

Tribute

[English]

Working with three prime ministers and a multitude of provincial premiers, he assumed the status of senior statesman on this issue. He believed to the core of his being that Canada was a unique land, a land endowed with a host of treasures: its natural resources; its rugged and profound beauty; its magnificent peoples that make Canada their home. His contribution to the cause of national unity will be sorely missed. His legacy, however, will live on.

I believe that when the history of Canada is written, Richard Bennett Hatfield will be accorded the place of honour he so richly deserves: consummate premier of New Brunswick, avowed pan-Canadian, reformer and leader.

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, Richard Bennett Hatfield served the people of New Brunswick as premier for 17 years. He led his Conservative Party to an unprecedented four election victories, taking the measure of four Liberal leaders, including the member for Acadie—Bathurst.

Richard Hatfield was proud of his deep understanding of New Brunswickers and his finely honed political instincts rarely failed him, especially when it came to what the electors expected from their premier and their government. Premier Hatfield often said that the secret of his success was that he trusted New Brunswickers and they trusted him because he reflected their values and their principles. He was always supremely confident that their sense of justice and fairness would prevail, come election time, and four times out of five he was right.

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For two decades his presence on the national and international scene was the focus for how the rest of the world viewed New Brunswick.

[Translation]

Richard Hatfield contributed greatly to the development of the Acadian community in his province. Unequivocal proof of his dedication to the development of the French fact is found in the unanimous approval by the legislative assembly of New Brunswick of Bill 88, an Act to recognize the equality of the two official language communities of New Brunswick. The bilateral entrenchment of Bill 88 in the Canadian Constitution would

crown the courageous efforts of this good friend of the New Brunswick Acadians.

[English]

Chief Rolling Thunder had a special place in his heart for the Micmacs and the Maliseets of New Brunswick and his genuine commitment to aboriginal people was expressed recently in an eloquent statement by Dr. Charles Paul, who described his friend as a true champion of the Indian people.

Richard Hatfield was always, as my friend has said, a passionate spokesman for Canada and in view of his key role in the repatriation of the Constitution, Canadians know he would have made an important contribution to the current constitutional debate.

We are all saddened by the untimely passing of a man who devoted much of his life to his province and his country.

My colleagues and I extend our sympathy to the members of Richard Hatfield's family and to his many friends in Canada and around the world.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Beauséjour in New Brunswick, and especially as a minister who had to deal with Mr. Hatfield in the patriation of the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, I was very sad to see that he was leaving us so early.

[Translation]

Richard Hatfield was a truly great Canadian. Throughout our negotiations with the provinces on the patriation of the Constitution as well as on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, what I found most impressive in this man was the wonderful courage he has shown throughout his political career. He has never been afraid, although himself an anglophone, to confront individuals who did not appreciate at all what he was doing to promote the French fact in New Brunswick.

Also, as the previous speaker noted, he was incredibly ahead of his time and displayed a tremendous strength of character on these two issues, even if he lived in a society which made it difficult at times to champion the rights of the native people. Every minute of every hour I have spent working with him was enjoyable; his behaviour was always proper and he was very witty. He never looked