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Stirling, Brotc (1934 - 1937)

35 22

T. G. NORRIS PAPERS
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ORIGINAL ORDER

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

MacNeill, Norris & Pratt
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F. D. PRATT

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VANCOUVER, CANADA
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BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA BUILDING
602 HASTINGS ST., WEST

VANCOUVER, B.C.

November 2, 1937.

Hon. Grote Stirling,
KELOWNA, British Columbia.

Dear Mr. Stirling:

Since Saturday, I have had an opportunity of thinking over our conversation in New Westminster. In view of what you said, I was at first of the opinion that all that remained for me was to close the chapter of our friendship as merely one more disappointment in my life. On thinking the matter over, however, I think that for your own sake there are a few things you should be told, for apparently you either don't know them or don't understand them now.

For the moment, I will recapitulate the main points of our discussion. On Friday last, in my office, I pointed out to you that the attendance of W. A. C. Bennett at the annual meeting of the Conservative Association in New Westminster--which I was to attend as a defeated candidate from South Okanagan--was, in view of Bennett's traitorous and disloyal conduct during the last Provincial election, not only in extremely bad taste but was an affront to me, who had to bear the burden and expense of that campaign

35 22

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

Hon. Grote Stirling

I stated that the fact that he had been brought down to New Westminster by South Okanagan Conservatives, was offensive and embarrassing to me. Bennett had no status to attend and my feeling was that if he were appointed at the meeting in New Westminster so soon after the South Okanagan difficulty, it would set the seal of Conservative approval on his actions. You then stated that you were of the opinion that he had been properly appointed last summer and that nothing could be done about the matter now. I attended at New Westminster on Saturday morning and discovered that Bennett was in attendance, that he had not been appointed last summer and that somebody from South Okanagan, either yourself or Weddell, had stated to the Executive of the B. C. Association that Bennett was a proper person to be appointed as a member of the Executive from Yale riding. I discovered that a request in writing had been made by Weddell that the Executive on Saturday appoint him. On these ex parte representations and in spite of the fact that Bennett was not put forward by any responsible body in Yale, in spite of his traitorous conduct, which I was advised by members of the Executive was not disclosed to them, he was duly appointed a member of the Executive from Yale. It was then open to me either to make an issue of the matter before the meeting or simply to sit at the meeting and let matters take their course. As a loyal Conservative, I thought that the proper course for me was to do nothing to disturb the harmony of that important

35 22

Stirling, Grote (1934-1935)

meeting. I then went to you and told you that for the sake of harmony I did not propose to make an issue of the matter at the meeting but that I regarded Bennett's attendance as offensive to me; that it might very well have been suggested to him that he should not come, in view of recent events, and that after what I had been through in South Okanagan, and after the treatment which had been accorded to me by Bennett and his friends, I should not be called upon to swallow this one more thing and have him flaunted before my eyes as a leader of Conservative thought in Yale. Out of the thousands of loyal Conservatives in Yale, surely it was not necessary to pick this one man. Other prominent Conservatives were at the Coast on business at that time. You then stated that as Secretary (you stated of South Okanagan--I presume you meant Yale) he was the proper person to attend and that you could not see that his presence should be offensive to me. I might point out in passing that in the years gone by, neither the President nor the Secretary of Yale riding has been a member of the Executive of the B. C. Association. You then stated that at the time of the election you had come back from Ottawa and found the Conservative party in South Okanagan split in two factions and that you could not possibly take either side; that it would not have been proper for you to do so. I pointed out to you that you had overlooked the little item that I was the candidate properly nominated and that there was no question of

35 22

taking sides, that there was only one side for all loyal Conservatives to take. You then said that you could not see that what happened in South Okanagan had anything to do with Yale. You said that as you went around South Okanagan, both sides poured their version of the difficulties into your ears. I pointed out that I at least had not done so and you replied saying that my friends had. May I suggest here again, that at that stage, after the nominating convention in South Okanagan, there could be only one side. Might I also point out that what happens in South Okanagan has had and will have a very vital effect on Yale. Your astounding statement about taking sides has now made very clear to me the reason for the fact that the part which you took in my campaign can be characterized as one of cold aloofness, which aloofness gave encouragement to those Conservatives who were ready to slander their candidate; there has now been made clear to me the reason for your great care at my meetings to avoid any reference whatever to myself except at my last meeting in Kelowna when I believe pressure was brought to bear on you. It is now made clear to me why you contented yourself in a Provincial campaign with merely telling the electors the story of your own activities at Ottawa. It is now clear to me why you, being the Conservative leader in the Interior of British Columbia, did not at once take the Kelowna situation in hand and bring the malcontents into line. It is now clear to me why you were never seen inside my committee rooms except on

