

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 5, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

[English]

### THE LATE JOHN KUSHNER

TRIBUTES TO FORMER MEMBER

**Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to John Kushner, a Member of this House whose career has been dedicated to public service and who in many ways exemplified those qualities most desirable in a public servant. His entire life was one of devotion to family, to community and to this country.

His was a remarkable career of involvement in Calgary; in the community as a school trustee; as an alderman; on behalf of the labour movement as president of his union; and as a director of hospitals. However, the most important thing in my judgment is that John Kushner was a man of modesty and accomplishment. He accomplished things that really mattered on behalf of people, ordinary Canadians, and this gave him his greatest joy.

He was deeply proud of his heritage. I remember last December his speech at Maple Leaf Gardens to the World Congress of Free Ukrainians, a body which was a great source of pride to him. He spoke from the heart when he mentioned his immigrant roots and he spoke to the soul of Canada when he talked of the need for tolerance in this society, coupled with a strong and ringing defence of liberty, a quality that most immigrant groups bring to this great country. This was his overwhelming belief, along with the need to couple tolerance in Canada with a strong understanding of what we have achieved here. But most of all he believed that freedom must always prevail in Canada.

He was direct, encouraging and warm. He had both a sense of history and a sense of humour. To me he provided thoughtful counsel and loyal support. To my Party he provided dedication and deep commitment to his principles and to its unity. To Canada he provided an abiding love and a real sense of gratitude for the citizenship which he held in this country.

Mr. Kushner's involvement in our Party, both at the provincial and federal levels, goes back to the 1970s when he was elected to the Alberta legislature, and thereafter when he was elected to this House where he provided able and distinguished service.

In that very special way, as it is for most of us, John Kushner's greatest pride was his family. His greatest love was his wife and his children. John Kushner made a real difference in his community, in this Party, and certainly in this House of

Commons. This country is, in my judgment, a better place because of him.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues and my Party, and I am sure on behalf of all Members in this House, I want to convey to Olga and her family our deepest condolences.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, we were all shocked to learn of the sudden passing of John Kushner. Only a few weeks ago he seemed to be his usual robust self.

Mr. Kushner was a shining example of how Canada has been strengthened by contributions from people who came here from many lands. Born in Poland, he completed his education in the United States. He devoted himself to public service, both in education and in politics. He served his community for four years in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and for almost five years in this House.

Mr. Kushner will be especially missed by many members of the staff of the House, the little people like the messengers and maintenance staff who always found his door open when they needed advice or encouragement.

I especially want, on behalf of this Party, to extend sincere sympathy to the late Mr. Kushner's widow and her sons.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East):** Mr. Speaker, I was personally shocked and depressed to hear of the passing of John Kushner. We have lost a good man. John Kushner was a people's politician. He served his people very well at the municipal level, at the provincial level and at the federal level. But to me John Kushner was even more; he was a friend. He was somebody in whom I could confide. He was somebody who offered me sympathy in some of my darkest moments.

● (1110)

We worked together for four years at the provincial level. John was very conscious of his ethnic background, a background similar to mine, and we tried hard provincially to do something on a multicultural level. I know his heart was in multiculturalism in this House because he recognized, as I have, that Canada was more than just the English and the French factions; it involved people from all over Europe, from all over the world, who came here to find a home.

I say bless him. I hope he has found peace. I offer my deepest sympathy to his wife and family. His family will be carrying on the political tradition, I expect, as his son, Stan,