

FARM FORUMS

TELLS OF OVERSEAS TRIP AT FORUM FALL RALLY

Mrs. M. J. Brown
The highlight of the fall rally of Halton farm forums was an account by Mrs. Edith Storr of her

trip overseas last summer. She was one of four Canadians who were privileged to attend a conference in the Netherlands where representatives of eleven countries participated.
Mrs. Storr spoke at Snider's School on November 20th where all

Halton farm forums were represented. She showed some beautiful pictures of places in Holland, Paris and England and told something of the activities of delegates while at the conference.

The evening also included a sing song conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Vernon McArthur and Mrs. Roy Coulter. A short panel discussion chaired by Miss Eleanor Saracuse, dealt with some forum problems. There was a varied program of music and readings by the different forums.

Stanley Turner expressed thanks to those who had helped with the program and a social time was enjoyed during the lunch hour.

Be sure to enter into the House Decorating Contest, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and help make Georgetown beautiful for Christmas.

OTTAWA REPORT

Dominion-Provincial Conference Important In National Picture



by Sandy Best
Halton's Member at Ottawa

Perhaps nothing that the new Government has done since it took office, quite equals the importance or potential of the Dominion Provincial Conference that took place this week. Its effects will be far-reaching, and certainly will influence our own problems here in Halton.

The premiers of the ten provinces and their advisors met Prime Minister Diefenbaker in the great stone railway committee room, in the centre of Parliament Hill. I was fortunately able to hear much of the discussion between my own committee meetings and the normal sittings of the House of Commons. John Diefenbaker, standing beneath a huge map of Canada, and a large greying picture of the Fathers of Confederation, welcomed the provincial leaders, and set the atmosphere for the meeting. The Prime Minister's tact and ability as chairman were soon evident and at the end of this Monday and Tuesday meeting the provincial

Premiers remarked on the smoothness and amiability which was the characteristic of the gathering. There is no doubt that it has been the most successful conference to date, and while somewhat preliminary in nature, it was indeed a most necessary step towards a re-assessment of financial matters between the Dominion Government and the ten provinces.

This is a problem we had pressed for long before the election, and one which it seems evident, is now about to come to pass. Possibly once again the true meaning of Confederation in this country, a spirit of unity and cooperation will replace some of the conditions which existed before.

The Hon. Leslie M. Frost, premier of Ontario, began the presentation of the provincial briefs. Speaking for his province, he outlined the tremendous growth which we all know so well. Last year almost half of Canada's total population increase took place in Ontario, nearly a quarter of a million additional people. The tremendous burden of added education costs, hospital services, roads and other problems are felt in Ontario perhaps more than in any other province, and due largely to this tremendous population increase. Speaking smoothly and in his own mellifluous style, the premier argued that the provinces need, and are entitled to a considerably larger share of direct taxation. At present they are allowed 10 per cent of personal income tax and 9 per cent of corporation profits. The premier urged from a position, not of desperation or depression into which many federal Liberal politicians appear to be trying to talk us, but from a position rather of optimism and potential strength. The opportunity of funds must come to serve as tools to exploit it. We have seen all these things in our own country of Halton and the arguments might well have been directed for the needs and benefits of our own municipalities.

Premier Maurice Duplessis, Quebec rose next. "Morris the Magnificent" he is sometimes called, and with some truth, for his cultivated and debonair air, at ease in French and English, produced much humour and considerable attention. Speaking for the provincial rights of Quebec, although not giving particular figures, Duplessis reiterated much of his argument from the previous conference in 1955. He said it must not be a return but a restitution to the provinces of their original rights and privileges. Quebec as always taken a particularly strong stand on provincial rights, and its chief exponent had many cases of evidence to provide. Wearing a fine white carnation as were the other premiers, Mr. Duplessis argued that Mackenzie King's journey into the succession duty field, supposedly to check on whether a man had paid his income tax during his life, was an unfortunate and complete negation of British justice. A man obviously cannot defend himself when dead.

The Honourable Robert Stanfield, the tall and spare Premier of Nova Scotia, speaking for the first time at such a conference, told of the plight of the Atlantic Provinces, with slow population growth and great distances to markets, their economic situation has been most perilous. One figure that came to my attention was the fact that the average income in Nova Scotia was about \$1,000. Off hand it seems to me the latest figures for our own county are in the neighborhood of \$4,000, and perhaps this is some measure of the plight of the Maritimes. The Beechwood project, however, recently announced by Prime Minister Diefenbaker, was a wonderful step in the right direction, and with new power sources the Maritimes would be able to achieve much progress.

On Tuesday morning I had heard the fortunate Mr. Manning of Alberta describing his own particular provincial problems. Alberta with its wealth of gas and oil has fared much better than some provinces and it remained for Joey Smallwood of Newfoundland, with bow tie and bouncing energy, to tell the real tale of woe and desolation. Speaking extemporaneously and with great vigor, he described his advocacy of Confederation and the tale of how nine years ago we gained our tenth province. Newfoundland, he said, had been the oldest, the most loyal and closest colony to Great Britain. Their funds for education and services were tremendously low, and he placed the economy of this, our newest addition, at some 25 years behind that of the three Maritime Provinces. At present, for instance, there are just 120 miles of paved roads in the whole of Newfoundland. Indeed, this was a eloquent plea for his province.

As I mentioned before, this was a great occasion. The premiers will meet again in Ottawa some time early in the new year, and much of the particular bargaining and special outlines will then be worked out. In the meantime Prime Minister Diefenbaker has announced a number of measures designed to improve conditions across the country. Additional federal aid for the unemployed appears to be definite and there is also an indication of further money available for housing. Hospital insurance appears closer, and some of the restricting provisions will probably be relaxed.

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