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

35 22

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

election night when the returns were coming in. You did not wish to associate yourself with me personally for fear that you might give offense to the disloyal element and thus endanger your own political interests. Bennett's attendance at New Westminster is now a matter of comparatively minor importance in view of your statements that you could not possibly take sides after your return from Ottawa--that it would not have been proper for you to do so and that you considered that what happened in South Okanagan had nothing to with Yale. It is those statements which have induced me to write this letter.

In New Westminster, I told you that you entirely lacked any sense of real loyalty and that I thought that in view of our past relationship, you were entirely too judicial in a matter wherein common loyalty should have induced you to go "all out" for a friend.

In view of your amazing attitude and as apparently your memory is an extremely short one, it is useful for a moment to remind you of the history of your introduction into political life. I do this, not that any credit should accrue to me because of that circumstance, but because it serves as a proper background for the things which I have to say and which I am hopeful may be helpful to you in the future. In 1925, you were practising your profession as a civil engineer in the city of Kelowna, your practice was a dwindling one, your orchard was causing you the greatest worry, and as you have stated on many occasions--the greatest financial embarrassment; the future

35 22

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

held nothing for you and your outlook on life was that of one who sees nothing ahead and has got into the rut which so often holds professional men in a small town. When the late J. A. McKelvie died, the Conservatives cast around for a candidate. I was at that time active in the Conservative organization in Kelowna. I had worked with you on Board of Trade affairs and concluded that you might be a safe man to win the election, your chief qualification being that there was nothing against you. I discussed the matter with our Kelowna supporters. Most of the Conservatives at that time did not think much of the idea but my opinion prevailed and Bob Morrison had Buckland call the meeting at which you were offered the support of the Kelowna Conservatives in seeking the candidature. In the 1925 Convention, I was the most active one in seeking to obtain for you the nomination and as a result of the campaign which I directed, you were selected as against Price Ellison and J. M. Robinson. So that you might be successful in the election I left my office for a period of over two months and actively worked on your behalf (as I did in subsequent campaigns). I was instrumental in obtaining the finances for your campaign, and I fought for you in season and out of season without regard to the consequences or financial loss to myself. In the following year when opposition to you developed and many of the people in the north and the south were plotting against you--I stood between you and the crowd who would have thrown you to the wolves and succeeded

35 22

in obtaining your renomination. Following that, in the year 1926, the same opposition developed and I again stood up as your champion. I was loyal to you without regard to consequences and made many enemies for myself because of the fact that I worked to secure your nomination and election. When even your Kelowna supporters, all of those responsible for your original nomination, without exception, turned against you, when Frank Buckland who was one of your early political friends urged that we drop you because of your insistence that we who had not any too much money ourselves should provide, or see that there were provided, the funds for your election before you would go into the campaign, I alone stood out and said I thought you were worth working for and that I would endeavor to so arrange things with the Dominion organizer that financial matters could be taken care of. It was at that time suggested that if after having had a year in office you couldn't look after such matters yourself, you weren't worth bothering with. Bob Morrison agreed to go to Revelstoke with me to meet the organizer and funds were then arranged for. Again in the year 1930, I was one of the most active in your interests. In all these campaigns, I worked hard and unsparingly and your election was secured. In the last Dominion election when all the others were unwilling to take active steps on your behalf, I took the responsibility of having a convention called and saw to it that you were nominated. At that convention, at your request, I arranged matters

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

35.22

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1935)

in such a manner that Weddell might be made President and Bennett might be made Secretary. During this campaign, I did not spare myself in the slightest and again spent my money and gave my time freely on your behalf.

