

Routine Proceedings

your even-handed speakership has enabled this place to function as well as it has.

I say thank you to the Clerk of the House and all the Table officers who have worked so hard late into the night many times to facilitate the work of this House. Thank you to the staff at Journals and Table Research who have provided us with incredible back-up service to make this House of Commons function. Thank you to the pages, the security staff and especially the House leaders, my colleagues with whom I have worked for many years. Thank you to the Whips of the various political parties, my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan and my colleague for Nanaimo—Cowichan as caucus chair. Again I want to acknowledge the fact that we have worked incredibly co-operatively over the months and years past. I do not think people appreciate the amount of co-operation and the give and take that occurs in this place to make this House of Commons work as effectively as it does.

I want to thank the House staff members for their support. They are very dedicated and talented individuals. I also want to thank the members' staff who work with us as members of Parliament to enable us to pursue our responsibilities and duties as called upon by our constituents.

I want to say a particular thank you to my family and friends. The members of my family have given up a great deal over the last 14 years and I appreciate their dedication and what they have given up to have their husband and father away for long periods of time.

I want to say thank you to my leader, the member for Yukon, and of course I say thank you to my Whip, my House leader's assistant and the deputy House leader, the hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona. Thank you to the people of Kamloops who for the last 13 years have given me their vote of confidence and enabled me to serve them in honour. It has been a privilege to serve the people of the great city of Kamloops and the surrounding region.

I also want to say to my friends and colleagues in the House of Commons that we have carried on passionate debates in this House. We have confronted one another with different points of view. I think what is fundamental to this House and the parliamentary process is that while we may differ in terms of what we believe is the appropriate course of action to take economically, socially, culturally or politically, we continue to respect one another for our different points of views.

Whether it is simply opposition parties debating with the government or opposition parties debating with opposition parties, I think the important thing to say to the people of Canada is that while we debate and argue strenuously and this is often a very combative environment, underneath it all is a respect and compassion that we share with one another.

It is with reluctance that I wish everyone well in the months ahead. As we enter into our various political campaigns we all have the respect of the people of Canada and the commitment that the collective will of our constituents is the right decision. I think it is fair to say that those who are returned to this place will be the correct people to be returned to this place as a reflection of the democratic principles to which we all so strongly adhere and believe.

Again I want to thank my colleagues for this experience and look forward to seeing the will of the people reflected in the next House of Commons.

• (2030)

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound—Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words. I would like to thank most sincerely my colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

I have had the privilege of sitting on the Standing Committee for National Defence and Veterans Affairs with the hon. member and certainly he has added greatly to it. He has had more experience than I as far as defence is concerned.

I do not know him too well but I have talked to him briefly. He said he enlisted as a young sailor some few years ago from a small fishing village in Newfoundland and retired as a Rear Admiral while still a young man and then entered the House of Commons. It was certainly great to be with him.

I have served 21 years as the member of Parliament for Parry Sound—Muskoka. I entered the House of Commons at an advanced age compared to most. I remember the people at the time saying that if I got elected at that age I would probably only last one term and be a sort of caretaker member of Parliament.

In fact I agreed with them and said that is probably what I would do. I have been carrying on as a caretaker member of Parliament for six elections, successfully I might say. At my tender age I have come to the conclusion that it is probably time for retirement before the voters retire me. They say it is a good idea to leave while people still want you. There have been a few that