

basking in the glow of congratulatory comments tonight that we also acknowledge the contribution he has made, that we are aware that even though he will not be leader of his party next week he will still continue to be a member of the House, and that we shall look forward to hearing his witty and incisive contributions to the debates of the House. We want to assure him that he has earned that special place in the House of Commons that comes to very few people in the service of the House.

With that introduction I am sure I have convinced the House that it would be appropriate to suspend the sitting of the House tonight so that the members of the New Democratic Party can attend and so that we can privately celebrate this occasion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: But since I still wish to gain a little bit of time for government business from this act of generosity, may I suggest that we consider government business from five o'clock to six o'clock and that we suspend the sitting for the rest of the day.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago the House leader of my party suggested that since I have known Tommy Douglas for so many years I might say a few words. I join with the government House leader in supporting the tentative motion that he has placed before the House. Seldom have I been able to speak in such unqualified terms in support of his views as I am on this occasion.

• (2:40 p.m.)

The wonderful thing about the House of Commons is that we sit here from day to day and get to know each other. With only 18 feet separating us, we develop that appreciation of the Parliamentary system that on occasions such as this sweeps aside every suggestion of partisanship.

One of the greatest parliamentarians, Sir Winston Churchill, had one political opponent who in debate it was said he feared above all others, Aneurau Bevan, the incomparable, a man with not Scottish but Welsh incisive wit. He passed away rather suddenly. Sir Winston was approached by his chief secretary who proposed that Sir Winston should say what was in his heart of hearts concerning his political adversary. The relationship between Sir Winston and Nye Bevan had never been of the very best. The press wanted to know what Sir Winston really thought of Nye Bevan. When asked, he said "Are you sure he is dead?" In that reply there was no bitterness or invective. There was simply a tremendous tribute.

I have known Tommy Douglas since 1935. I remember him in the House during the dark days of the early 1940's. He was here until he relinquished his position as a member of the House of Commons to become leader of his party in the province of Saskatchewan in 1944. For 17 years he was the premier of that province. He then decided that he should come back to the House of Com-

Tribute to Retiring NDP Leader

mons and we have had him here for nine or ten years. His has been a remarkable record.

Mr. Douglas is an outstanding debater, a man with a sense of humour that has always denied vindictiveness, however strongly he has expressed himself, an admirable exponent of that parliamentary system to which you and I, Mr. Speaker, and members in all parts of the House give their allegiance.

He will be 67 years of age later this year. It is a good thing he is not in Newfoundland, in view of the measure introduced in that province yesterday whereby all members of the legislature must be out at age 70. It has not been passed yet, but I have a strong feeling toward that legislation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member has been a great crusader. I have often disagreed most strongly with him. I do not share his political philosophy, but this does not deny my uttering these words of appreciation for one who has given such devoted service to my province and this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) does not often accept my suggestions, but I have one to offer him now. As a member of the Privy Council of Canada and as one of the three surviving members of the Imperial Privy Council, the other two being the Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent and the Right Hon. L. B. Pearson, I suggest, with that humility that an opposition member must at all times exhibit, that this House express its appreciation by having the NDP leader given the honour of membership in the Privy Council. For 17 years he was the premier of his province. All other premiers in 1967 were made members of Her Majesty's Privy Council. He deserves that recognition.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, we join the hon. President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) who spoke about the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) in laudatory and sincere terms.

Mr. Speaker, more than any other, our party has been able to appreciate the contribution made in the House by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, the leader of the New Democratic Party, since the members of our party and myself are seated close to him.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have the same knowledge nor as long a political experience as those who spoke before me, and as a member elected in 1968, I should say that I have always been much impressed by the gracious condescension and the constant concern the NDP leader showed towards new members whatever their party regarding their speeches and contribution in the House.

I often noticed that when a young member of any party is rising to take part in a debate in the House, the