

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 4, 1986

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

### THE LATE HONOURABLE T. C. DOUGLAS, P.C.

#### TRIBUTES

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate I should like to take advantage of this, the first opportunity that has been accorded to this body to offer a word of tribute to and appreciation of the life and work of the Honourable Thomas Clement Douglas, P.C., B.A., M.A., LL.D. I suppose that, as a westerner, I had to be conscious of Tommy Douglas for many a long year. We, in Manitoba, are rather proud of the fact that he was a graduate of Brandon College, now the University of Brandon. Regardless of political affiliation, we followed his activities as an M.P., in the first instance, then as M.L.A., afterwards as Premier of Saskatchewan and, after that, his record as Leader of the New Democratic Party in the national field.

I have the most vivid memory of my first meeting with Mr. Douglas, which was at what was then called the Dominion-Provincial conference in 1958. I attended it for the first time to represent the province of Manitoba, while he was already a seasoned veteran as the representative of the province of Saskatchewan. I always remember the clarity with which he presented his ideas, the cogency of his arguments and the appeal of the policies that he was recommending for consideration at those conferences. I venture to say that Mr. Douglas was the most distinguished premier that the province of Saskatchewan has had and was certainly an ornament to the sentiment of western Canada.

His achievements, of course, are well known. His work in the development of social policy and as a social pioneer was of landmark proportions and has affected the life of every Canadian in our country today. His understanding of human nature and of human needs was, indeed, remarkable and was, I think, one of the great secrets of his success in public life. He brought a civility to politics which we sometimes miss these days. I never heard him, nor, indeed, have I ever heard of him speaking in harsh or unpleasant terms about political matters. His gifts as a raconteur and as an orator were certainly very persuasive in stimulating the people of his province to support him both federally and provincially over many long years.

He was the first national leader of the NDP, to which he gave his usual distinguished concentration. He was an unforgettable actor on the national scene and, in my opinion, one of the great Canadian statesmen of his generation. I am sure this house would like Mrs. Douglas and his two daughters to know

that the Senate notes the passing of this great Canadian with respect and affection.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, the Leader of the Government has spoken so eloquently and accurately about the late Mr. T. C. Douglas that it is unnecessary for me to add anything very much except our support for the comments he has made. The Leader of the Government has mentioned the western roots of Mr. Douglas and pointed out that they exerted an important influence on his life. But Mr. Douglas was, in fact, well known in every part of Canada. As honourable senators know, he travelled frequently in the Atlantic provinces and in other parts of Canada as leader of his party. So, while he was appreciated for his western roots, he also reflected a Canadianism that was greatly appreciated.

Honourable senators, even politics, as it is practised today in Canada, is becoming increasingly bureaucratized so that often political parties, political leaders and even members of Parliament depend upon elaborate systems of research and support staffs to establish for them their ideas and their policies. Mr. Douglas became a star in the political firmament in his own right and his stardom flowed from his personal convictions and from his personal philosophy. He did not have to rely upon a flow of information or ideas from outside sources for the nourishment of his convictions, those convictions which he carried to accomplishment. As premier of his own province and, later, as leader of his party and as a member of the House of Commons, he constantly kept his ideas and his convictions before his colleagues.

Mr. Douglas completed his service in the House of Commons as a member of Parliament, having stepped down as leader of his party, and served as energy critic, in which capacity he followed the events of the House with the interest and the passion that he had demonstrated when he was leader of his party.

I had the opportunity to know Mr. Douglas and together with other members of the House of Commons remember him for his wit, his geniality, his accessibility and the way in which he maintained his own point of view without making it difficult for others.

Honourable senators, I add my words of support to those of the Leader of the Government and join particularly in the expression of condolences which he has offered to Mr. Douglas' bereaved family.

**Hon. David A. Croll:** Honourable senators, I join in the tributes paid by the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition.