

The late A. C. Casselman

During the passage of the years he had become the dean of this chamber. He served as party whip to the Conservative party for 20 years but finally gave up that position with the advent of a lengthy illness some two and a half years ago. However, after being absent for a very long period of time he returned to his parliamentary duties in October last, becoming the deputy chairman of committees in the house.

I refer, Mr. Speaker, to Arza Clair Casselman, known to members who served in previous parliaments as "Cass". Born in 1891 and educated at Osgoode Hall, he went overseas at the beginning of the war as a gunner in the artillery, served overseas, and then returned to serve his country in days of peace as in the days of war almost continuously throughout the intervening years with the exception of four years in that parliament during which Right Hon. Mr. Meighen sat for Grenville-Dundas following the resignation of Mr. Casselman.

It is difficult to express what one feels on an occasion such as this. If there is one thing which new hon. members will appreciate as the years go by and as they look back on their membership in this house, it is the comradeship and the fellowship in this chamber which know no boundaries of political faith.

Speaking now as one belonging to his own party, I know something of the way in which the late Mr. Casselman discharged his duties. When I came here as a new member in 1940, it was Mr. Casselman who gave me that assistance, that direction and that counsel which all of us receive as new members. I feel a distinct sense of personal loss as, I know, do all of us who served with him through successive parliaments. Able, courteous, Mr. Casselman takes his place among those very few people who of the 24 parliaments—this being the twenty-fourth since confederation—had been elected to almost half. To those he left behind I extend on behalf of this party and I am sure on behalf of hon. members in every party in this house our heartfelt condolences. To Mrs. Casselman and to the sons and daughter go our heartfelt feelings of sympathy.

It is very seldom—it certainly has not occurred in my time—that at the same time as I refer to the passing of a fellow member in this house condolences with one of the hon. members should also be in order. I refer to the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe). To him and through him to the other surviving members of the family goes that abiding feeling of comfort which flows from the membership of this house. The hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe has lost a son-in-law, but all of us have lost a fine public

servant who gave devoted service and made a contribution to the betterment of his country which few of us are privileged to make.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Casselman belonged to that group of men who in their devotion to their country earned not only the commendation of their fellow men but, in this house, something that is far greater—that feeling of fellowship which binds us all together and which is evinced on occasions such as this. I ask the sympathy of the House of Commons, and I am confident it will be extended to those who mourn at this time.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has I am sure spoken for all members of the house in the tribute of respect and regret which he has just paid to our late colleague, but on behalf of the opposition and on my own behalf I would like to join him in that tribute. I think when we met this morning many of us hoped that at this opening we would be spared the sad duty of paying a tribute to one of our colleagues who had passed away since we last met, but when we came here this morning we learned that that was not to be.

The Prime Minister expressed in words which I believe reflect the feelings of us all what those of us who were his colleagues in the house thought of the late member for Grenville-Dundas. As has been said, he was the dean of the House of Commons having been first elected in 1921, but before he began his long period of service to his country in this house he had already served Canada gallantly and well in world war I. Throughout his career in the house and out of the house he took a great interest in the welfare of veterans.

For many years, of course, Mr. Casselman was the chief whip of his party, and as such he was an officer of parliament who won the respect and affection of members on all sides and in all parties. It is a melancholy circumstance that he has been succeeded as dean of the house by one who was so close to him not only in friendship but through the marriage of his daughter to Mr. Casselman. I am referring, as the Prime Minister has referred, to our friend the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe).

May I conclude by joining the Prime Minister once again in the expressions of regret that he has given, and tell him that we sympathize with him and the members of his party in the loss of a valued party colleague. Especially do we extend at this moment our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Casselman and the members of the family in this hour of great sorrow.