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Christmas Luncheon

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Full Text

DECEMBER 12,1973

Christmas Luncheon

GUEST OF HONOUR The Honourable W. Ross Macdonald, P.C., C.D., Q.C., L.L.D., LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO

CHAIRMAN The President Robert L. Armstrong

MR. ARMSTRONG:

Your Honour, ladies and gentlemen: Welcome, on this happy occasion, to the traditional Christmas luncheon of The Empire Club of Canada. On behalf of all of our members and guests I extend an especially warm welcome to our Honorary Vice-President, His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, our province's loyal and beloved representative of Her Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and to his daughter, Mrs. Douglas Haldenby.

Christmas is the season with which we associate peace, love and abounding joy. We in Canada can be ever so thankful that conditions are such as to permit the fulfilment of the true spirit of Christmas and in this spirit we should not be oblivious to the needs of others throughout the world who are less fortunate than we.

Today we are enjoying a physical fulfillment in this cheerful and friendly atmosphere, with the colourful March of the Flaming Pudding led by Pipe Major Ross Stuart, and we shall shortly be given a special treat, the singing of Christmas carols by the Gentlemen and Boys of St. Simon's Church. I am sure we shall be invited to join with the choir in singing one or more of the well-known carols.

It is now my privilege to call upon the Honourable W. Ross Macdonald, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Ontario, to bring greetings on behalf of her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth.

Your Honour.

His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, addressed the meeting, bringing a warm message as the Queen's representative in Ontario. Mr. Joseph H. Potts then presented a bouquet of roses to Mrs. Haldenby, a daughter of His Honour. MR. ARMSTRONG:

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall now introduce the other guests seated at the head table. (Introduction in the usual manner.) There is one head table guest whom I single out for particular attention. He is our immediate Past President, Joseph H. Potts, C.D., one of Her Majesty's Counsel, learned in the law. It was my privilege to serve as an apprentice during the 1972-73 Club year under the able tutelage of Joe Potts. His was a vintage year and The Empire Club of Canada continued to prosper under his leadership as President.

Our Club has historically been known for its somewhat conservative philosophy, but last year the new look was much more liberal. Our mod President was responsible for the admittance of ladies to membership in this hitherto bastion of male chauvinism.

Today we honour you, Joseph Potts, with an illuminated scroll of office which bears the signature of our Honorary President, His Excellency the Governor General. It records your period of service and is presented on behalf of the Board of Directors and all members of The Empire Club of Canada.

We recognize Mrs. Potts who has provided her husband with inspiration and love. We present you, Mrs. Potts, with this token of our affection and appreciation. (Presentation of bouquet of roses to Mrs. Potts.)

Mr. Potts made a suitable reply.

MR. ARMSTRONG:

I should like at this time to express the thanks of the Club to some very special ladies who contribute so much to its successful operation, and I refer particularly to Mrs. Eleanor Cook, our Executive Secretary, who besides putting up with me this long, has had to organize and endure the move to our new office premises in this hotel. Thank you, Mrs. Cook, and your assistant, Mrs. Everard. I shall not embarrass personal secretaries of our officers and Directors, by naming them, but we thank them for their wonderful help. Appropriately in relation to our Christmas Luncheon, two are named Mary and Carol.

Today's delightful affair was organized by our Director, George Stafford, and his capable committee. Our thanks to all of them for their contribution to the success of this occasion.

We now move to the main part of our program for which we have all been anxiously waiting. We are most fortunate to have with us today the Gentlemen and Boys of St. Simon's Church under the leadership of Organist and Choirmaster, Mr. Edgar Hanson. You will be interested to know that on December 21, 1921, the Boys Choir of St. Simon's first provided music at a Christmas party of The Empire Club.

The Gentlemen and Boys of St. Simon's have performed on many important occasions in the past. I quote from the jacket of their beautiful recording, The Gracious Time: "Today's Gentlemen and Boys of St. Simon's follow a tradition of excellence in choral music that began 80 years ago. Since 1966 under Edgar Hanson, Organist and Choirmaster, the choir has been greatly in demand for recitals and public performances in addition to its regular duties of singing services. During a tour of English Cathedrals in 1971 the choir sang Evensong in Westminster Abbey on Dominion Day. Notable performances in 1973 have included participation in a programme in tribute to Ralph Vaughan Williams, the Guelph Spring Festival and the Stratford Festival."

The record, The Gracious Time, can be ordered at a table outside the entrance to this dining room, and also from Sam the Record Man and the Anglican Book Centre. I am now pleased to turn the microphone over to Mr. Edgar Hanson.

The Gentlemen and Boys of St. Simon's.

MR. ARMSTRONG:

Mr. Hanson, the applause which you and your choir have just received conveys more eloquently than any words I can express, just how much we appreciate your and their contribution to our enjoyment of this Christmas luncheon. You have our sincere thanks and best wishes for a truly happy Christmas.

And now as we count our many blessings, will the audience please rise and join in the singing of our National Anthem, following which it will be appreciated if you will remain standing during the departure of the Vice-Regal party.

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