

Hon. Allister Grosart: Honourable senators, I realize that the tributes which have been paid to our colleagues have been very full and that it is unlikely that I can add anything of any great value.

I join sincerely in the tributes which have been paid to them. In view of my long friendship with our late colleague Senator Robertson, I feel I would be remiss in my duty to him and to the family if I did not express my feelings personally at this time.

Like Senator Haig, Senator Yuzyk, and the Honourable Kelso Roberts representing the Government of Ontario, I had the sad duty of paying our respects to our late colleague in public life. It may be enough if I merely add my testimony to that of Senator Haig, about the memorable tribute paid to Senator Robertson by his neighbours and friends of Kenora-Rainy River on Monday of last week.

In death, as so often in his life, Pete Robertson was the central figure, the impelling magnet that attracted a great gathering of his north country neighbours. We saw them sorrowing at the church, at the cemetery, in the bereaved home, and in the homes of his brothers and sisters, where besides being the head of his own family, he was the leader, guide and counsellor of the Clan Robertson.

It seemed to me that every part of that far-flung constituency of Kenora-Rainy River was represented, in spite of the fact that it spreads from the Manitoba border almost to the head of the lakes and from the Minnesota border, 500 miles to the north.

Standing there, one felt the presence of the Great Father of all mankind, particularly in seeing representatives of the Indian bands he knew and loved so well, with heads uncovered and bowed, in 20 degrees below zero weather, as their last tribute to one who was their friend and spokesman.

I knew Senator Robertson for a good many years. I admired him for all the qualities that have been indicated in the tributes paid to him this evening; but above all else, I admired Pete Robertson for his uniquely dedicated concept of public service. I know that his summons here was to him, above all else, a call to further service to his fellow man. I know of no one here, or in the other House of Parliament, who entered so eagerly and energetically into the opportunities which public life offers for public service.

Pete Robertson was of the Protestant faith, but the range of his interests and sympathies were catholic, in every good sense of that good word. If proof of that were needed, it would be the fact that in that Protestant church there was in attendance at the funeral

a guard, in full regalia, from the Father Alneau Assembly of the Knights of Columbus of the Fourth Degree. I said to one of them, "I have never before seen such an honour given in a Protestant church." The reply I received might well serve as an epitaph for our lated colleague: "We did it for Pete, because we wanted to. He made no distinction between people on grounds of creed, race or position in life. We were all people to him. He loved people and people loved him."

Knowing his family as I do, I find it difficult to speak of the awful void his passing leaves in the immediate family circle, for his was a young family who loved him dearly—Mrs. Robertson, brave and talented, two boys and a girl, Joyce—the eldest boy, Jimmy, just 14 years of age.

But if courage and loyalty are enduring, the spirit of Pete Robertson lives on. Almost the first words that 12-year old Neil spoke to his mother after the shock of the bereavement were, "Don't worry, Mom, I still have my paper route."

I know our hearts go out tonight to Senator Robertson's kith and kin in this sudden loss of a good husband, father and brother.

On their behalf, honourable senators—because I was speaking to Mrs. Robertson by long distance telephone only an hour or so ago—I take the liberty of passing on this message to you. Great comfort has come to them in this difficult hour from the many letters they have received from his colleagues in the Senate and elsewhere in Ottawa, making clearer to them than they ever knew the high regard in which Senator Pete Robertson was held by all who knew him in the short time he was permitted to be with us here.

Hon. James Gladstone: Honourable senators, this is a moment of extreme grief—first, because Pete Robertson was my close personal friend.

Just about three weeks ago, in the middle of January, he visited the town of Medicine Hat, in the Province of Alberta, where he was born. From there he came and visited me and stayed over night with my family. We had great pleasure in having him in our own home. His time was very limited, for he was on his way to Vancouver, but I took him to the Blood Reserve, which was known to Pete, and he was able to visit some of our farms and ranches on my reservation. He was delighted with what he saw. Before he left for the coast he had arranged that we would meet in Kenora this past weekend so that we