

Réal Caouette dies

Former leader of the Federal Social Credit party, Réal Caouette, died on December 17 two weeks after undergoing open heart surgery. He was 59.

Prime Minister Trudeau described the former Member of Parliament for the Quebec riding of Temiscamingue as one of Canada's "original political spokesmen."

"He knew that French Canadians must build their future on the vast potential for development of our federal system," continued Mr. Trudeau, and said many Canadians saw the expression of their own thoughts and feelings in Mr. Caouette's "colourful speech and forthright manner."

Réal Caouette, a native of Amos, Abitibi, Quebec, was first elected to the House of Commons in 1946 but was defeated in the elections of 1949, 1956, 1957 and 1958. He was re-elected in the general election of 1962 and was the Social Credit party leader since 1963. He resigned because of ill health in November 1976.

It was Caouette who first coined the phrase "Vote Social Credit — you have nothing to lose." The party obtained 30 seats in the 1962 election but lost six of them the following year.

Representatives of all parties paid tribute to the former Social Credit



Réal Caouette

leader: "Réal Caouette had an unshakable faith in this country that could serve as an example to us all" (Pierre Trudeau); "An historic man" (André Fortin, Social Credit party leader); "A loss from the Canadian scene of a very strong force for Canadian unity" (Progressive Conservative party leader, Joe Clark); "Canada has lost a man who based most of his political activity on his profound commitment to the continuation of our more than 100-year history of federalism" (New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent).

Residential rehabilitation program continues this year

There will be enough money in the 1977 federal housing budget to maintain a high level of residential rehabilitation, announced Urban Affairs Minister André Ouellet, recently.

Because of the popularity of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, many municipalities across Canada ran out of funds that had been allocated by the Federal Government to the scheme.

"It would have been a pity to change a winning program," Mr. Ouellet said. "I am pleased to announce that there will be substantially more money available for RRAP in 1977. Municipalities should be advised that the present program regulations and guidelines will not be changed at this time and applicants should be assured that their applications can be accepted and

processed according to the present ground rules. The staff of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation throughout the country has been instructed that applications for assistance can continue to be accepted, processed and committed under the present rules."

RRAP provides loans and grants to help people who qualify in terms of income and other conditions to rehabilitate their homes to acceptable standards of health and safety and to prolong the building's useful life. CMHC in 1976 budgeted \$61.1 million for rehabilitation under the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, the Rural and Native Housing Program and in other specially designated areas — an increase of 400 per cent over the amount budgeted in 1975.

Integrated organization and amendments to the U.I. Act.

A bill to establish a new Department of Employment and Immigration and a new Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, and to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, was introduced for first reading in the House of Commons on December 9 by Manpower and Immigration Minister Bud Cullen.

The major amendments contained in the bill are as follows:

- The integration of the Unemployment Insurance Commission and the Department of Manpower and Immigration to form the new Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, with a small supporting Department;
- An increase in the number of weeks required to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits (the "entrance requirement") from eight weeks to 12;
- A changed, simplified method used to determine a claimant's entitlement to benefit (the "benefit structure");
- Amendments to authorize more productive, "developmental" uses of unemployment insurance funds, including income maintenance for claimants on training courses, job-creation projects, and work-sharing programs.

The integration of the Department of Manpower and Immigration and the Unemployment Insurance Commission will produce a new organization capable of providing a "one-stop" service to clients, and will facilitate a more integrated approach to the planning and administration of employment, unemployment and immigration programs. The well-established policy of close consultation and co-operation between government, labour and business will be continued through the representation of the private sector in the Commission itself and in the newly established Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council.

Unemployment Insurance arrangements for trainees will be streamlined; UI will now pay full income maintenance for claimants handicapped by a lack of, or inappropriate, job skills who are referred to manpower training courses.

In addition, experimental programs will begin on a limited trial basis in the areas of job-creation and work-sharing.