

The Address—Mr. Zaplitny

battalion of the United States army at Chateau Thierry. The battalion that was lost was under the command of an officer known in those days as "Go-to-Hell" Whittlesy—"Go-to-Hell" was the reply he gave to the enemy who asked for his surrender. It was my brother who led them to safety.

While my brother was recovering from this double mastoid he learned a great lesson by looking through the window and watching a blind man go to his daily task. He wrote this poem entitled "The Virtue of Blindness", and I quote:

When in the morning I awake, to entertain the day,
My head, perchance, and bones do ache, and all the
world seems gray.
Then of my daily tasks I fret, and little things
annoy.
I feel the old world owes a debt, for stealing all
my joy.
I am uncivil to my friends, their pleasant greet-
ings scorning;
To justify my selfish ends, I blame it on the
morning.
As just about to leave my room, and cheerless
hearts behind
I spy, despite the gathered gloom, a man goes by,
"he's blind".
Still to his work he trips along, a smile o'erspreads
his face,
He sings a low and merry song, as with uncertain
pace
He feels his way thro' the busy street, with
uncomplaining mind,
While I, with eyes to guide my feet, see less than
he who's blind.
He sees the light that shines within, the soul's
illumination.
He sees the folly of the sin, to curse one's hapless
station.
What tho' his feet in darkness grope, with cheerful
heart and mind
He travels on in trusting hope, an optimist tho'
blind.

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Oh sore affliction, by whose hand the light that in
those eyes
Was darkened by your stern command, pray tell
me wherein lies
The faith to see in life's dark road, while groping
there to find
The strength to bear the heavier load, that's borne
by one who's blind.

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But wanderer tho' your lot is sad, and tho' your
feet are tiring
Perhaps 'twill make your heart more glad, to know
you are inspiring
Those thankless men, who seeing fail, in life's long
walk, to find
The unseen rays that light the vale, for men whom
we call blind.

Mr. F. S. Zaplitny (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, in my opinion this debate is perhaps the most important of any in which we will be taking part this session, because this is the first opportunity which private members have of bringing to the attention of the house and the government any matters which are in danger of being overlooked or neglected—and

[Mr. MacDougall.]

there appears to be a good field in that direction. It is an opportunity to rise and protest, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) did so vehemently this afternoon, about any action which is taken by the government and which we may feel is not in the public interest.

I would like the indulgence of the house for a brief period to raise a matter which has to do primarily but not exclusively with the constituency I represent. May I hasten to say that it affects a portion of the constituency of Churchill as well as a portion of the constituency of Portage-Neepawa.

The area which I have the honour to represent is normally one of the best farming areas in Manitoba, and I say that not in any boastful vein because the statistics bear me out. Unfortunately this year we had very unusual rainfalls and it is estimated that in the months of May and June we had fifteen inches of precipitation in that area. You can easily imagine what the conditions would be under those circumstances. As a result a great number of acres of our best land were not put to crop at all and a great part of what was seeded produced practically nothing. Consequently, there is real hardship in my constituency, in portions of the other constituencies I mentioned, and as well to a lesser extent in many other parts of the province.

I recall that two or three years ago there was a disaster in the southern part of my province. The parliament of that time dealt with the situation rather generously. We were, of course, very happy to see that happen; but I want to assure the house also that in the Dauphin area we have always responded to every call for assistance whether it was from Manitoba, Great Britain or the continent of Europe. Wherever disaster has struck the people of Dauphin and district have always responded very generously.

On this occasion I am putting this matter before parliament because we are attempting to obtain some assistance of an emergency nature. It appears that it will be up to this parliament to decide in what form that assistance shall be. I am particularly glad that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) is in his seat tonight, because what I have to say has largely to do with his department. He is not altogether unaware of the problem, but I feel that it is a duty and a privilege of the member presenting a problem to lay it before the whole house.

I do not wish to merely cite opinions, but I would like to quote from two briefs presented to the government of the province of Manitoba in this connection. One brief was from a delegation representing about