, and has one of the finest land-locked harbours in the world. That City, being the nearest seaport, except Prince Rupert, to the great Oriental markets, is undoubtedly destined to become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, City, in Canada, within the next 100 years.

Owing to the nature of our terrain, our rivers and lakes, have water power potentialities which can be made available to our industries and homes at a low cost.

Ladies & Gentlemen: All of these things harnessed together will make, and are making, a real worthwhile contribution toward world trade and reconstruction. It may mean strenuous competition -- but competition has made us what we are today.

It is undoubtedly on account of all this natural wealth and all these advantages that we can show such progress and that our population has increased 160% since 1911 as against Quebec, 80%, and Ontario, 62%.

Politically, even His Majesty's Loyal Opposition have admitted on more than one occasion that we have a real good Provincial Government.

At any rate we do try to keep up with the March of Time, particularly with regard to Social and Labour Legislation, and other matters of benefit and interest to our people.

Development

Within the memory of the present generation there was little industrial activity in British Columbia. And I think I might be pardoned if I were to suggest that much of our development and progress today can be attributed, not only to native Scots men and women, but also to those of Scottish ancestry, whose pioneering spirit of enterprise, honesty and integrity are well known --in fact the very foundations of this Country were laid by men and women from the Old Land. The history of Canada from coast to coast is replete with accomplishments of men who themselves, or their forebears, came from Auld Scotia's shores.

I would like to make particular reference to the contribution made to the settlement and development of the West by these men and women, whose determination was tempered, and whose purpose was hardened, in the pit fires of cotten homes in that rugged land that many of us love and remember.

Perhaps the best-known Scot of all in the early pioneering days of B. C. was Sir James Douglas, whose name and glory overshadows many. It was he who selected the location of Victoria and superintended the laying out of the Fort in 1843. But it cannot be forgotten that there were many other famous Scotsmen assisting him-- many of them employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, and whose mother tongue, Gaelic, was understood at every trading post in the Northwest--McTavish, MacDonald, MacKenzie, Fraser, and a host of other clan names.

Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, father of the late Premier, Simon Fraser Tolmie, was the first medical doctor here. He was interested in agriculture as well, and imported much purebred stock -- particularly cattle and sheep.

There was another Scot who played a great part in developing the Island and the Province.

I refer to Robert Dunsmuir, who came out from Scotland to work in the coal mines of this Island and who also discovered coal at Wellington. Later he undertook to construct the railway from Nanaimo to Victoria. The history surrounding that venture and enterprise is very well known, particularly to our guest speaker here this evening, the Honourable Mr. Chief Justice Gordon MacGregor Sloan.

The original agreement entered into for this project has been much in the public eye of recent years. As to whether that agreement was a provident one or not, the fact remains that it helped greatly to develop Vancouver Island, and Victoria in particular.

Probably one of the best-known Scots in the political history of Canada was Sir John A. MacDonald, born in Glasgow, of parents from Inverness, my own shire. Sir John A.'s vision and enterprise against much political and financial opposition was primarily responsible for the construction and penetration of the C. P. R. through the Western Provinces, which, after all, was the real turning point in the development of this section of Canada. Few realize that this intrepid Scot was for many years representative for the City of Victoria in the Dominion House of Commons.

I said we were fortunate to be able to call ourselves citizens of our adopted country

We are also fortunate to be able to enjoy the great natural resources which are ours.

Ladies and Gentlemen, With all these advantages, there should be no doubt in our mind about the future of this great Province--that we shall have our ups-and-downs no one will doubt, but I venture to say that nothing can hold back the development of this great country, as long as our people remain sound and sensible, and of that there need be no doubt at all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I ask you to rise and drink with me to the Country of Our Adoption.

