

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 7, 1953

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

THE LATE MATTHEW MacLEAN

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister, who is unavoidably absent, I wish to pay tribute to one of our late members. I know hon. members will have been saddened to learn today of the passing of the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria. Matthew MacLean first came to Ottawa as the result of a by-election in 1937 in which he was paid the unusual tribute of being returned unopposed. The faith that his constituents placed in him at that time by electing him by acclamation was reaffirmed by his re-election at each successive general election. We have had the privilege of being associated with him over that rather long period of time.

Matthew MacLean served the interests of his constituents vigorously and energetically. He diligently and effectively applied the legal training he had obtained at the law school of Dalhousie university to the various committees on which he served. His many friends on both sides of the house will miss him greatly. I am confident that all members of the house will wish to join me in asking you, Mr. Speaker, to extend our sincerest sympathy to Mrs. MacLean and the other members of the family.

Mr. Gordon Graydon (Peel): Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that the Leader of the Opposition would have reached Ottawa today in time to join in the tribute just paid to the deceased member for Cape Breton North and Victoria by the Acting Prime Minister. On his behalf I should like to associate the members of the official opposition with the words that have been so well spoken by the Minister of Agriculture. I suppose that one of the great joys and rewards of public life in our daily associations in the House of Commons comes from the fact that over the years there is a great camaraderie among the men and women on both sides of the house.

Matthew MacLean was one of those with whom it was easy to be associated throughout the years. He was always a very hearty and kindly gentleman. I often think that perhaps the best test of the character of a

man in public life is to be found in how he is regarded by those who are closely associated with him. This morning one of the older messengers on the staff came into my room and said, "I suppose you have heard that Matthew MacLean has passed away." I said that I had and that I was sorry to hear the news. He said, "Well, I am sorry too because no more kindly gentleman ever came within the precincts of the House of Commons". I thought that was one of the most sterling tributes a member could have paid to him after a long period of association with others in the House of Commons. I am sure that it saddens all of us to hear the news that he has now been taken away from the House of Commons and its membership.

I would like, on behalf of the official opposition, to join with the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Gardiner) in conveying our genuine and deep sympathy to Mrs. MacLean and to her daughter, Janet, who was so often spoken of by Mr. MacLean, and who was the great joy and pride of his life.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, these sad occasions come from time to time and those of us who have been in the house for a long time, since before 1940, realize that our ranks are thinning in one way and another. Consequently such occasions are reminders that life is all too short and that time passes.

I wish to express our sympathy to the family of Mr. Matt MacLean. He was a kindly, unassuming member of this house. Those of us who knew him as a friendly man with a dignified bearing in the house regret the passing of one who has contributed to the general well-being of the house. Although we are divided politically and, very often, by ideas, nonetheless there are, across the floor of this chamber, genuine friendships. In the passing of Matt MacLean many of us feel, after this long association, that we have lost one whom we regarded as a friend.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we very much regret hearing of the untimely passing of any member of this house. We accept them always at face value and pay honour to them for doing the very best they can to represent the wishes of their people. I am satisfied that we are speaking now of a member who did just that.