At all times during the past thirteen years, I have worked for you unsparingly; I have considered that the relationship between us was much more than a mere political friendship and I have conducted myself accordingly. I do not boast of these matters. I simply state them as facts. There are many other matters in respect of which I stood by you and fought for you when you needed support; many of the old time Conservatives will remember them. Over and over again I took blame for errors made by you and gave you credit which was not rightfully yours. There was no room for your enemies among my friends. We built you up as the strong, silent man--the idol of the people, and after the feet of clay became apparent, we spared no effort in covering them up.

From such a beginning and through such efforts on your behalf, you obtained high office in the public service of the country. The result, may I suggest to you, was not because of your own merits or your own efforts, but because you happened to be the senior member from British Columbia when the vacancy occurred and because, even although the interests of your constituents were sacrificed, you had taken care not to offend those in high places. Had it not been for the work done for you in 1924 and afterwards, you would not be able to write before your name "The Honourable" on which you count so much. During all the twelve years past,

35 22

Hon. Grote Stirling

I have covered up your political mistakes, I have made excuses for you when in spite of years as member you continued to display those gross errors in political judgment which were so obvious to the people of Yale. You have lost all your old political friends one by one and of those who worked so hard for you in the early days, I alone remained as one to whom you could turn in any emergency. I shut my eyes to that which should have been clear to me--that the friendship which I thought existed between us was merely one-sided--on my part alone, and that you were incapable of real loyalty or friendship. I know that having left Kelowna and being resident in Vancouver, I can be of little further political service to you and perhaps I should have expected that under the circumstances you would cast me aside, as it were, like an old coat. As I say, however, I thought that somewhere in your make-up there was some understanding of the basis of friendship. I was mistaken.

I have believed that loyalty is the basis of friendship; by loyalty I mean the loyalty which requires support to a friend through thick and thin, the refusal to listen to the word of slander or gossip or adverse criticism, not the too careful weighing of merits which you seem to think is so necessary. You now say that you could not possibly take either side as between Bennett and myself at the time of the Provincial election in South Okanagan and I again say that you do not know what loyalty means--this, of course, as apart from the obligation resting upon you to support with all your strength the duly nominated candidate.

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

35 22

Hon. Grote Stirling

On the merits,I say that had you even reasonable discernment you would have realized where the merits lay.

As I have said, these matters are a closed book now. What I said to you on Saturday, to your face, and what I say to you now, has been said for twelve years behind your back throughout the riding of Yale, not merely by political opponents but by those who should have been supporting you, some of whom you still consider your political friends. Most of those who were really loyal to you have either been dropped by you as of no further use to you or have given you up as I have now done.

You expect to stand again within a year or two in the Federal riding of Yale. I think I have some knowledge of the people of that riding and I say that the chance which you have of being elected depends, of course, on the candidate who is brought forward to oppose you but mainly on whether you are able to overcome the faults and weaknesses which are charged against you. That you may be given an opportunity of putting yourself right with the people of Yale, I propose to enumerate the charges which are made against you.

It is said:

1. That you are cold-blooded and do not understand friendship and loyalty.

When you returned from Ottawa during the South Okanagan campaign, did there not pass through your mind the thought, "Here is my old friend who has gone through so much for me and is now in difficulties. I at least by my strong stand for him

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

35 22

will bring him support". I suggest that you remember that true friendship requires that one should be ever ready to stand between a friend and his enemies and that the very meticulous concern for that which is proper or conventional should not find a ready place as between friends. Loyalty requires sacrifice, a willingness to give as well as to take. Remember for your own good that loyalty begets loyalty.

2. That you entirely lack political sense.

I suggest that you learn that often the thing to do is that which your heart dictates as right and that that which is proper is not merely that which is conventional. You will only too often be led astray by your own poor judgment if you set that which is proper above all else. Try to remember that understanding above your fellows has not been given to you and that a short year in office and the right to be called Honourable have not endowed you with superior wisdom.

3. That you are a Snob.

Remember that it is merely cheap to sneer at the little weaknesses of your supporters behind their backs and at the same time accept their support; that it takes more than a cultured accent and well-tailored clothes to make a gentleman and that in any event a great many of your supporters are in no sense of the term gentlemen but are nevertheless loyal and active for you politically. Remember too that your insistence on the outward

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

35 22

and visible signs of office such as the private car in the riding at the last election--the destroyer from Vancouver to Victoria--the display of a little brief authority--cost you much support and your supporters much worry. Try to overcome an inclination to defer greatly to persons of authority and influence while you pass by with impatience the smaller fry of the people.

