

Chapter 1 : General Geography In Diagrams by R.B. Bunnett

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He was the eldest of six children, and grew up nearby at the Bay of Fundy home of his father, Henry John Bennett, in Hopewell Cape, the shire town of Albert County, then a town of 1, people. His father descended from English ancestors who had emigrated to Connecticut in the 17th century. His early days inculcated a lifelong habit of thrift. The driving force in his family was his mother. She was a Wesleyan Methodist and passed this faith and the Protestant ethic on to her son. He operated a general store for a while and tried to develop some gypsum deposits. The Bennetts had previously been a relatively prosperous family, operating a shipyard in Hopewell Cape, but the change to steam-powered vessels in the mid-19th century meant the gradual winding down of their business. However, the household was a literate one, subscribing to three newspapers. They were strong Conservatives; indeed one of the largest and last ships launched by the Bennett shipyard in was the Sir John A. Educated in the local school, Bennett was a very good student, but something of a loner. In addition to his Protestant faith, Bennett grew up with an abiding love of the British Empire, then at its apogee. A small legacy his mother received opened the doors for him to attend the Normal school in Fredericton, where he trained to be a teacher; he then taught for several years at Irishtown, north of Moncton, saving his money for law school. This was the beginning of an improbable but important friendship with Max Aitken, later the industrialist and British press baron, Lord Beaverbrook. This friendship would become important to his success later in life, as would his friendship with the Chatham lawyer, Lemuel J. Tweedie, a prominent Conservative politician. He began to study law with Tweedie on weekends and during summer holidays. Another important friendship was with the prominent Shirreff family of Chatham, the father being High Sheriff of Northumberland County for 25 years. The son, Harry, joined the E. Eddy Company, a large pulp and paper industrial concern, and was transferred to Halifax. His sister moved there to study nursing, and soon Bennett joined them to study law at Dalhousie University. Their friendship was renewed there, and became crucial to his later life when Jennie Shirreff married the head of the Eddy Company. She later made Bennett the lawyer for her extensive interests. University, early legal career[edit] Bennett started at Dalhousie University in , graduating in with a law degree and very high standing. He worked his way through with a job as assistant in the library, being recommended by the Dean, Dr. Richard Chapman Weldon, MP, and participated in debating and moot court activities. Max Aitken later to become Lord Beaverbrook was his office boy, while articling as a lawyer, acting as a stringer for the Montreal Gazette, and selling life insurance. Aitken persuaded him to run for alderman in the first Town Council of Chatham, and managed his campaign. He was ambitious and saw that the small community was too narrow a field for him. Patrick Burns and R. Bennett at the Calgary Stampede in Bennett moved to Calgary in A lifelong bachelor and teetotaler although Bennett was known by select associates to occasionally drink alcohol when the press was not around to observe this [4], he led a rather lonely life in a hotel and later, in a boarding house. For a while a younger brother roomed with him. He ate his noon meal on workdays at the Alberta Hotel. Social life, such as it was, centred on church. There was, however, no scandal attached to his personal life. Bennett worked hard and gradually built up his legal practice. In he was one of five people appointed to the first Library Board for the city of Calgary and was instrumental in establishing the Calgary Public Library. During his leadership projects completed included the first storage reservoir at Lake Minnewanka, a second transmission line to Calgary and the construction of the Kananaskis Falls hydro station. Laurent, another future Prime Minister. Early political career[edit] Young R. Bennett He was elected to the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories in the general election, representing the riding of West Calgary. He was re-elected to a second term in office in as an Independent in the North-West Territories legislature. In , when Alberta was carved out of the Territories and made a province, Bennett became the first leader of the Alberta Conservative Party. In , he won a seat in the provincial legislature, before resigning and switching to federal politics. He was elected to the House of Commons of Canada in At age 44, he tried to enlist in the Canadian military once World War I broke out, but was turned down as being medically unfit. In , Bennett was appointed director general of the National service

