

able the senior senator from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Haig), my very warm regards and my congratulations upon the manner in which he performed his duties as Government Leader in this house and indeed as a member of the cabinet during the Twenty-Third Parliament.

Among other attachments to Senator Haig—as he often reminds me, he was a desk-mate of my father in the Manitoba Legislature 44 years ago. Mr. Haig, as you know, continued to be re-elected to that body, despite the great adversity which occurred to our party in Manitoba in that early era, while my father, no doubt to his personal advantage, failed to be returned to that house in the next election.

With reference to politics in Manitoba, I hope that in this non-partisan body I may be excused if I refer to the fact that on June 16 the electors of that province will have an opportunity of electing a new Government; and without attempting to indulge in prophecy I just wish to say that some of my, no doubt, prejudiced Manitoba friends tell me that the adversity of that former era that I referred to may perhaps be redressed at that time.

To you, sir, the honourable senator from Rosetown (Hon. Mr. Aseltine), may I offer my sincere congratulations upon your selection as Government Leader in this house? This honour is indeed a fitting tribute to your ability and devotion to duty as well as to your long tenure of office in this house. We from the Prairie Provinces—and indeed, we from the West—rejoice, as Westerners, in the successes and achievements of our colleagues from that part of Canada, and I am sure that honourable senators will excuse me if I reiterate that I naturally take pride in the fact that the Leader of the Government in the other place and the Leader of the Government in the Senate both come from the West. And of course I also take pride in the fact that both of them are residents of Saskatchewan, for I myself was a resident of that province for a period of seven years and I graduated from the provincial university there, as did the Prime Minister.

In this passing reference to western Canada, and especially to the Prairie provinces, may I add that there have been times—indeed, within living memory—when we have been deemed a poor relation. I want now to place myself squarely on record as saying that we westerners are a poor relation no more. It is true that up to about a decade ago our wealth emanated largely from the

surface of the ground. Now, however, as is so well known, untold riches in both oil and other mineral wealth lie buried under the surface of this vast area of our country.

Now, honourable senators, I would like to touch upon a facet of the Canadian scene to which some—at least local—prominence has been given in some newspapers. That is to the effect that I am the first person of Icelandic origin to be appointed to the Senate of Canada. That is, of course, true. Consequently, I thought it might not be inappropriate if on this occasion I made a few brief remarks in regard to Icelandic immigration to Canada, and something about what we hope is deemed by others to be a useful contribution to the building of our nation.

Immigration from European countries, other than the United Kingdom and France, did not really commence to any considerable extent until the early 1870's. The first of the immigrant groups to come in considerable numbers were the Mennonites, who arrived in 1874. These people were originally German and Dutch, but came from Russia. Honourable senators will remember that they had migrated from Holland and Germany about 100 years previously under offers from the Russian Government, or the Emperor, of that time, that they would not be subject to military duty. In the early 1870's Catherine the Great, I think, withdrew that promise, and as a result they migrated to the Western world. A fairly large group of these people settled in colonies on the lush Red River Valley soil south of Winnipeg. The integration of the Mennonites into the Canadian way of life was, for reasons that must be clear to you all, slow. But now these people, in the third and fourth generation here, are making rapid progress both in adopting the Canadian way of life and in becoming well-to-do from an economic point of view. The Mennonites are splendid agriculturists and are now indeed making southern Manitoba into a veritable garden. They have even progressed so far that their community is represented in the present House of Commons by an elected member sitting to the right of Mr. Speaker. The Icelanders were a little more rapid in their political advancement, having first elected a representative to the Legislature of Manitoba on the side of Mr. Speaker that I have just referred to, exactly 50 years ago, in 1908. My father was the second person elected to that special side of the house, namely, in the year 1914.

It is of some interest that Lord Dufferin, who became Governor General of Canada in