

134084
Mr. Arthur Meighen

WHAT satisfaction it must have been to Mr. Arthur Meighen last night to hear a speech delivered by a Conservative Prime Minister! He is himself one of the four Canadians of this century who could so label themselves. Two of the others, Sir Robert Borden and Mr. R. B. Bennett, are dead. Now, at the age of 83 and at a dinner held in his honor, he had the pleasure — and what keen pleasure—to hear Mr. Diefenbaker in action. Mr. Meighen, in his day, sat in the House of Commons for Portage la Prairie in Manitoba. Mr. Diefenbaker sits for Prince Albert in Saskatchewan. The prairies gave them the foundation of their careers, but both men are natives of Ontario.

It was an excellent idea for the Toronto Canadian Club to arrange this event. Mr. Meighen, now long out of public life and little known to the younger generation of Canadians, is a man of the utmost distinction. His career contained great elements of disappointment. A cabinet minister at the age of 41, and twice for brief periods Prime Minister of his country, he went to the Senate in 1932. He retired from that body during the war and sought unsuccessfully a seat in the House of Commons. Defeated, his retirement became final.

This bald recital does far less than justice to a man who laid a permanent and beneficial mark upon his country's policies. Nor does it recall that he is recognized as the finest intellect ever to sit in the House of Commons, and as one of the tiny handful of its greatest orators. Only Sir Wilfrid Laurier, it may be said, was his equal and Sir Wilfrid, with greater warmth and charm, was not his match in those qualities of incisive, remorseless logic with which he developed and marshalled his arguments.

Mr. Meighen would have been great in any deliberative assembly the world has ever seen. The volume of his speeches which he published a few years back under the typically Meighenesque title "Unrevised and Unrepented" deserves to be read and re-read in every debating society in the land and by every man or woman who aspires to public office. His choice of language was, and remains, a delight to the ear.

It is in the nature of things that Mr. Meighen's career is drawing toward its close, yet his Toronto audience yesterday was sincere in wishing him many more happy returns, a tribute which Canadians everywhere will echo with all their hearts.

134085

THE TELEGRAM, Toronto,
9 Mon., Dec. 2, 1957

Churchill Hails Meighen —Both 83

Arthur Meighen, at 83, Canada's oldest living ex-prime minister, will receive a tribute from Sir Winston Churchill, also 83, and 450 eminent Canadian figures Tuesday evening.

The Canadian Club decided to combine its 60th anniversary celebration and a testimonial dinner to Mr. Meighen.

The club's president, Henry E. Langford, will read Sir Winston's message of "very warmest good wishes" to Mr. Meighen, which adds:

"I was very glad to hear that the Canadian Club is honoring this most distinguished Canadian statesman who, during his long career, has served so well his country, the Empire and the Commonwealth."

Among those present will be Prime Minister Diefenbaker, Hon. J. Keiller Mackay, Ontario Lieutenant Governor designate; Premier Leslie Frost, Metro Chairman F. G. Gardiner, former transport Minister Lionel Chevrier, Social Credit Leader Solon Low, and Maj-Gen. John A. Gunn, the club's only living charter member.

Letters of congratulation will be read from Opposition Leader St. Laurent, CCF Leader Coldwell, H. H. Stevens and E. L. Patenaude, Justice Minister in Mr. Meighen's 1926 cabinet.

Planning the dinner, J. M. Philp, secretary of the Canadian Club, has drawn attention to a hi-fi recording by Canada's elder statesman.

Mr. Meighen's speech on Shakespeare to the Canadian Club in 1936 was recorded and later reproduced with high fidelity equipment.

"It was magnificent," Mr. Philp said. "One could not tell whether it was Meighen or Shakespeare, for his oratory, his language were superb."

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