

The late Gordon Graydon

THE LATE GORDON GRAYDON

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MEMBER FOR PEEL

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it is again necessary to inject a note of sadness into the opening proceedings of this new parliament. You have just informed us that since the general election Mr. Gordon Graydon, who had been chosen for the fifth consecutive time to represent the constituency of Peel, has passed away. His death is a great loss not only for his many friends but also for the nation as a whole.

Never defeated at the polls, Mr. Graydon had been a member of parliament since 1935. During that time he had, I think all will agree, been one of the outstanding personalities in the house. He had been chairman of the Progressive Conservative Association of Canada, his party's house leader during the latter part of the war, and as such leader of the opposition.

Gordon Graydon devoted much of his time and attention to foreign affairs. He was a member of the Canadian delegation at the San Francisco conference which drafted the charter of the United Nations. Later he went to Paris and New York on several occasions as a parliamentary adviser to the Canadian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. In parliament he was his party's spokesman on external affairs and ever since its establishment was vice-chairman of the standing parliamentary committee on external affairs.

Among his many fine qualities, and there were many, Mr. Graydon will perhaps be most remembered for his balanced judgment, his constructive attitude and his warm, friendly personality. His opinions on public affairs were obviously the result of keen insight and deep reflection. Frequently, as is only natural, his political opponents did not agree with his views, but he nevertheless maintained the best of relations with everyone in the house. His cheerful personality won for him a host of friends here, in his own constituency, and in the country as a whole. I was proud to count myself among them. This friendship and confidence was expressed by his constituents in the recent elections only a few weeks before his untimely death. I think the words he spoke himself last year in a splendid tribute to the late King George VI might well be applied to him, for his life was also characterized by a remarkable and genuine devotion to duty, and provided an inspiring example of courage and humanity. I am sure I speak for all members of the house in expressing to Mrs. Graydon and to her daughters our deepest sympathy.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): In joining with the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, in expressing the sorrow that we all feel at the untimely death of Mr. Gordon Graydon I do so with a particular feeling of loss because, as the members of this house will all recall, he had been my closest associate at all times in the House of Commons and had sat beside me on all occasions since I came here. His was truly a life of public service. As a very young man, he accepted responsibility in public office and before he came here in 1935 had already established himself in the confidence of the people in the community in which he lived. Above all, those who knew him well, I believe, always carry in their minds the recollection of a genial, friendly, lovable man who endeared himself to everyone with whom he was associated, regardless of political persuasion or any other characteristic.

As the Prime Minister has pointed out, he had specialized in external affairs. He had spoken for our party on that subject on all occasions for several years, and he had built up a close and intimate knowledge of many of the people who today take their part in the international gatherings where the hope of peace is still very much in the minds of those who meet. I think it was very appropriate, and very much appreciated, that a tribute should have been paid at the United Nations by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson). I know the sentiments expressed there were shared by all Canadians.

Truly, he carried friendship to the very highest level and it was typical of him that in a letter which he dictated in hospital to me just five days before he died he closed with the words, "What in the world would we do without our friends?" In those words he summed up his whole attitude towards public life and towards the duties that he carried out. His service to his own community and to his country was a triumph of simple and unselfish devotion. He was dedicated to the task he had undertaken of representing his own people in the House of Commons and serving Canada in this particular field of endeavour.

I know that everyone here will join with the Prime Minister in the sympathy that we feel for his wife and for his three daughters in the great loss that they have sustained in so tragic a manner. He died young, far too young. Perhaps of him these words could be used: "That life is long which answers life's great need." In a very real way he had served the higher purposes of life itself, the service of his fellow man.