

12-11
Tributes to Deceased Members

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1934 Session

January 25th

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I desire to express to the Prime Minister (Mr. Bennett) my thanks, and those of the official opposition, for the sympathy he has extended to us in the loss of our late colleague, Mr. T. M. Cayley, the former member for South Oxford, and for the tribute he has paid Mr. Cayley's memory.

I desire to express to him, and to members of the Conservative party, more particularly to the members of the government, the sympathy of the official opposition, and the expression of my personal sympathy, in the loss they have sustained in the death of Mr. Ryckman, who, until quite recently, was a member of the present administration, and who was also a member of a previous Conservative administration.

The late member for South Oxford and the late member for Toronto East were both in ill health during the last session, and while we naturally hoped that their health in some measure might be restored, it cannot be said that in the case of either the end was wholly unexpected when it came.

Mr. Cayley was considerably the younger of the two, being only in his fifty-fifth year at the time of his death. He had, too, been in public life and a member of the House of Commons for a much shorter time, having entered in 1926 as the member for South Oxford, for which constituency he was again returned in 1930. His public career, though brief, was full of promise.

He was a native son of Oxford county, and his election as member for South Oxford was due in the main to recognition on the part of the electorate of the extent to which his life had been bound up in furthering the interests of the district, which was the home of himself and his parents. In all community movements, whether these related to politics, religion, or education; to furthering the interests of agriculture, business, the needs and activities of ex-service men, or fraternal organizations, he was foremost, over the greater part of his life.

Though a member of the House of Commons during two parliaments only, Mr. Cayley, as the Prime Minister has just said, made for himself a real place in its deliberations. He was a clear thinker and a good administrator and conscientious in the discharge of his duties as a member of Parliament, and one of the most loyal to his party and its leader. He was of a very kindly disposition and was well liked, and enjoyed the friendship and very sincere regard of many of his political opponents, as well as of all the members of his own party. We who knew him best will long cherish his memory.

The late Minister of National Revenue, Hon. Mr. Ryckman, was also fortunate in enjoying the friendship of not a few of his political opponents, as well as of all members on his own side of the house.

Quite apart from any differences of political opinion, which are well known, but of which I should not wish to speak at this time, I would say that I think it would be doing an injustice to Mr. Ryckman's memory to attempt to gauge his services to the country or to his party by the years during which he held the office of Minister of National Revenue which for him were years of greatly impaired health. His resignation from the cabinet some weeks ago was due to recognition on his part, as well as that of the Prime Minister, that, because of the very serious condition of his health, he was unable to discharge the duties of his office. He had been, in fact, far from well for a long time past. This was known to the Prime Minister, and I can say for myself and for the members of my party, that it was a fact ever present to our minds. I know it was a painful duty to the Prime Minister to feel obliged to accept Mr. Ryckman's resignation, just as I believe it was a feeling of loyalty which caused him to retain his colleague at his side as long as he did. There is nothing in public life, as there is nothing perhaps in private life, quite so difficult as to hold the scales evenly between our personal loyalties and our official duties.

What I think we can now see more clearly, and what was most admirable, and what we shall wish always to recall, is the tenacity with which the minister sought to discharge the country is not likely to forget his patriotism, or the sacrifice occasioned his family circle by the great war.

Personally, I am inclined to place foremost, as deserving of highest remembrance, Mr. Ryckman's readiness in years such as those which have followed the great war, to continue to share in the public life of his country. It won for him the distinction of being a minister of the crown in two administrations, but even more worthy of remembrance, it seems to me, is the fact that he shared as well and with great loyalty, as the Prime Minister has said, the fortunes of his party when in opposition, and that for over twelve years he was a member of this House of Commons.

I join most sincerely, as do all hon. members of the opposition, in the expression of deepest sympathy in their bereavement, which you, Mr. Speaker, have been asked by the Prime Minister to convey on behalf of the house to Mrs. Cayley and to Mrs. Ryckman and to the members of their respective families.

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