

The Late J. J. Macdonell

ber and, I might say, a great friend of the Canadian people, the late James J. Macdonell.

When Jim Macdonell came to Ottawa in the early 1970s he already had a record of many accomplishments. He had been a successful and prestigious auditor and a renowned management consultant. He came here and I think achieved what was probably the greatest accomplishment of his career, as our Auditor General. He brought new ideas to the position, he brought enthusiasm, he brought energy, and perhaps above all he brought dedication and preoccupation with the concept of providing Canadians with value for money. He believed that the taxpayers of Canada should receive full value for the disbursement of public funds. In that light and for that purpose he introduced the concept of comprehensive auditing to our system.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, it was mainly Mr. Macdonell's work that had instigated the establishment of the Lambert Commission, and that has provided Canada with an accounting system for dealing with public funds the efficiency of which has been without precedent.

[English]

He reminded us constantly, as Parliamentarians, that the funds we appropriate in this House are funds of the taxpayers of Canada and are to be disbursed and accounted for accordingly. Indeed, Madam Speaker, Jim Macdonell has left all Canadians a very rich legacy.

[Translation]

To his family we extend our deepest sympathies.

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the death of James J. Macdonell, former Auditor General of Canada, comes as a shock to this House and to all Canadians. He was a good servant of the House and of all Canadians.

His reports on the financial procedures of the Government from 1973 to 1980 identified the problem of over-spending by Government and, as the Minister has said, introduced the principle of value for money, a principle totally foreign to the methods of the Government then and now.

To quote the wisdom and words of the former Auditor General, recently he pointed out that Canada in the 1970s "indulged in the biggest spending spree in the history of the country". This statement corresponded fully with the views of the Opposition, although it has still failed to win recognition in the House.

J. J. Macdonell, born in Calgary, sprang from the ancient Highland stock which settled in Glengarry County not far from the capital, Ottawa. A namesake was aide-de-camp to General Brock at Queenston Heights. Perhaps it was this combination of Scottish canniness and dogged dedication to duty that made him a formidable foe of waste and extravagance by the federal Government. He fulfilled his difficult mandate with distinction.

His memory deserves well of this nation and this House.

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Madam Speaker, I should like to join with my colleagues from the Government and the Official Opposition and, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, offer condolences to the family of J. J. Macdonell and say a few brief words about his accomplishments.

As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I first came to know Mr. Macdonell in early 1980. I had heard of him before but had not previously had the opportunity to meet and work with him. The time that I spent on the Public Accounts Committee when he was Auditor General is time that I will cherish. I found him not only to be a person very concerned about the public purse and the way taxpayers' money was spent, but also to be a very warm person. He was quick to offer assistance to all Members of Parliament who wished to come to him to take advantage of his insight into the way that the taxpayers' money was being spent.

I am sure he will be long remembered for his accomplishments. He pushed for the establishment of the Comptroller General's office, he was responsible for the revised estimates that sprang from it, and, as the Minister of State for Economic Development (Mr. Johnston) mentioned, was responsible for putting comprehensive audit into place.

I am sure Mr. Macdonell will be long remembered as one who brought much to Canada and to Parliament. On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I wish to offer our condolences to his family.

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, as one who had the privilege of serving as a chairman of the Public Accounts Committee while J. J. Macdonell was Auditor General, I should like to join in expressing to his family my condolences and those of members of that Committee many years ago.

He was able; he was experienced; he was conscientious; but above all he had a bulldog-like tenacity to see an issue or a problem through to its successful solution, no matter whose toes were stepped on. I believe that he will be remembered not only for his well-known reforms in accounting and auditing procedures and concepts, but also for his ability to attract the services of excellent people to assist him. He served the taxpayers of the country well and we all honour him.

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to add a few words to those of my colleagues and particularly those of the Minister of State for Economic Development (Mr. Johnston).

I was also a chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that served under J. J. Macdonell. Those who knew him well knew that he would pass away with his boots on, which was his will.

I think the mark and style of the seventh Auditor General of Canada was described best in the language of Damon Runyon by the late Hon. Robert Andras, who was responsible for some of the great advances Mr. Macdonell was able to give to