

Tributes

• (1510)

She is a leader who brings with her and believes in sharing power and leadership and is a model to other women. We have stunning proof of that in the House, which you have just brought to our attention, Mr. Speaker. We all welcome Alexa McDonough as the new leader of the New Democratic Party. We wish her well as she takes on a very difficult and very trying role. I hope she does not find putting together both roles of politician and general citizen too difficult.

Audrey McLaughlin the activist has served on many boards and has brought a lot of interesting perspectives to these boards of directors. Audrey McLaughlin is also a mother with two children and it has taken the support of those children for her to be in the House. She has also been an outstanding daughter to her mother and we have all followed that with great heart.

On behalf of countless women and children across this land, we take our hats off to you, Audrey McLaughlin. We wish you well in your future.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add the voice of the official opposition to that of the government spokesperson in paying all of the honour that is due to Audrey McLaughlin as she moves from the life of an elected representative to the life of a private citizen.

I would like to tell her that we have all loved and admired her and that we will continue to show her all of the esteem she deserves. When I was on the opposition benches from 1990 to 1993, when the Bloc was not a recognized party, I had the opportunity, since I was in the same corner of the House, to work in close conjunction with Ms. McLaughlin as Leader of the Opposition. I must admit that I learned lessons from her which I try to put into practice daily.

I believe that we must acknowledge the work carried out by this great lady who is leaving the House of Commons for another life, a life in which I know she will be equally productive. We must tell her how much she will be missed. The social awareness she has shown in this House is something that has been building throughout her life. She came to politics from social work. She has worked in the health field, she has worked with children. When she spoke of those causes in the House she knew what she was talking about, and we sensed that in the sincerity of her speeches.

I would also like to remind people that she was the first woman leader of a major federal party. She has blazed a trail for others to follow. We must acknowledge that she has done a good job of doing so, for now another woman will be leading her party.

I do not wish to see her leave the House right away, but I know that the decision she has made to leave the leadership of a great party like the NDP was a very big decision. I hope she will remain extremely active in politics, for the party she has led which is now to be led by Ms. McDonough and in fact has been led by her since the weekend, is a party which represents in English Canada the values to which all of us in the Bloc Québécois adhere, but which are not exclusive to the Bloc.

We know that social values are very important in English Canada, that English Canada fought long for them. There must therefore be a party in this House at all times to defend those values. I hope that party will be the NDP.

Again, allow me to repeat our regrets that Ms. McLaughlin has stepped down from the leadership of the New Democratic Party, and to wish her from all of us a long and active life. At any rate, we know that she will be following the excellent examples set by Stephen Lewis and Ed Broadbent before her.

[English]

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Reform Party I would also like to congratulate the member for Yukon.

We have sat together in the House for several years. Although we have all kinds of different political views, we also share many things and have a lot of things in common. We first came to the House via byelections, a very exciting situation. The member for Yukon was elected in 1987 and I was elected in 1989. We are women and that gives a certain situation and a certain leaning. When you are in here you learn all kinds of things about being a woman in federal politics certainly. We are both far from home as we serve in this place.

• (1515)

When we live in far flung western and northern ridings, Ottawa is a long way from home. There are people who we really cherish and miss dreadfully when we are a long way from home.

We have sat as independents in this House. We have that in common as well. That gives a certain perspective also in the House of Commons. It lets us realize that things are not always just the way we would want them to be but it is a good learning situation for both of us.

What impressed me the very most when I first came here and wandered around as a caucus of one all by myself was seeing Audrey in her good business clothes and her Reeboks walking through the Byward market. That really warmed me to you, Audrey. I realized then that here was a party leader who was practical and when she was going on a long jaunt from Parliament Hill she was free and willing to wear her Reeboks. I have always appreciated that about her. I will continue to think of her as I march through the market in my Reeboks.