

Of him it can be said that virtually his entire life was one of service. His contribution to Canada and democracy was always one above and beyond the call of duty. He gave more than was expected, and always with a quiet modesty and good cheer that became a man who never turned his back on the foe, whether military or political.

The thoughts of this House remember him fondly and go out today to his wife, Blytha, his close friends and family who have suffered a loss comparable only to that suffered by the nation.

Of him, John Diefenbaker once said, "He was a great soldier." We can do no better here today than echo those words.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words on behalf of our Party because I represent a riding in British Columbia which is one of the places that General Pearkes served so well. It has already been said that he was a Mountie. He was a Victoria Cross winner in World War I. He was a staff officer. He was a politician. He was Minister of National Defence. He was a representative of the Queen as Lieutenant-Governor of my Province of British Columbia in 1960.

He was a gentleman, a soldier, and a person of great integrity. If that could be said of any of us in the House, we would consider it to be a wonderful honour.

Most of my generation never served in the Armed Forces. Thank God we did not have to go to war. I believe we must thank people like General Pearkes and other soldiers who did go to war to serve Canada and help make the world a safer place for people of my generation.

It has been said that General Pearkes was a genuine Canadian hero. At the time of its fortieth anniversary, D-Day is much on our minds. Many of Canada's old soldiers are going over to the beaches of Normandy. I trust and hope that they will reflect today on the passing of General Pearkes. He had a full life and I think we should be thankful for that. Old soldiers never die.

On behalf of my Party I want to extend to his family our thoughts and gratitude for the fullness of this man's life.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, when I came here as a member in 1957, it was to assume a post as first parliamentary assistant to the Minister of National Defence, the late George Pearkes.

● (1410)

As a veteran of World War II with a lot of friends at National Defence, and working under a man who was Officer Commanding, First Canadian Division, when I went overseas in 1941, not to his division but to another formation, I can assure the House that he had the loyalty of Canada's Forces behind him. As was indicated by the Hon. Member for Yukon

*The Late George R. Pearkes*

(Mr. Nielsen), there were tough decisions, I remember, on the Arrow and on the Bomarc. However, he always served as Minister of National Defence in the House with the greatest courtesy to all, and with a determination to get the job done.

May I just add a further note that in his role as Grand President of the Royal Canadian Legion, a year or so before he retired from that position he received an honour from the Legion in convention in Edmonton which is rarely accorded—a standing ovation on being introduced.

He had an honourable life since leaving the office of Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, where he was one of the most popular Lieutenant-Governors in recent history. We who have known him for many years watched his declining health with continuing concern. May we say that it is unfortunate he did not reach a century. On the other hand, I think his family and friends will be relieved that he has slipped quietly away. To his widow, Blytha, and to his son, John, may we all say we are sorry. George was one of Canada's great men.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, General Pearkes was a legend in the Canadian Forces, but his life before he joined and after he left the Forces was equally outstanding. He came to Canada to homestead on a prairie farm in 1906. Then he joined the Royal North-West Mounted Police as a rookie and served as a constable, serving in the Yukon and elsewhere. In January, 1915, he joined the Canadian Mounted Rifles, now the British Columbia Dragoons, which was then a cavalry unit stationed in Victoria. He joined as a private soldier and worked his way up through the ranks, achieving a record in the year 1916 which has not been equalled before or since, of going from the rank of Sergeant through all ranks to the rank of Major in one year. He finished World War I as a Lieutenant-Colonel, with the Military Cross, Distinguished Service Order, and the most highly regarded decoration in the world, the Victoria Cross.

He remained in the permanent Force in that fine regiment, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and, on the outbreak of World War II, he again went overseas in his country's service. He commanded the Second Brigade and then the First Canadian Infantry Division, where I first met him while serving under his command. I served under him again when he was General Officer Commanding, Pacific Command, and of course when he became Minister of National Defence in 1957.

His moves from the military to the House of Commons, to the Privy Council, and to Government House in Victoria, in his mind I believe, were simply a continuation of his public service and his duty.

It is difficult to find words to describe adequately the respect and affection which the people of Victoria, and indeed the Canadian public, felt for this man. To state it simply, they trusted him and they believed him. His service to Canada in war and in peace set an example which may never be equalled.