

SALUTE TO ALEXANDER

The recent death of Earl Alexander of Tunis, a former Governor General of Canada, elicited the following tributes from Governor-General Michener and Prime Minister Trudeau, who spoke in the House of Commons:

The Governor General --

It is 17 years since Lord Alexander resigned as Governor General of Canada to become Minister of Defence in Britain. Nevertheless, he was so well and favorably remembered in Canada that the news of his death today has moved us all profoundly.

Apart from his personal and human qualities which made him a host of friends, there were two good reasons for the high esteem and affection which Canadians held for him.

He was a great soldier with an excellent record on the Western Front in the First World War, and in high commands throughout the Second World War, notably, for Canadians, as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in Italy, where thousands of our troops served under him. Therefore, when he came to Canada as Governor General he had a host of admirers and many personal friends. As you know, he was the last of a series of 17 Governors General appointed from Britain, and in many respects the most successful. He travelled widely in Canada, and was a distinguished and frequent speaker. I remember two of his addresses very well. Altogether he was very popular and much appreciated.

His interest in Canada continued after his retirement; in fact, it is only two months since he visited us in Government House and appeared then to be in settled good health.

On your behalf, as well as for my wife and myself, I have expressed our deep sympathies to Lady Alexander and her family.

We shall miss Lord Alexander in Canada, but we shall not forget him.

The Prime Minister --

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that I speak for all Members of this House and for all Canadians when I say how grieved we are this day on receipt of the news of the death of Earl Alexander of Tunis. His close ties with this country and his obvious liking for Canada and for Canadians gave him a special place in the hearts of all of us.

Earl Alexander served as Governor General of Canada from 1945 through 1952. During that period he became familiar to tens of thousands of Canadians who had the good fortune to meet him in his many

travels throughout this country. To millions of other Canadians who observed his zest for life, his keen interest in skiing, and the roots which members of his family established in Canada, there evolved an open and sincere friendship and admiration. They responded as warmly to him as did he to Canada.

MILITARY FEATS

But it was long before his stay in Canada that Canadians heard of Viscount Alexander, who had earned an exceptional reputation during the war of 1939, as much by his military feats as by his talents as a great strategist. He directed the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940 and was one of the last to leave the beach. Later, in Burma, he headed the Allied forces for two years, during the campaign against the Japanese. Moreover, in 1944-45, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean, he contributed to the victory of the free world; at that time, a motorized brigade and two divisions from Canada were among the troops under his command.

Earl Alexander visited Canada many times following his return to Britain and his assumption of the office of Minister of Defence. The Honorable the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), the Right Honorable Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) and I had the pleasure of travelling with him from Washington to Ottawa only a few weeks ago following the funeral of his old colleague in arms, General Eisenhower. But it is in his role of Governor General that Canadians will remember him best. Then, as host to Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip on their first tour of Canada in 1951, he established new traditions at Government House by introducing his royal guests and the premises to a lively square dance.

Earl Alexander bears another Canadian distinction. He was sworn a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council for Canada.

The passing of Alexander of Tunis will be widely mourned throughout Canada, the Commonwealth and much of the world. He will long be remembered for his human qualities, his inspiring leadership in moments of crisis, his courage, and for the devotion with which he performed his many duties.

I should like, Mr. Speaker, supported by the Leader of the Opposition, to suggest that as a tribute to the memory of this great public servant of his Sovereign, of Canada and of the Commonwealth, and as a mark of our deep sympathy with Lady Alexander, and with all members of Viscount Alexander's family, we stand together for a moment of silence and mournful reflection.