

# A Milestone in Every Life

By: Alexia Lee



Senator Patrick Burns

“I think it’s a code of conduct issue”

I am going to tell you the truth. I used to have no idea who Senator Patrick Burns was, even though my school is named after him. By his title, I knew he was a politician. I thought he was from a wealthy family and he had had a high education. I was wrong. Senator Patrick Burns was not only a politician; he was also a businessman, a leader, a self-made man and a philanthropist. However, he is most remembered in Canada for all his kind actions. He made a milestone of compassion and sharing.

Patrick Burns was born on July 6, 1856 to humble and modest farming parents, one of the eleven children. Unlike what I had thought, he had only received three days of education in his whole life. When he was twenty-two, he headed out west along with his brothers, John and Dominic. Mr. Burns eventually stopped in Minnedosa, Manitoba, where he started homesteading. Mr. Burns continued to homestead, until after the Lois Riel uprising. From there, he gradually became involved in buying cattle and selling meat and by 1885, Mr. Burns was buying and selling his own cattle.

In 1890, Mr. Burns moved to Calgary, Alberta where he built his first slaughter house. Eight years later, he also built a packing house. This was soon followed by packing houses in Vancouver, Edmonton, Prince Albert and Regina. He then acquired large pieces of land. His company, P. Burns & Co., became one of the largest meatpacking businesses in Canada. After World War I, Mr. Burns sold P. Burns & Co to Dominion Securities. He then started focusing on his true ambition - cattle ranching.

Along with George Lane, Archibald Mclean and Alfred Ernest Cross, Mr. Burns created the Stampede in 1912. In 1931, Mr. Burns was chosen Senator for Northern Alberta by R.B.Bennett, who was his friend. He was in the Independent section until he resigned due to health problems in 1936. Senator Burns died on February 24, 1937 in Calgary, Alberta.

Senator Burns changed everything in Alberta. He took part in leaving Calgary a great everlasting event, the Calgary Stampede. Even now, thousands of people line up to watch the spectacular events

that happen in the Stampede every year. Cowboys and cowgirls race to the Stampede to gain the publicity by participating in the “Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth”. This has also left a huge economic impact on Calgary. Its tourist business has boomed. People also say that Mr. Burns contributed a lot to the meat-packing industry by using the by-products. Traditionally, by-products were thrown away and wasted, but Mr. Burns used every single extra thing. This has inspired many meat-packing companies to do the same. Mr. Burns was also said to revolutionize cattle ranching. How? Well, just one example is that he purchased large amounts of pure breed cattle to help other ranchers improve the bloodline of their own cattle.

However, what impressed me the most was what he showed Alberta about compassion. Back in earlier times, there was less focus on “giving back” or “philanthropy,” as much of this was connected to people’s religion. Senator Burns showed everyone that they should take care of others. Senator Burns was never motivated by greed. He was very generous to several charities and to the needy. One example of his kindness was when the Frank Slide hit in 1903. He was one of the first to send aid there. The same thing happened when a huge fire devoured Fernie, British Columbia. An anecdote that has touched my heart was when he was asked to donate to paint the local Catholic Church and he said yes. Then, when he saw the local Anglican Church, which looked shabby next to the newly painted Catholic Church, Senator Burns decided to donate money to the Anglican Church, so that their building could also be repainted.

Now, this is the truth. Senator Patrick Burns is a role model and a great example. He took part in the community actively through his hard work and sharing. Senator Burns has shown me the importance of being kind, and I am willing to try harder to consider everyone in my life beyond those most immediate to me. However, the most inspiring thing I learned from him was, you should never give up on your dreams. Even if you are in an underprivileged life like he was, keep working hard, but never

stop at satisfactory. Go for the very best and most importantly, share along the path. Anybody can make a difference in this world. It doesn't matter where you come from, or how much education you have received. We can all have a milestone of philanthropy as our legacy.