

*Tributes to Deceased Members*

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE PERLEY (Argenteuil): On behalf of the opposition and those who sit around me I wish to join with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) in expressing regret at the death of these two friends of ours who have passed away since the last session, and I also wish to express the sympathy of the opposition with the government in the loss of two of their loyal supporters.

As a matter of fact the life of a member of parliament is a pretty strenuous one, more so than that of an ordinary individual, and that is the reason why we find every year there are those who in the interval between sessions have passed away and whose memory we wish to honour by some words of appreciation.

Mr. Perras, as member for Wright, was born across the river in Hull. He lived most of his life at Gracefield up the Gatineau river, and one thing I had in common with him was the fact that he was in the lumber business, which, long ago, before I entered public life, was also my work. Mr. Perras was mayor of Gracefield for many years, and I believe was successful in carrying out the work of that office. He was also warden of the county, and we all know the responsibilities which that office entails.

I did not know Mr. Perras very well, but some of my relatives lived next door to him in this city and they described him to me as a good neighbour. I do not know how one can say anything better about a man than that those who lived beside him considered him a good neighbour. He died a comparatively young man, at the age of only sixty. He was a regular attendant at the sessions of this house. It is quite true, as the Prime Minister has said, that he did not take very much part in debate, but he was careful in his work and diligent in looking after the wants of his constituents, and he has left behind him a name of which his relatives may well be proud.

Mr. Veniot was an older man in point of years, and one who, as the Prime Minister has said, had given much of his life to public service. According to the records he first started some sixty years ago, as secretary of the school board. He became a member of the provincial legislature, afterwards premier of his own province, eventually a member of this house, and he was appointed by the Liberal administration in 1926 as Postmaster General of Canada. In other words, Mr. Veniot's career was a distinguished one, and I join with everything the Prime Minister has said in that regard and in the expression of sympathy to the family he has left behind.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. Veniot was a very worthy representative of the Acadian race, and when he was in his prime he was a doughty fighter, an opponent strenuous in debate. During the last year or two he had not been well, but I feel sure, although I never heard him on the platform, that in elections he must have been an effective debater. At the same time Mr. Veniot was of a very kindly disposition; I always found him so. When he had his political armour off he was a cheery, pleasant man to meet and to do business with. I think we may take a pattern from Mr. Veniot's life. There is no position which is not open to anyone with the ability and the energy to take advantage of the opportunities afforded in this country. My opinion has always been that we cannot expect democracy, such as we know it, with universal suffrage, to survive unless everyone is willing to render public service according to his means, his ability and his position. I do not care whether it be for municipal purposes, in connection with charitable organizations, or in either the dominion or the provincial field; some service everyone ought to render, and I have always felt it to be the duty of everyone, in whatever position he may happen to be placed, to do what he can for the general community.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we all regret very much the death of these two gentlemen, and I would say here that this House of Commons is the poorer for their passing. I join with the Prime Minister in requesting, sir, that you express to their families the sympathy of this house in the great loss they have sustained.

Mr. J. H. BLACKMORE (Lethbridge): I should like to express on behalf of the social credit members our endorsement of the words of sympathy which have been expressed. We were not in the house long enough to learn to know these gentlemen, but what we have heard has led us to believe that they were men of outstanding character, devoted to the public service. We rejoice therefore in the record of their lives and wish to join with the members of the older parties in extending to their memories honour and to their bereaved ones our sincere sympathy.

Hon. J. E. MICHAUD (Minister of Fisheries) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I would be failing in my duty, and almost a filial duty, if I did not second the laudatory remarks which have just been uttered with regard to one of our colleagues, the late Hon. Peter Veniot, former minister and representative of the province of New Brunswick in the dominion government.