

Tributes

Under the leadership of Fred Williams, the Royal Canadian Legion launched a vigorous and an inspirational campaign for national unity in this country, because legion members have known for many years that this country is worth fighting for. Fred Williams reminded them of that and he leaves them as he leaves us to carry on the fight.

[*Translation*]

Personally, I will miss his advice, his company and his good humour. He always maintained an optimistic view of life, even though his health had been failing for several months.

[*English*]

On a personal level, I will miss his helpful advice, his excellent company, and his effervescent good humour. He had an optimistic outlook on life at all times in spite of being in failing health with cancer for many months.

I am sure that as we mourn him all his legion comrades will be consoled by the thought that at the time of his death he had achieved what he always had as a great ambition, that is the leadership of the organization he loved, the Royal Canadian Legion. Fred Williams was a proud Newfoundlander and a great Canadian. He will be missed by all who knew him.

• (1510)

The sympathy of the government, the party on this side of the House and certainly my Department of Veterans Affairs Canada goes out to his wife Elizabeth and the rest of his family at this time.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition I rise today to join in the tribute to the late Fred Williams.

Fred Williams was a man who distinguished himself by a lifetime of service. As a member of the Royal Navy during World War II his contribution, like that of thousands of other Newfoundlanders, meant much to the victory the allies achieved.

After the war, as a Newfoundlander and as a Canadian since 1949 his good work continued. He served for many years as a member and most recently as Dominion Command President of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Fred Williams, through his work over the years, stands as a shining example of the Legion's motto: *We Care*.

Canada has a proud tradition of caring for its veterans and much of the legislation which has come forward over the years has been at the urging of the Royal Canadian Legion and people like the late Mr. Williams.

Even up to the time of his death Mr. Williams was working on the Canadian Unity Program which may prove to be one of his and the Legion's greatest challenges and greatest legacies.

To the family of the late Fred Williams and to the Royal Canadian Legion, my party and I extend our sincere sympathy. Though he is gone, those things for which he stood and the ideals for which he strove will live on. His living memorial will be the work he did with the Legion, and though he will be sadly missed, he will be long remembered.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister and welcome him back from a very good mission to Sicily and Italy in remembrance of our veterans who are still there. I want to thank him for his tribute to Mr. Fred Williams, the late President of the Royal Canadian Legion whom I did not have the privilege of knowing, but as a Legion member I had many fellow Legion members express to me their high regard for him.

I can say one thing: in my years in this place there have been a few times when we have made a major accomplishment to redress former wrongs. While Mr. Williams was President of the Royal Canadian Legion, he led it into fully supporting the declaring of merchant seamen as full veterans, like any other veteran of any of the Armed Forces. That will be an everlasting memento to Mr. Williams as well as the Legion and disabled vets, all of whom support such a move.

I join with the minister and my colleague from the Official Opposition and on behalf of my party and myself in extending our condolences and best wishes to his wife and family. We know, in its real tradition, the Legion will do its best to find someone to fill his shoes.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few personal words to the statements made by our Minister of Veterans Affairs and representatives of the opposition parties here today, since I knew Fred Williams and his family for many years.