4. That you are selfish.

Remember that kindness is only worthwhile when it costs you something. It is not sufficient that you pass on to department heads the requests which are addressed to you personally but you should put yourself out to show some personal interest even at the cost of embarrassment or of laying yourself open to the charge of doing that which is unconventional. Ask yourself how many times you have done something for your supporters of your own volition without representations to you emanating from the riding. How many times when you were in office did you say when an appointment was opened, "Wouldn't John Smith at home do for that job?" What have you ever done about it?

5. That you lack courage.

To do the conventional thing is not enough. You have a certain stubbornness which with the uninitiated passes for independence of spirit. It is merely a weakness. In the party and in your dealings with those in authority, you have always gone with the tide for fear of giving offense. Have you ever on one occasion

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

35 a

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

stood out on any issue in Parliament, or with the Departments when it was unconventional or might result in embarrassment or inconvenience to yourself. Honesty is not conventional.

6. That you are conceited.

A little conceit is a good thing. Too great pride in your cultural attainments is a weakness. Something more is required than the ability to make a cultured speech. This charge is closely connected with the previous ones.

The foregoing are a few of the main charges against you, which have been current throughout the riding. If you pay attention to them, there may be some hope for you. You cannot hold the respect of honest men unless you do. You cannot hope for loyalty until you are willing to put aside your own interests and give unstinting loyalty to your friends. You cannot succeed politically whether elected or not as long as you are concerned only with what is proper and as long as the "What happens in South Okanagan has nothing to do with Yale" type of reasoning finds a place in your mind.

I claim as one who has been for years the most loyal to you personally and politically, the right and the duty to tell you frankly that which others have either not sufficient interest or sufficient courage to tell you. That I speak out of the depths of disillusionment and disappointment at the attitude of one who, I thought, was a friend, renders what I have said none the less true.

Yours truly,

35 22

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

My File No. 913B

April 27th, 1934

Grote Stirling Esq. M.P.,
House of Commons,
OTTAWA

My dear Grote,

Please accept my thanks for your letter of April 21st. with reference to the Crestland Fruit Co. and for the information therein contained.

Yours sincerely,

TGM/L.

35 22

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

My File No. 913-B

April 14th. 1934

Grote Stirling Esq. M.P.,
House of Commons,
OTTAWA

My dear Grote,

I have your letter of April 9th. I was much interested in the account of your trip to Halifax and especially your reference to the Hon. J.A. Macdonald. I have known a good many Maritime Province Grits and they have all been "whole hoggers".

For your information I enclose copy of letter dated April 7th. received from the Registrar under the Combines Investigation Act and copy of my reply of today's date. The additional documents which I forwarded showed that the National Fruit Co. which operates in the Nelson District is controlled by the Consolidated Fruit Co. Ltd. in the same way that it controls the Crestland Fruit Co. that the Scott Fruit Co. Ltd. is similarly contro although this latter company did not operate in British Columbia in 1933. You will note the Registrar's

35 22

ence to the Sales on Consignment Act and to the type of investigation contemplated. Unless speedy action is taken I fear that there will be a "coverup". In connection with proceedings under the Sales on Consignment Act against the Crestland Fruit Co. Ltd. we are up against the old question of the right of Provinces to control Dominion companies. Undoubtedly when the Crestland Fruit Co. Ltd. was incorporated its incorporator had this very point in mind.

The Board of Trade people were very much pleased with your reply to the wired resolution with reference to the action of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. I note from the press that Bill No. 51 is not likely to be before the House again for several weeks. I think that this is just as well as it will give our people a chance to consider it fully in relation to such a scheme as they propose to present to the new Marketing Board.

Kind regards,

Yours faithfully,

TGN/L.

913-B
9313

House of Commons
Canada

OTTAWA, Ontario,
13th April 1934.

T. G. Norris, Esq., K. C.,
K e l o w n a,
B. C.

My dear Tom,-

Thank you for your letter of the 7th instant.

