

Work, Earn, Give

R.B. Bennett

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Word Count: 647

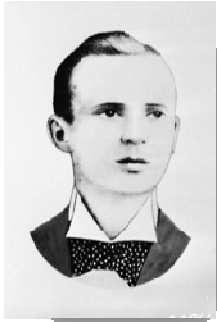


Figure #1

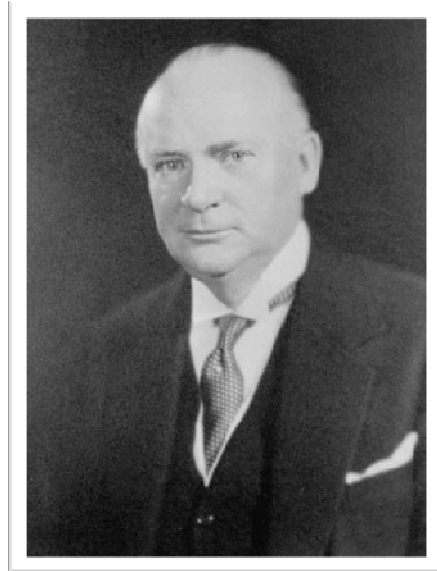


Figure #2

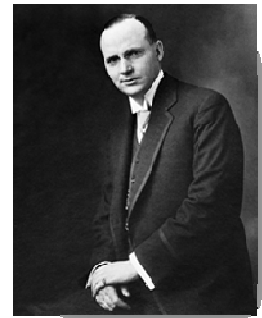


Figure #3

Work, Earn, Give

“Work as hard as you can, earn all you can, and then give all you can” was the motto by which R.B. Bennett, the eleventh Prime Minister of Canada, lived his life. At first glance, R.B. Bennett appeared to be a cold, ambitious man, disconnected from the harsh realities of the average Canadian during the worst years of the Great Depression. His term as Prime Minister is often characterized as a symbol of political failures during turbulent times. But after careful consideration, a different image emerges. R.B. Bennett had a strong personality, was decisive, and dedicated to creating a better society for Canadians. While Prime Minister, and during his life, he made many important contributions, leaving behind an amazing legacy.

Richard Bedford Bennett was born on July 3rd, 1870 in Hopewell Hill, New Brunswick. He was the eldest of six children and grew up in a struggling family of English descent. Despite their financial challenges, Bennett’s family placed an importance on education and literacy, subscribing to three newspapers and educating their eldest son at the local school. He had a strict religious upbringing that shaped his personality. He worked hard as a teacher and school principal until he saved up enough money to attend Dalhousie University where he graduated with a law degree in 1893. Through hard work and the establishment of some important business relationships, he became a self-made millionaire at a young age.

Bennett’s political career began in 1896 when he ran for Alderman in Chatham, New Brunswick. When he moved to Calgary in 1897, he continued his involvement in politics, and eventually became the first leader of the Alberta provincial Conservative Party in 1905. He was then elected to the Canadian House of Commons for Calgary in 1911, and became the leader of the federal Conservative Party in 1927. Three years later he would become Prime Minister of Canada.

R.B. Bennett's actions were important in shaping present day life in Calgary and Southern Alberta in several ways. Bennett helped to establish the Calgary Public Library, and was appointed to the first Library Board in 1908. He also became the director and later the president of Calgary Power Ltd. (now Trans Alta Corporation). Bennett Jones, the law firm he worked hard to establish, maintains a prominent role in business circles to this day. Bennett also shaped Canada as a country in many ways. He passed the Relief Act of 1932, he created the Canadian Broadcasting Commission, and in 1935 he established the Bank of Canada, as well as the Canadian Wheat Board. He signed the Statute of Westminster, which gave the Canadian Parliament complete independence when making decisions. Bennett also introduced progressive legislation in regards to a minimum wage, maximum work hours per day, restrictions of monopolies, and grants to farmers.

Bennett was a successful businessman, but he was also very generous, giving \$25,000 to charity annually. He was often criticized for a "lack of compassion", yet he read and responded to letters from ordinary citizens asking for his help. He often sent money to alleviate the suffering many families endured during the Great Depression.

R.B. Bennett lived by the motto "work, earn, and give". His life accomplishments have encouraged me to take action and be the best that I can be. First I will choose a career that will support me financially. I will make sure I have the education necessary to work as an expert in my chosen profession. Once my career is established, I can give back to my community. I can also support my community by continuing to volunteer at local soup kitchens, and by mentoring students interested in careers in my profession. I can help to create programs that educate students in my area of expertise. "Work, earn and give" are guideposts on which I plan to base parts of my life and future career.

Work, Earn, Give

R. B. Bennett

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Images

Figure #1

- ❖ "Chatham, New Brunswick." *Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2014.

Figure #2

- ❖ "Richard Bedford Bennett." *Richard Bedford Bennett Wikipedia*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2014.

Figure #3

- ❖ "Avenue Calgary Blogs | Avenue Magazine." *Avenue Calgary Blogs | Avenue Magazine*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Mar. 2014.