

THE SENATE

Monday, December 14, 1964

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

THE LATE SENATOR HORNER

TRIBUTES

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, it was with a deep feeling of sadness that we learned today of the death in Saskatoon of the dean of the Senate, Ralph Byron Horner. Senator Horner was with us when we last met here on December 2, and it comes as a shock to know that he should now have left us permanently.

Through the years there have been few members of the Senate as well liked as Senator Horner. He was born in the Province of Quebec, in fact, in the district of Pontiac near by Ottawa. On his father's side he was Irish, and on his mother's side he was Irish also but with a mixture of Scotch. These two racial strains did much to temper the character of Ralph Byron Horner. Certainly, he had a fine sense of humour, and this was the graceful and gracious thing in his character which endeared him to all his colleagues.

In his early days the late senator went west, and became part of the warp and woof of that part of the country. He had nine children, which is a large number for him to have looked after as well as he did and still carry out his duties as a servant of the public.

Senator Horner was outspoken, both publicly and privately. He was a man who believed in the principles of the party to which he belonged. He tried to live up to them in his life and in the speeches he made. But the friendships he made on both sides of the house were never affected in the least by his adherence to party principles. He was a self-made man and was proud of this fact. He was a farmer, a fact of which he was equally proud. He was a rangy, raw-boned type of man, and his physical appearance reflected the kind of life he lived, as well as the things he believed in.

Senator Horner was a staunch westerner. On November 18, about a month ago, we paid tribute to another westerner, Senator Blais, who sat on the benches on this side of the house. You will remember that among the tributes paid to Senator Blais there was a fine, short tribute paid by Senator Horner.

Going out of the chamber that night, he came to me and said how pleased he was with the tributes that had been paid to his old friend from western Canada and how much they had touched him. He belonged in so many ways to the western union.

Honourable senators, we can all be happy in his long life and the lifetime of service that Senator Horner gave. And we can feel honoured that he was one of our associates. For that reason, I do not mind telling this story about him. After the 1958 election, there was somewhat of a decimation of certain parties in the other place, and the C.C.F. party returned with eight members. After that election there were four Horners in Parliament, two of his sons, one of his nephews and himself. I remember remarking to him, "Within your own family you almost have a national party." He was eminently proud, and properly so, of his family and particularly of his two sons who had been elected to Parliament.

Just last spring most of us attended that significant ceremony in which he was honoured on his eightieth birthday. At the same time we honoured the senator and Mrs. Horner on their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

I am sure that I speak for all honourable senators who have known Mrs. Horner—and she has been here faithfully with him through the years—when I say how deeply we feel for her in her sad bereavement.

I am very pleased to be able to say that Senator Aseltine, an old and intimate friend and Senator Horner's former room mate, will represent the Senate at his funeral.

Hon. A. J. Brooks: Honourable senators, we were all greatly shocked at the news of the passing of our dear friend, Senator Horner. I did not know until quite late this afternoon, that he had passed away, although I received a wire yesterday from Saskatoon to say that he had entered hospital there.

The loss of Senator Horner is felt by all of us. He had been a personal friend of mine for many years. When I first came to Ottawa in 1936 I met some senators at that time, through having known the late Senator George B. Jones, whom I succeeded as member from Royal. Senator Jones was a great friend of Senator Horner, Senator Haig and Senator Aseltine, all of whom later became close friends of mine. Indeed, I became deeply attached to them.

Senator Horner passed away while approaching his 81st year, although he appeared to be much younger. One recalls his tall, erect figure, as he addressed the Senate, without notes, and how he would speak on almost any subject that arose, and address himself to it intelligently, having a good background of information.