

THE LATE SENATOR TURRIFF

TRIBUTES TO HIS MEMORY

Hon. W. B. WILLOUGHBY: Honourable senators, there devolves upon me as leader of this House a duty which is not as pleasant as the others I have had to discharge since we have met in session, and that is to allude to the death of Senator Turriff. Unfortunately, at every session we have to mourn the loss of one or more senators, to whom we pay our tribute of respect, somewhat like the ancient Romans who used to say to those about to die, "We salute you."

It was my privilege to know of Senator Turriff for a long time before I met him. I am a pioneer of Western Canada, but in a lesser degree than Senator Turriff. He was one of the very early settlers who took part in the public life of the West. Long before the formation of the provinces he was a member of the old Assembly, having been elected to that body three times. Those were stirring days; even more stirring than we have witnessed since. There was constant strife between Ottawa, representing those in charge of the administration, and a population always demanding more rights and powers than were accorded to them; not wholly dissatisfied, but pressing on, and chafing at any delay in securing the privileges that were to be enjoyed under the British North America Act in a full-fledged province.

Senator Turriff then, as you know, entered Dominion politics as the representative of the Assiniboia district. On three occasions he was elected. Once he was defeated, but only after making a most remarkable run against the then Minister of the Interior. The late senator was a born fighter. He stripped for the fight, struck hard, and spared not, nor did he ask for quarter from the other side. Later, as older members of the House will know, he became identified with the administration, holding an official post at Ottawa in the Department of the Interior. He was a good executive officer. Those who recall Sir Clifford Sifton as Minister of that Department know that he was a great driving force. There had been a time when the administration of the West was not conducted with as much despatch as the people desired. Settlement was proceeding rapidly, but progress in other lines was slow and difficult. I remember one of the members in another place, now on the Bench, saying that he used to receive daily from twenty to sixty letters with reference to homesteads and matters pertaining to them. The administrative machinery of the Department of

the Interior was very much clogged up. Such was the situation when Sir Clifford Sifton took office. We did not all agree with his policies, but it was due to his executive ability and despatch, and to the assistance of the late Senator Turriff, that conditions were very much improved.

It will be remembered that Senator Turriff was injured in a street railway accident. He had been a fairly vigorous man, though not particularly robust, and I am fairly certain from my own knowledge—for I saw him quite often during his illness—that his life was shortened by that accident. The new senators who did not know him in his more active days, but saw him hobble into this Chamber, a cripple, his life ebbing away, would not realize what a vigorous character he had been.

We of the West are grateful to Senator Turriff as a champion of the rights of those who pioneered in that country, for he was always willing to take up a challenge on behalf of the people of the West. It may be that the West was sometimes impatient. I think it is typical of new countries that they are impatient to get all the advantages of older and more advanced civilization.

Senator Turriff was married twice. He is survived by his wife and four children—three daughters and one son. I am sure every honourable member will agree that, as I said at the outset, such a duty as I am performing now, which falls to the lot of the leader of this House at the commencement of a session, is a mournful one. I know that I voice the feelings of all honourable members when I say that the deepest sympathy of this House is extended to the late Senator Turriff's widow.

Hon. R. DANDURAND: Honourable members, I concur in every word that has been said by the honourable leader of this House in paying tribute to the memory of our late lamented friend and colleague, Hon. Mr. Turriff. I learned to appreciate his work long before he came into this Chamber. That was at a time when there were only two political parties in Canada, when the Progressive group were to be found mostly in the Liberal ranks. Members of that group came from the West, and naturally they understood Western needs and interests better than their colleagues who represented other parts of the country. Mr. Turriff was at that time a member of the other House, and I had opportunities of listening to him when I attended some of the caucuses of the Liberal Party at which the policy of the Laurier administration was shaped. As all honourable members know, the purpose of caucuses is to inquire