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SIR ROBERT BORDEN

An Address over the Maritime Network of the C.B.C.
by
Professor Heath N. Macquarrie

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In the near future another statue of a Canadian statesman will be placed on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The likeness of Sir Robert Borden will join similar memorials to other great figures in our national history. It is unfortunate that the action could not have been taken a little sooner, so as to coincide with the centennial of his birth, which has now passed by almost two years. However, even if slightly delayed, it is a move which will command general satisfaction and remind Canadians of Borden's major contributions to the development of his country. He was our first war-time premier, and the only national leader to guide a nation through that fearful conflict from beginning to end. He was also the man who brought Canada into the international arena as a full-fledged nation in her own right.

Robert Laird Borden was born in 1854, in Grand Pre, in Nova Scotia's beautiful Annapolis Valley. The year of his birth is significant. 1854 was marked by two events to which Borden's own career was to add impressive footnotes. It was in that year that the great reciprocity agreement with the United States went into effect, and by an ironic twist of fate the same year gave birth to a child, who in his maturity would smash a second attempt to establish reciprocity with the Great Republic.

The year 1854 also marked the birth of a new political party. A skillful young politician, John A. Macdonald, was able to bring together a number of political groups in the province of Canada and formed the Liberal-Conservative party, which he later led from success to success. In 1911, and in 1917, Borden brought the same party to victory and in doing so he followed John A.'s earlier example in joining hands with important sections of the Liberal party.

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