

The late Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King

parliamentary experts we have ever had in Canada. I feel sure that for many long years to come the statements he made from time to time in regard to the responsibilities of the houses of parliament, and the procedure in the House of Commons, will be a guide for many of its members.

Those who were closely associated with him have reason to feel the personal loss of a man who gave almost his whole lifetime to the building of the party in which he believed, and in that way contributing to the processes of democracy in this country.

To me, one of the characteristics I shall always remember is that, no matter how keen the differences of opinion might have been in regard to political affairs or matters of the moment, he was always courteous and friendly, and always anxious to meet people on a personal basis. The last time I saw him was on an occasion many members of the House of Commons will recall. It was at the time of the meeting of the empire press union here in Ottawa only a short time ago. It was obvious to everyone who saw him at that time that Mr. King was a very sick man. Nevertheless he had gone there to meet his friends of the press in Canada and in the other parts of the commonwealth who were gathered together in Ottawa, and also to meet the members of all parties who were gathered there on that occasion. He carried that friendliness which was his greatest characteristic to the very last and all of us who saw him on that occasion will share a very happy recollection of the way in which he sought to keep those friendships alive.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, we join with the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) in expressing our appreciation of the service which the late Mr. Mackenzie King rendered to Canada and its people. He gave an example to many of the younger people of Canada in that he consciously prepared himself from boyhood for a life of public service. His public service extended for some fifty years during which he held for over twenty-one years the highest office in the gift of the Canadian people.

As did the Prime Minister, I referred to his passing when I learnt of it at Calgary as marking the end of an era—the era of Mackenzie King. I should like to record that during the thirteen years that I sat with him in this House of Commons when he was prime minister I found him to be invariably courteous and at times even encouraging in the work that one was endeavouring to do. We disagreed often on social and economic policies but I had for him a warm personal regard.

[Mr. Drew.]

There is one thing that might be said perhaps: that because of the high office that he held, he was a somewhat lonely man. I remember that the last time I had an opportunity of chatting with him a few months ago he happened to say that since he had left the House of Commons he felt a loneliness that he had not realized might be the result of the severance of his connections with public life.

We are then recording our appreciation of a man who made a notable contribution to our national life and whose aim was undoubtedly to do all he could to further the nationhood of Canada and to maintain that unity among our diverse people which should be the aim of all good citizens of Canada.

On behalf of those associated with me I join with all those who have spoken in expressing our appreciation of the life of a notable Canadian and also our sympathy to the party which has suffered loss in being denied the counsel and advice which Mr. Mackenzie King might have given in the interests of the Canada which he served with such distinction.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, the group which I have the honour to lead in this house wish to join with others in paying a tribute to the late William Lyon Mackenzie King. We regret sincerely that Mr. Mackenzie King was not spared to enjoy more years of the eventide of his life in health and in freedom from the cares and burdens of official duties so that he could have undertaken many of the things he had intended to do before his days were ended.

Every Canadian must regret, I am sure, not only that Mr. Mackenzie King's wish to live on was not fulfilled, but also because we shall all be poorer for not having the advantage of whatever his last years might have produced from the abundance of his experience and his knowledge and wisdom.

For fifty years he was most intimately associated in one way or another with the government of Canada. Perhaps more than any other man he helped to shape the course of history of our country. That is why I think he would have had so much more to give to those who followed him if he had been spared. I feel certain that he would have given all of which he was capable.

I was fortunate in having been associated with Mr. Mackenzie King in the House of Commons for four years. During that time, especially while he was prime minister, he treated me with a full measure of kindly consideration and always with courtesy. Although our views were often at variance, and despite the fact that we opposed each