Board, which was in charge of identifying the number of potential recruits in the country. While he campaigned for Conservative candidates in the federal election he did not stand for re-election himself. The government was defeated in the federal election. As Opposition leader, Bennett faced off against the more experienced Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King in Commons debates, and took some time to acquire enough experience to hold his own with King. In , King blundered badly when he made overly partisan statements in response to criticism over his handling of the economic downturn, which was hitting Canada very hard. Electoral history of R. Bennett As the leader of the Conservative party, Bennett adapted its program, organization image to promote more rapid modernization of Canada. The "New Deal" was largely a mirror of the American program. The party was torn between reaction and reform, with deep internal factionalism that led to its defeat in Bennett tried to combat the depression by increasing trade within the British Empire and imposing tariffs for imports from outside the Empire, promising that his measures would "blast" Canadian exports into world markets. His success was limited however, and his own wealth often openly displayed and impersonal style alienated many struggling Canadians. At the time, the federal government was required, under a Statute of British Parliament, to re-adjust representation to Alberta and Saskatchewan based on the census. The re-adjustment made to the four western provinces at the time can only be correlated if only those having British and French origins are considered. Despite the economic crisis, " laissez-faire " persisted as the guiding economic principle of Conservative Party ideology; similar attitudes dominated worldwide as well during this era. Government relief to the unemployed was considered a disincentive to individual initiative, and was therefore only granted in the most minimal amounts and attached to work programs. An additional concern of the federal government was that large numbers of disaffected unemployed men concentrating in urban centres created a volatile situation. As an "alternative to bloodshed on the streets", the stop-gap solution for unemployment chosen by the Bennett government was to establish military-run and -styled relief camps in remote areas throughout the country, where single unemployed men toiled for twenty cents a day. Bennett hosted the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa ; this was the first time Canada had hosted the meetings. It was attended by the leaders of the independent dominions of the British Empire which later became the Commonwealth of Nations. Bennett dominated the meetings, which were ultimately unproductive, due to the inability of leaders to agree on policies, mainly to combat the economic woes dominating the world at the time. What do they offer you in exchange for the present order? They are sowing the seeds of unrest everywhere. Right in this city such propaganda is being carried on and in the little out of the way places as well. And we know that throughout Canada this propaganda is being put forward by organizations from foreign lands that seek to destroy our institutions. And we ask that every man and woman put the iron heel of ruthlessness against a thing of that kind. Even if the accused had never committed an act of violence or personally supported such an action, they could be incarcerated merely for attending meetings of such an organization, publicly speaking in its defense, or distributing its literature. Eight of the top party leaders, including Tim Buck , were arrested on 11 August and convicted under section This plan to stamp out communism backfired, however, and proved to be a damaging embarrassment for the government, especially after Buck was the target of an apparent assassination attempt. While confined to his cell during a prison riot , despite not participating in the riot, shots were fired into his cell. When an agit-prop play depicting these events, *Eight Men Speak* , was suppressed on 4 December by the Toronto police, a protest meeting was held where Communist politician A. This created a storm of public protest, compounded when Buck was called as a witness to the trial and repeated the allegations in open court. Camp workers laboured on a variety of infrastructure projects, including such things as municipal airports, roads, and park facilities, along with a number of other make-work schemes. Conditions in the camps were poor, not only because of the low pay, but also the lack of recreational facilities, isolation from family and friends, poor quality food, and the use of military discipline. Communists thus had ample grounds on which to organize camp workers, although the workers were there of their own volition. The Prime Minister and his Minister of Justice, Hugh Guthrie , treated the trek as an attempted insurrection, and ordered it to be stopped. In January , Bennett told the provinces that they were "wasteful and extravagant", and even told Quebec and Ontario that they were wealthy enough to manage their own problems. In a series of five radio speeches to the nation in January , Bennett

introduced a Canadian version of the "New Deal", involving unprecedented public spending and federal intervention in the economy. Progressive income taxation , a minimum wage , a maximum number of working hours per week, unemployment insurance , health insurance , an expanded pension programme, and grants to farmers were all included in the plan. The old order is gone. We are living in conditions that are new and strange to us. Canada on the dole is like a young and vigorous man in the poorhouse If you believe that things should be left as they are, you and I hold contrary and irreconcilable views. I am for reform. And in my mind, reform means government intervention. It means government control and regulation. It means the end of laissez-faire. Stevens , who bolted the government to form the Reconstruction Party of Canada. Some of the measures were alleged to have encroached on provincial jurisdictions laid out in section 92 of the British North America Act. Bennett personally became a symbol of the political failings underscoring the depression. Car owners, for example, who could no longer afford gasoline, had horses pull their vehicles, which they named " Bennett buggies ". Unity in his own administration suffered, notably by the defection of his Minister of Trade, Henry Herbert Stevens. The Tories would not form a majority government again in Canada until

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