I saw the Deputy Minister of Labor with regard to the request for an investigation into the Crestland affair and drew his particular attention to your remarks about Burroughs and explained to him that as he had taken a prominent part in the investigation ten years ago, you had thought it possible that the Registrar might discuss this matter with him. He said it was most unlikely that Duncan would be made use of because of certain difficulties that this Government has had with him. He was to see the Minister with regard to the views I expressed but Gordon has been laid up since. I will follow it up.

I am much interested in what you tell me of Dr. Patterson's visit, and, in my opinion, it would be a good thing to let a little more time elapse before we consider a Convention in the Province.

Bill 51 certainly does seem to have gone over with a bang; I think every Province has passed - or will pass - something in the way of parallel legislation.

The Chamber of Commerce has created for itself a most unfavourable impression by its hostile action and particularly its questionaire. I understand that some of them met the Prime Minister the day after the meeting and I am told

that .....

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)
35 22

that he did not mince his words when he told them what he thought of their questionaire. (This should come)

Two days ago I attended a meeting here of its Agricultural section and it was evident, from the Chairman's opening remarks, that they were anxious to soft-pedal. I could not stay long but I had the opportunity of outlining to them what we in the Okanagan saw in this Bill, and, from the few ~~the few~~ questions asked me when I had finished, I got the impression that perhaps they were seeing a new light. Drayton was very mouthy to Burrows yesterday at first, but, before their conversation ended he admitted that probably a more detailed examination of the measure would reveal that it was not as drastic as it at first seemed.

Malkowski

~~McCosky~~ sent me a copy of his ~~firm's~~ scheme, and, in acknowledging it, I told him, as I have been telling half a dozen other correspondents, that now that the growers had apparently been given what they had been screaming for for years, it would be just too bad if they were to go on and squabble about a scheme lest Section 9 of the Act should be imposed on them.

I shall be glad to see the excerpt from the Crestland judgment which you are sending me.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

Grote Stirling

AVP. Grote Stirling.

I am sorry to say that this is a sample of what my work meaning stenographer sometimes does!

Grote Stirling.

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

35 a

913-B

House of Commons
Canada

O T T A W A, Ontario,
9th April, 1934.

APR 1934
RECEIVED
T. G. NORRIS

T. G. Norris, Esq., K. C.,
K e l o w n a,
B. C.

My dear Tom:-

I am much obliged to you for your letter of March 24th enclosing a copy of Patullo's wonderful Act and giving me your re-actions to it, which I find quite interesting. I think it is a good thing that before prorogation they put through some form of legislation aiming at co-operation under our Bill 51 so that powers resting with the Province may be made use of by a Board set up under the Dominion Bill; people were saying that if they had not time to take this action Patullo would still do it under the S.P.A. I am still more doubtful as to the wisdom of this since reading your letter.

I also acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 29th and its enclosures with regard to the Crestland Fruit Company, Limited; I will see the Minister with regard to it and will be most careful to treat it as confidential, then I will write to you again.

I have just got back from a pleasant trip to Halifax where I spent the adjournment, and I had opportunities of discussing Bill 51 with the new Liberal Minister of Agriculture and his Deputy, and some of the apple people; the latter and the Deputy were fine and appreciative but is not the Hon J. A. Macdonald a thorough-going Grit? It would be a terrible atmosphere to live in.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

Grote Stirling

AVP.

Grote Stirling.

Stirling, Grote (1934-1937)

35 22

913B.

House of Commons
Canada

Ottawa, April 21,1934.

APR 1934 RECEIVED T. G. NORRIS

Re File No. 913-B.

T. G. Norris, Esq., K. C.,
Kelowna, B. C.

My dear Tom;

Thank you for your letter of the 14th inst, and its enclosures.

I saw Mr. Dickson, the Deputy Minister, and explained to him that you were anxious to press the matter of an investigation of the Crestland Food Company, and that you did not want any more publicity given to it than was necessary.

He had a talk with MacGregor, and then saw me again the same day, and he tells me that a temporary difficulty is the amount of work now on MacGregor's hands, but that he will pursue the matter.

I will see him again in the course of a few days.

With kind regards, I am

Yours ~~faithfully~~ sincerely,

G. C. Stirling

(Grote Stirling)

Stirling, Grote (1934 - 1937)

35 a