

## THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 13, 1976

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

### THE LATE HONOURABLE J. HARPER PROWSE

#### TRIBUTES

**Hon. Raymond J. Perrault:** Honourable senators, we were all saddened to learn of the death on September 28 of our esteemed colleague, Senator J. Harper Prowse. For over ten years he was a distinguished member of this chamber, where he was a strong voice for Canada, for western Canada, and certainly for his native Alberta.

Above all he will be remembered by all of us as a man of infinite compassion, because he was a humanitarian in every sense of the word.

The late Senator Prowse was a graduate of the University of Alberta Law School. In 1938 he had embarked on a career in journalism. He joined the Edmonton *Bulletin*—a publication no longer in existence—and was a writer for that newspaper. When the Second World War broke out he enlisted in the Loyal Edmonton Regiment. He spent six years overseas and was twice wounded in action.

As many honourable senators know, Senator Prowse was first elected to the Alberta Legislature in 1944 as one of three non-political representatives of the armed forces, and at the same time he continued his journalistic career, writing a popular veterans affairs column in the *Bulletin* entitled "The Road Ahead."

He was elected leader of the Liberal Party in 1947, at a difficult time for his party in the history of politics in Alberta. He was a challenging opponent to the government of the day, headed by our distinguished colleague, Senator Manning. Senator Prowse held that position until resigning as leader of his party in 1958, and retiring from provincial politics in 1959.

It was during the period when Senator Prowse was leader of the Liberal Party in Alberta, and all the challenges and vicissitudes which that meant in terms of being in opposition to a strong government, that I came to know him personally and came to be inspired by many of the concepts and ideals which he enunciated and propagated during that time.

He was summoned to the Senate in February of 1966 and served on our Finance, Transportation, and Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committees, and worked with a great deal of distinction despite his physical disabilities.

The Edmonton *Journal*, in an editorial tribute to our late colleague, wrote:

J. Harper Prowse was a man of many talents and many interests. He tried much and accomplished much. He was a man to whom adversity was inspiration.

His death at the age of 63, an untimely death, is a severe loss to this chamber, and I am sure that all honourable senators will wish to join with me in expressing our deepest sympathy to his mother, his wife Irene, his daughter Dianne, his son James, and his other relatives and many friends.

**Hon. Jacques Flynn:** Honourable senators, in Harper Prowse death has claimed a man of fortitude and vision, a libertarian who fought valiantly and effectively in defence of personal freedom. Senator Prowse was concerned about the encroachment of government, labour, the business community, and indeed, of society in general, upon the rights and privileges of the individual Canadian.

He was an exceptionally fine orator, one of the classical variety, and he was never better on his feet than when he was castigating authoritarians and defending the little guy against a huge, insensitive society mostly governed by bureaucrats.

We will miss Harper Prowse because he saw so vividly the dangers for the individual in an overgoverned society. Not only did he see what most of us miss, but spoke out forcefully, with the eloquence that commands respect and ensures a hearing.

Anger was not, to him, a vice; it was a cleansing virtue; and though he was a most pleasant, amiable and, indeed, very sensitive man, Harper Prowse, as a politician and protector of individual rights, could most accurately be described as an angry man. He had another reason to appear to be an angry man. A political career for a Liberal in Alberta in the last 40 years was as frustrating and punishing a career as it was for a Conservative in Quebec.

Those of us who are concerned about the erosion of individual liberty mourn the passing of Harper Prowse, a comrade in arms. To his wife and children I offer, on behalf of my colleagues in the opposition, our most heartfelt condolences.

**Hon. David A. Croll:** Honourable senators, we all referred to Senator Prowse as "Harper." His correct name was James Harper Prowse, and he was born in Taber, Alberta. His grandfather was a member of the Senate from Murray Harbour, Prince Edward Island. He graduated from Dalhousie University, and the University of Alberta, in law. He loved the law, and, more particularly, the criminal law. He understood its nuances and its compassion. He was a very good lawyer, and one of the best jury lawyers in the west.

He was a reporter for the Edmonton *Bulletin* for a while, and had a radio program on CFRN in Edmonton. Then he practised law in Edmonton and subsequently enlisted in July