

Tributes

persuaded to run for Parliament. A colleague commented that his experience in the pulpit made him one of the easiest speakers to listen to in this House. Though his voice was strong and authoritative in the House his firm Christian faith was quiet and always consistent. His background in the ministry served him well in encouraging what he thought was the ethical fibre needed in parliamentarians.

When a secretary passed away and no funeral was planned several staffers asked Dr. Patterson to lead a memorial service for those who wished to remember and pay their respects. It was not unusual for colleagues and staffers from various areas of the Hill to drop by his office to discuss a difficult time or ask for a word of encouragement and advice.

Following a stroke in early March of this year our friend was in hospital for four weeks when family members were able to gather. He passed away peacefully in the arms of Charlotte, his loving wife of 56 years, with his children at his side. Alex is fondly remembered, deeply missed and will always remain so to his family, friends and colleagues here. He will remain a perfect example of a faithful husband and father.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues in the New Democratic caucus I would like to extend our condolences to Mr. Patterson's family and to join in remembering him and his service here in the House of Commons.

I remember him personally. We shared five years together here. Although I did not have the opportunity to work with him in committee and therefore did not get to know him very well the overriding image I have of him is that of a real gentleman. He was a fellow whom one could speak to in the elevator, the hallway or the House, and although members said he could be forthright he was the kind of person one felt one could talk to. Sometimes those things do go together. I want to express our condolences.

Looking over Mr. Patterson's career before I came to this House I noted that he was defeated twice and re-elected. That is not something that happens to a lot of members. It is an unusual thing for someone to be twice defeated at different intervals and then re-elected.

It shows his commitment to the House of Commons as a place where he wanted to live out his commitment to his understanding of reality.

I note also that he was a minister in the Nazarene Church and I appreciate that element of his vocation as well. Although as a fellow Christian I may have come to different conclusions about how we express our Christian faith in political life that is something I also want to take note of and to respect.

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in paying tribute to a man everyone here respected. He was a man of whom it is easy to speak well because he was a good man. He was thought well of in the party, in the entire House of Commons and obviously by his constituents.

I remember my former colleague, the former member from Capilano, told me once that when Alex Patterson was speaking he would come down from his office and listen to him in the House. That says something about the quality of speaker that Alex Patterson was. It was good oratory but it was also good content. He was a good member of Parliament.

I think the members of the opposition also recognized that while he spoke in opposition he did not speak in malice. There is a great deal of difference between the two. We in the House of Commons need to learn lessons like that from a man like Alex Patterson.

• (1530)

Obviously he was also a good member for his constituency. As members who have spoken before me have noted, he was a man who was constantly re-elected. As my hon. friend from Winnipeg Transcona has mentioned, he could also be defeated but was re-elected. That does not happen too often.

He was re-elected under changing circumstances for his riding. If one compares the boundaries of his constituency in 1953 to what they were in 1984 one recognizes that there were many changes in his constituency both in its size and in its constituents. Yet he commanded the respect of the people all through those years. At the outset it was a constituency that was probably entirely