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The following poem was recited by the late Principal Sir Donald MacAllister of Glasgow University some years ago at a dinner of the Glasgow Celtic Society and I believe composed by himself. It's a toast to the

LAND OF THE BEN AND GLEN

Here's to the Land of the Ben and Glen
The land of the valiant Highlandmen
The land of the clansmen staunch and strong
The land of the bards and ancient song
The land of the pibroch's thrilling strain
The land of the caronach's wild refrain
The land of kilts and tartan plaids
The land of braw lairs and bonnie maids
The land of leal hearts warm and true
The land of mists and mountain dew
The land of carries and lachs and linns
The land of the heather and bracken and whins
The land of the kindly gaelic tongue
The land of the Ceilidh when nights are long
The land of the peat fire's fragrant reek
The land of the moss and moorland bleak
The land of the hundred seagirt isles
The land of the sea swept cliffs and kyles
The land of Columbia's saintly toil
The land of Iona's sacred soil
The land of the glamour of legends old
The land where the Seannachie's tales are told
The land that breeds freemen to Britain's hosts
The land that breeds seamen to guard her coasts
The land that she counts on to fight her foes
The land she forgets when the danger goes
The land of the welcoming hand and hearth
To the Gael though he comes from the ends of the earth
The land of the North and the land of the West
The land of our fathers the land we love best.

Death Slainte cuir Faelte air Tir na Beann nan Gleann's
nan Gaisgeach Tog Cnach is cheann

(Copied from The Oban Times)

BURNS' POEM, LONG HIDDEN, APPEARS

It is seldom in these days that a hitherto unpublished poem of the great poet Burns comes to light. But Mrs. John Moffat, St. Andrew's, is the happy possessor of such. The poem below was copied by Mrs. Sanderson, well nigh 100 years ago.

The verses were prefaced with the following words: "Composed by Robert Burns and presented to the nobleman addressed upon being called up from the servants' hall (where he had been sent to dine with them), to add to the entertainment of the company, along with which company he had been asked to go on an excursion to Bass Rock. On presenting which he put on his hat, turned on his heel and retired."

The verses are as follows, a copy of the poem having been brought to Calgary by Mr. Robert Ure, barrister:

My lord, I would not fill your chair,
Tho' ye be proudest noble's heir.
I come this night to join your feast
An equal of the best at least!
'This true that cash with me is scant,
And titles trifles that I want,
The king has never made me kneel
To stamp my manhood with his seal.
But what of that? The King on high
Who took less pains with you than I
Has filled my bosom and my mind
With something better of its kind
Than your broad acres, something which
I cannot well translate to speech,
But by its impulse I can know
'This deeds, not birth, that makes men low.
Your rank, my lord, is but a loan!
But mine, thank heaven, is all my own!
A peasant, 'tis my pride to be;
Look round and round your hall and see
Who boasts of higher pedigree!
I was not fit, it seems to dine
With these fox hunting heroes fine,
But only came to bandy jests
Among your lordship's hopeful guests.
There must be here some sad mistake
I would not play for such a stake--
Be a buffoon for drink and meat,
And a poor earlie's tax paid seat!
No, die, my heart, ere such a shame
Descends on Robert Burns' name.

RCMAc DONALD
1941

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The Conservative Party is out to assist in obtaining for the man on the land a fair return for his labour. To secure the Home Market first, and assist in marketing of surplus farm products.

The Conservative Party, if elected, are definitely out to encourage industrial activity throughout the Province, and to give preference to the products of British Columbia's industries in all Government Departments; and to assist industry in order that it may expand and develop markets outside the Province; and also to encourage legitimate mining prospectors by eliminating present restrictions which hamper development of mineral prospects; and we are also out definitely to support a cost of living bonus to old age pensioners, and a reduction in the age for eligibility to sixty-five years.

The Conservative Party recognizes that upon the termination of the war, the most urgent problem will be the provision of employment for the men and women in our Armed Forces, and also the men and women now employed in work created by our war effort; and a definite programme will be planned to put these people back to gainful employment.

If there are members of society who should receive definite recognition after the war, it is the men and women who have not only sacrificed good jobs, but who are also prepared to sacrifice their very lives for their Country and for Democracy.

Now, insofar as my qualifications to represent you in the Legislature are concerned, if elected -

All I can offer you is twenty years' experience in Municipal Government, and over 24 years experience in business; and an assurance to continue to work hard and conscientiously in the interests of the people - not only for Dewdney, but also the people of the other Ridings of the Province of British Columbia.