

The Late Olof Palme

welfare system which is renowned as being the most advanced and most progressive in the world.

The people of Sweden have lost a highly articulate and sometimes controversial spokesman for social justice. The world has lost a man who devoted himself to peace and to the dignity of the human spirit. His death is a great and tragic loss, not only for the people of Sweden but for every human being who believes in what he stood for. We will mourn his passing and in so doing we will celebrate the ideals for which he stood.

Some Hon. Members: Hear hear!

● (1110)

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, distinguished Vice-President of the Socialist International, was cruelly assassinated on Friday in Stockholm as he was walking after having seen a movie with his wife—so typical of both the man and the nation which he happened to have led. It was so typical that he was simply out walking, that he had just viewed a recently produced Swedish film and that he was unprotected. All of these facts say a lot about the man.

I have known Olof Palme for more than 10 years. I profoundly regret his passing, both as a colleague and as a friend. He was a marvellous, energetic and imaginative citizen of the world.

Olof Palme devoted himself to improving the human condition, not simply in his beloved Sweden but throughout the globe. He came to his social democratic philosophy not by birth but by conviction. Born into the Swedish aristocracy, born affluent, he thought with depth and passion about the future of his nation and about the future of the world. He became a dedicated and imaginative social democrat.

I would like to say something very briefly about his goals because I think they are instructive for us all. He was determined, first, to improve his own society by means of achieving a better distribution of power and income at home. He never ceased saying that a true democracy must extend the same principles of liberty, equality and participation from political institutions to the economy. In my view he was quite correct in seeing this and not state ownership as the fundamental principle of democratic socialism. Therefore, it is not accidental that the Swedes probably have more individual rights than any other industrialized democracy in the world. It is not incidental that they probably have the most equitable distribution of income of any advanced society in the world. Finally, it is not accidental that in Sweden, perhaps more than in any other nation, in the past decade under his immensely creative leadership, more progress has been made in involving ordinary men and women in the decisions which actually affect them in their places of work.

[*Translation*]

I also would like to mention his concern regarding the effects of rapid technological change. While accepting technological change in a very positive way, he was at the same time

determined to provide a clean and healthy environment for his people and to aim for full employment.

More than any other industrialized country, Sweden has been able to achieve goals that a number of countries have wrongly branded as incompatible.

[*English*]

It is not accidental that one of his most recent acts as Prime Minister was to name the man who has now succeeded him as Minister responsible for the future, a man who would have had responsibilities in his Cabinet for co-ordinating activities of various departments to ensure that future planning would result in the implementation of these goals and philosophies in which he so profoundly believed.

The third aspect of Olof Palme's life which I would like to underline in this world of increasing nationalism—and I speak as a nationalist of one sort, as a man who can see nationalism having very many positive forms—is that he was well aware that much of nationalism, or many types of nationalism, can lead to very unfortunate consequences. He was therefore a determined internationalist.

In this regard he was among world leaders in working incessantly for peace and disarmament. He worked incessantly in the international domain to solve the problems of the Third World and to ensure that those countries, largely in the northern part of the globe, did what they could to redistribute wealth among the people of the globe and, more precisely, to encourage developments in the Third World which would facilitate development in that part of the world to bring about increasing levels of prosperity in the elimination of poverty. To that end Sweden has one of the most distinguished records of all nations in allocating a certain high percentage of its Gross National Product to other poorer countries.

Third, he was determinedly insistent in making his criticisms, as a leader of a small nation, of the two superpowers. He never hesitated to say—and not in a self-righteous way—what was wrong when a decision either by the Soviet Union or by the country to the south of us was taken in a way which violated the rights of others, or potentially threatened the peace of the world.

I will always remember others telling me about Olof's decision many years ago to marry, in a formal way, a young Czechoslovakian girl as an act which would enable that young woman to come to freedom out of her society, which is what she wanted. The marriage was later dissolved. It was not a breach of faith; it was a commitment made in the understanding that that woman would be free in Sweden.

I will always remember that Olof Palme was among the world leaders who condemned the American involvement in Vietnam as totally inappropriate and inconsistent, as he well knew from his American experience, with the best traditions of the United States. He was criticized at the time, but he was right. The same Olof Palme was among the very first to condemn the Soviet Union's brutal invasion of Czechoslovakia. He was a consistent man, consistently believing in freedom and