

Government has said, as "Pete". He was only 51 years of age, one of our newest and, as age goes in the Senate, one of our youngest senators.

I did not know Senator Robertson before he joined us in the Senate a few years ago, but it did not take long to become acquainted with him, for his was a very friendly and genial disposition and he made friends easily. His ready smile and friendly attitude soon endeared him to all his colleagues.

Being a self-made man, he had been engaged in many activities. He had been in business in his home town of Kenora for some years, and had been on active military service. However, his major activity was with the railway, the C.P.R., where he was most successful. He was also at all times greatly interested and active in labour matters, was a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen for 23 years, and very active in labour matters and in helping to solve labour problems.

He was appointed to the Senate, as you know, in 1962, his appointment being as a representative of labour and labour unions.

We are told that Senator Robertson learned of his appointment to the Senate while in a caboose at Ignace, a northwestern Ontario turn-around point for C.P.R. train crews. He told us of it this way:

The despatcher came to the caboose and told me that he had a long distance telephone call. When I arrived I found the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker, was on the line and asked: "Do you know a good man I could appoint to the Senate who would represent labour well?" While I stood there trying to think of someone, Mr. Diefenbaker laughed and said: "It was you I had in mind, Pete. Would you do it?"

It is significant, then, that in his maiden speech in October, 1963, Senator Robertson addressed the Senate on Bill C-102, the measure that made provision for the placing of the Maritime Transportation Unions of Canada under the management and control of trustees. In that speech he quoted Clarence Darrow, who stated some 50 years ago:

With all their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization of men that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the development of character in man, than any other association of men.

Those are the things that Senator Robertson believed in. Indeed, they served as guide lines for his life—decency, honesty, education, the betterment of the race, and the development of character in man.

Honourable senators, as we have just been told, the public life of Canada could ill afford to lose the services of these two distinguished gentlemen, the late Senator Taylor and the late Senator Robertson.

I join our leader in extending once again to their families our sincere sympathy.

Hon. G. Percival Burchill: Honourable senators, I want to express my sorrow on the death of my very close friend, Senator Taylor. We had been associated with one another for a great many years. I mourn his passing and shall miss him very much indeed.

I cannot add too much to what has already been said by the leaders on both sides, but I would mention that he had a most distinguished career as Minister of Agriculture in the Province of New Brunswick. He was the friend of every farmer in that province. When he took on the mantle of leadership, following the retirement of the Honourable Mr. McNair, he travelled around and became very well known throughout every section of the province. But he was known not only throughout New Brunswick, but throughout Canada. He was recognized as one of the leading authorities on agriculture and associated matters in this country. He regretted very deeply during his time here in the Senate that he had not been able to do more for the agricultural community. He was devoted to agriculture, and as a very successful farmer he instituted and carried out in New Brunswick practical policies which appealed greatly to the farming population.

By his death this chamber has lost a very distinguished parliamentarian, Canada has lost a great public figure, and the Province of New Brunswick has lost a very, very staunch friend. To his wife and daughter I too want to convey my very deep sympathy.

Senator Robertson's sudden death was a great shock to us all. I did not know him as well as I knew Senator Taylor, but in the short time he was with us I grew to like him and to respect him. I join the leaders on both sides in extending my very deep sympathy to his people.

Hon. J. Campbell Haig: Honourable senators, last Tuesday afternoon in the Town of Kenora, Ontario, on a cold, sunny day, there was held at Knox United Church the funeral service for one of our former colleagues, Senator John Alexander Robertson, who was affectionately known to his many friends and business acquaintances as "Pete".

There is a story behind that appellation. His father was known as Pete, and John Alexander was known as "Piccolo Pete," because at one time in his student days he was in a play in which he portrayed a character who played the piccolo, and consequently he was known thereafter as "Piccolo Pete".