

PROMINENT PEOPLE . . . with connections to Olde Berlin Town Neighbourhood in Kitchener (formerly Berlin), Ontario

W.D. Euler, a proud Canadian, lived his adult lifetime at **111 Queen Street North**, which is now the site of the Centre in the Square. Born in 1875 in Conestoga, Ontario of German heritage, he grew up, became a teacher at Suddaby Public School, founded the Euler Business College and married Virginia Howd. He was elected eight times as a Member of



Parliament (MP), was a Cabinet Minister, a member of the Privy Council and a Senator. In 1936, he toured Europe as a 'good will' trade ambassador, soliciting business in his country's name. He had long talks with King Edward VIII in London, Hitler and Goering in Germany and negotiated important trade agreements in Europe. He served on various boards in Kitchener including the Waterloo Trust and Savings Company which later became Canada Trust, and Economical Mutual Insurance Company. He became President of the Laurier Clubs and was appointed as the first Chancellor of Waterloo Lutheran University in 1961, which topped a long career of thirty nine years in public office. He proudly served constituents and the country for the love of the

people. He was buried from St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in July 1961. Here are some events that represent the public life of William Daum Euler.

While W.D. Euler began his career as a teacher, he is better known for his lengthy political career that began as the Mayor of Berlin, Ontario (now Kitchener) in 1914 -1917. Shortly after World War I, a crowd in Berlin seized Mr. Euler, escorted him to the Hall of the Great War Veterans Association of Canada and was told to kiss the flag of Canada. "He refused, announcing he was willing to kiss the flag and sing God Save the King at a public ceremony, where everyone did, but he would not humiliate himself before an unruly mob". This incident has its' origin in the change of the city's name from Berlin to Kitchener and the attempt to change it back. While Mr. Euler had no part in this, he was blamed for it anyway. Receiving a black eye and a bloody nose, he retained his self-respect.

He was first elected and was appointed a Cabinet Minister in 1917 as a supporter of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He subsequently won re-election seven consecutive times, and in the House of Commons he became known as a strong exponent of public ownership, and was also known to be an anti-conscriptionist. In 1926 when the Liberals returned to office, after a short-lived "shadow government", Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King went searching among his followers for a man to restore the Customs and Excise Department that was rocked by scandal. Prohibition in the United States made conditions ripe for bribery and corruption. Mr. Euler, MacKenzie Kings' schoolmate and friend was again appointed a Cabinet Member, this time as National Revenue Minister, to conduct a clean-up of the Department. "Whenever he (Mr. Euler) was offered a bribe he became so angry he was determined to expose the negligence of the U.S. Revenue Department" an observer stated.

In 1929, W.D. Euler personally crossed to the United States on a "rum-running' trip, travelling between Windsor and Detroit in daylight. So thorough was his "house cleaning" of the Revenue Department that by the 1930 elections there was no talk of scandal in any branch of the department. Even though the election victory of the Bennet Government dropped the Liberals to the Opposition, Mr. Euler was once again re-elected and seized this opportunity in the House to thunder aloud the praises of the Roosevelt Government for the improvements of the depression conditions in the U.S. but not those of the Bennett efforts in Canada.

When the Liberals regained power in 1935, Mr. Euler was once again appointed to the Cabinet, this time as Minister of Trade and Commerce, a highly important portfolio, because of the trade policies and the governments drive for foreign markets. Less than a year after he entered office, he travelled extensively through Europe soliciting trade concessions for Canada in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, Holland and Switzerland.

Missions to these countries, combined with the world wide recovery from the depression, made Canada the fourth largest exporting country in the world. Here, Mr. Euler announced “the more business we can do with our neighbours, in a mutually advantageous way, the better it is for the peace of the world”. Mr. Euler negotiated tariff cuts wherever possible and encouraged farming and the development of national resources. He stated however that “manufacturing must take a prominent part in the essential industries of Canada if we are to build up an all-round development such as we ought to have”.

In November 1936, prior to WWII, Euler represented Canada at the XI Summer Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany as the guest of Adolph Hitler. Upon his return Euler took his own government to task for its desultory manner in prosecuting the war and was continually at odds with the rest of his fellow Cabinet Members. Having seen the tremendous preparations being made in Germany, he argued that a full-scale war would break out. It was only a short time later that England and Canada declared war on Germany.

In 1939, during the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, Mr. Euler acted as Prime Minister Kings’ tour liaison officer.

In 1940, W.D. Euler was appointed to the Senate and became a very active members of this prestigious institution.



1939 Royal Tour - train stop in Kitchener

In 1948, he led the fight for the legalization of the sale of margarine in Canada.

By bringing forth this bill three times before the Parliament, he aroused the bitterest controversy. When the Speaker of the House asked when the bill would be read a second time, one Senator shouted “NEVER”. After these defeats, this determined and dedicated man set out once again to pursue the passing of the ‘Margarine Bill’. This time he took his bill to the Supreme Court of Canada. Here he was successful. In 1948, the Court ruled to lift the ban and legalized the sale of margarine. From this point in time, Senator Euler was nicknamed the “Oleo Margarine King of Canada”. During his tenure in the Senate he was appointed as a Canadian representative to the United Nations by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.

<https://www.therecord.com/news-story/8978797-kitchener-s-william-daum-euler-led-the-charge-to-legalize-butter-substitute/>

Submitted by Olde Berlin Town resident

Article for Winter 2020 edition of the Olde Berlin Town neighbourhood newsletter