

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 8, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

THE LATE A. B. DOUGLAS

Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, once again we have the heavy task of noting the loss by the House of Commons of one of our members in the untimely death of the hon. member for Assiniboia. Ab Douglas was a man of very wide knowledge, great human qualities, tremendous industry and transparent integrity. We sorrow because a promising career in this place is now denied him.

I remind the House that his first public service had to do with education when he was a trustee in a school district in the province of Saskatchewan. He served in that or in like capacities on school boards for a period of 22 years. Probably no finer groundwork for unselfish public service could be laid than by being associated with a school board for a period of 22 years.

Mr. Douglas had the respect and friendship of every member of the House. His passing is a very great loss to us and we sorrow with his family. Our sincere sympathy goes to Mrs. Douglas and their four sons. I would hope some condolence would come to them from the knowledge that the very human qualities he brought to the House and to the task he performed here over the very short period of two and a half years are bound to endure.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in expressing our regret over the very untimely death of the hon. member for Assiniboia I should like to associate myself and my colleagues with the remarks of the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Laing). Most of us have known Mr. Douglas only since his election in 1968. Those on this side of the House saw him as a cheerful, goodnatured but very diligent representative of his constituency, constantly pressing for action for the welfare of the people he represented. To the people of Saskatchewan he was, of course, well known and highly respected for his work in various fields, including the education of youth, as the Acting Prime Minister reminded us, and among farmers.

• (2:10 p.m.)

I recall very vividly the occasion last October when the hon. member seconded the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. In addition to his attachment for his constituency and for his province, we noted his fervent interest in all manner of issues, including agriculture, tax reform, economic management and anti-pollution measures. On that occa-

sion he quoted the following words from a speech credited to the late Governor General, Georges Vanier:

People do not age by living a number of years. I am convinced we grow old only by deserting our ideals. We are in fact as old as our doubts and despairs, but we are as young as our faith and our hope, especially faith and hope in our youth, which is, after all, the same as saying our faith and our hope in our country's future.

To Mr. Douglas' family may I say that those words of the former Governor General are a most fitting description of the life of the hon. member for Assiniboia—a life filled with faith, hope and ideals.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party would like to go on record as expressing their great sense of loss at the passing of Mr. A. B. Douglas, Member of Parliament for Assiniboia. He was respected and esteemed in all parts of the House as a conscientious and hardworking member, and I am certain the House will miss him.

For me there is a sense of personal loss. Mr. Douglas came from Weyburn, Saskatchewan, an area which I had the privilege of representing for some 26 years in this Parliament and in the legislature of Saskatchewan. Consequently, I have known Mr. Douglas since he was a very young man and had a very high regard for him. We were very good friends. During the period that I was associated with the government of Saskatchewan I had the privilege of inviting him to serve on a number of commissions and boards representing the school trustees of the province. As one would have expected, he brought to every task painstaking industry and forthright integrity.

On behalf of the members of this group I would ask you, Sir, to convey to his wife, to his four very fine sons and to his mother our deepest sympathy in their time of bereavement. I hope it will be of some comfort for them to know that although he was cut off in his prime he gave of himself unstintingly in the service of his community and his country, and that we in this House feel we have lost a valued friend and colleague.

Mr. Oza Tetrault (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say on behalf of our group that we deeply regret the passing of the hon. member for Assiniboia. We always considered Mr. Albert Douglas to be a very active member in committees and in the House of Commons. May we offer to Mrs. Douglas and her family our deepest sympathy.

Mr. Speaker: I should mention to the House that I have already conveyed to Mrs. Douglas the condolences of the