

applied and more effective when it is read into the conviction and thought of his neighbours—those who know him—and assumes the quality of conferment of an estimate of him. I feel that a man who is trying to live right and do right is helped in every way if he has the consciousness, whether written or unwritten, of being held in esteem by those who know him, and consequently of having a mark of appreciation placed upon him. In the same way, if a man serves the State and serves it well, I do not think the State is injured, and I do not think the man himself is injured if a recognition of his services is made by the bestowment of an honour upon him. Whilst we stand upon that ground, we all have to admit that it is possible that even kings may err in the bestowment of honours, but I hold that that does not militate against the general principle, and it is on the general principle that I am basing this argument. The exception is present everywhere, and is said generally to prove the rule; in this case I think it does. I also have some little objection to this Bill being passed at this time because I have some very worthy friends on the other side of the House, who, I know, may very well aspire to have the eye of the bestower of these gifts pass benignly and rest for a time upon themselves. I should not be so ungenerous as to vote that in the opinion of this Parliament these honours should not be bestowed; it would not be quite fair to these deserving friends of mine on the other side. For myself and for hon. gentlemen on this side, we are so democratic that we have no aspirations in that line and therefore we could afford to let the Bill go. While I have in part treated this subject lightly, I do not wish to have it understood that I do not feel perfectly convinced in my own mind that it is not a radical evil that the eye of those in the highest position may be directed towards the subjects of the King; and where there are deeds that are for the benefit of the country, that are patriotic and that are performed in that public way that they may be recognized, I do not think it is a bad thing to have in a country some means of giving recognition; and, democrat as I am, I yet feel that a tempered democracy in this respect might not be a bad thing to perpetuate in this country and in this empire of ours.

With reference to public service I do

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not think that I will strike much of a note of opposition when I say that a great deal of the best public work and public service in our empire is not paid for, is not the subject of emolument and of reward as we count the rewards either of position or in a financial way. I go further, and say that public service which is done without the hope of rewards and emolument in that way, is probably the cleanest and purest and most efficient that we have in the empire; and I do not think it takes away from either the merit of what has been done or from the recognition of it, to have the sense present that after all there is one high superior power which when there comes up a striking case of public service can mark it, label it by the bestowal of the honour, and hold up to the people of the whole empire the deed that was done, for that is what the honour is supposed to do. If one could say that the bestowal of honour had been done unworthily, upon unworthy persons, none of us, of course, would for a moment give such a practice our approval. But the principle itself, I hold, is not wrong in our empire. It has in the past resulted in great good and will, I believe, in the future result in great good. In that regard I am sorry to say to my hon. friend that I am not yet convinced that I should support his Bill.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I also am sorry to have to say to my hon. friend from Peterborough (Mr. Burnham) that I cannot support his Bill, and I do it with all the more regret because he has been very kind to me in his remarks in presenting it to the House. I am all the more sorry because, in a large measure, I am very much disposed to agree with him in principle. I do not think that the intention which he had in mind when drafting his Bill is well expressed in the manner in which the Bill has been brought forward. If we are ever to take the position in this House that we should have no more titles in Canada, the question should not be approached in the way of a Bill but by a recommendation or address to His Majesty the King, because the King alone does bestow honour. And, if we were to object to the exercise of the prerogative in this respect I do not think it would be respectful to do it in the form of an Act of Parliament. My hon. friend says that the titles we have at the present time are not at all in consonance with our democratic spirit.