

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 19, 1986

The House met at 2 p.m.

[English]

THE LATE HON. DONALD CAMPBELL JAMIESON

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is my unhappy duty to draw to the attention of all Hon. Members the death of a colleague and friend, Don Jamieson. Certain Hon. Members will be rising and paying tribute. We will commence with the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner).

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we learned with shock this morning that Donald Jamieson died while he was jogging in Swift Current.

At the outset it is hard to say something sad about a man who really expressed and reflected such joy. Don Jamieson approached the challenge of life with energy, vigour, and enthusiasm. As most Hon. Members of the House know, his first political involvement related to the pre-Confederation debates in Newfoundland where he opposed the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation. The battle was far closer than anyone imagined, but Newfoundland chose to join Canada. From that moment Don Jamieson accepted the result with grace and became a total Canadian.

Don often remarked that he became a Canadian not by birth, not by conviction, but by conversion. In his subsequent career he was able to prove time and time again how useful it was for both Newfoundland and Canada to have our newest province as part of the terms of union with our country. Of course he ended his career in the House of Commons speaking for us Canadians as a nation and speaking for us eloquently on the world forum after his retirement as a Minister and a Member, representing our country so elegantly in the United Kingdom.

[Translation]

Even if over time, Don Jamieson became one of Canada's most ardent defenders, he never missed an opportunity to promote the interests of the province of his birth, and he did so with his legendary humour.

● (1405)

[English]

I think we all knew that Don Jamieson was gifted in his sense of humour. In fact, I was always convinced that Don had invented the so-called Newfie jokes himself. I remember he always told me that they said in Newfoundland:

If you have a reputation for getting up early in the morning, you can sleep in until noon.

We all recall with warmth the day he intervened in the House of Commons during a discussion of payments for farm-stored wheat. He exclaimed:

Mr. Speaker, I am very sympathetic to financial support for farm-stored wheat, but I have to ask the House to give a favourable ear, as well, to the question of sea-stored cod!

He embodied the highest standards of public office—commitment, compassion, and integrity. He came from a humble background. He rose by way of his own abilities to a senior position in the Canadian broadcasting industry, but he never forgot where he came from, nor did he ever lose touch with the people who elected him and whom he represented.

● (1410)

I am very proud in personal terms, Mr. Speaker, to have known Don Jamieson as a colleague and to have treasured him as a friend. I extend on behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and our caucus colleagues, our deepest sympathy to Barbara Jamieson, his widow, and to their four children.

I think it would be appropriate to close by quoting from Don's very first, his maiden speech in the House of Commons, made on May 9, 1967, because I think most of us who knew him and had the honour of sharing this place with him will recognize that there never has been a finer speaker in this Chamber than Don Jamieson:

This country has survived and flourished because its people have been prepared to fly in the face of conformity. The very existence of Canada, I suggest, proves the claim that most worthwhile things in this world are done by people who, when they are told that their dreams are vain, go on to realize them anyway.

I am happy to bear witness to the fact that Don Jamieson's dreams were realized, were fulfilled and that he made an immense contribution to Newfoundland and to Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in this tribute to our former late colleague, Don Jamieson, on behalf of the Government of Canada and our Party. I think he would have to be recognized by everyone in Newfoundland as being one of the greatest political figures of Newfoundland in the 20th century and I think of Canada as well.

Don turned 65 last April. He was working, I believe, on a book on events that occurred preceding and during Newfoundland's entry into confederation. I am sure it would have been a great book had he finished it.