

Tributes to Deceased Members

It was with deep regret that we all learned of the passing of Mr. J. E. Matthews, the oldest in point of years and one of the most esteemed members of this house. On account of ill health he had been unable to attend the special session last fall, but most of us had hoped that his recovery had been sufficiently complete to enable him to be back with us at this time.

While Mr. J. L. Douglas, the member for Queens, Prince Edward Island, was also getting on in years, his passing came as a distinct shock to his many friends, who I think were under the impression that he enjoyed rather good health.

Both Mr. Matthews and Mr. Douglas were Prince Edward Islanders, the former having been born at Albany on August 17, 1869, and the latter at Head of Hillsborough on November 29, 1881. Each received a public school education, which in the case of Mr. Matthews was followed by graduation from Prince of Wales college in Charlottetown and, in the case of Mr. Douglas, by attendance at the Charlottetown business college. Both entered the House of Commons in 1938 as a result of by-elections in their respective constituencies, and both were re-elected in the general elections of 1940, 1945 and 1949. You will remember that in the fall of 1949 Mr. Matthews was chosen to represent the Canadian government at the meeting of the international labour organization in Geneva.

I know I am safe in saying that both Mr. Matthews and Mr. Douglas had the respect and friendship of their colleagues of all parties in this house. There was never any doubt among us as to the high integrity of their motives or the sincerity of their statements. They made few formal speeches, but when they did speak they were listened to with deep interest and close attention. They were scrupulously faithful to their parliamentary duties, and even during busy sessions found time to keep in close touch with those whom they represented here.

Prior to their election to the House of Commons in 1938 both Mr. Matthews and Mr. Douglas had already made names for themselves in the business world. After teaching for some time Mr. Matthews spent eight years in the field of journalism. In 1902 he joined the staff of the North American Life Assurance Company in Charlottetown, and in 1911 was transferred to Brandon as branch manager for western Manitoba, which position he occupied until 1935. Prior to his removal to Brandon Mr. Matthews had served as an alderman on the Charlottetown city council. During his many years of residence in Brandon he was at different times president of the Life Underwriters Association of Canada, president of the Brandon board of trade and

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

president of the Brandon Kiwanis club. He was also a member of the Canadian club, and an active member of the Brandon curling club.

Mr. Douglas had entered the service of the Prince Edward Island railway in 1901. After serving as an engineer for several years he retired from the railway and took up farming on the old homestead and on an adjoining farm at Head of Hillsborough. He later served as dominion fruit and vegetable inspector, and for some time prior to his entry into politics was in business at Charlottetown. In his later years his chief occupation, apart from his political duties, was that of a produce exporter.

During their many years of useful service Mr. Matthews and Mr. Douglas won widespread respect for their sincerity, steadfast purpose and uprightness of character. I am sure that in this chamber all the friends of our lamented colleagues would wish to be personally associated with me in this expression of our most sincere condolences to Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Douglas and their families.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in the tribute he has paid to two highly respected members of this house who enjoyed the friendship and the affectionate regard of those who knew them. Both, as has been said already, were from Prince Edward Island, and in that fact there is evidence of the continuing contribution made to the whole of Canada by a province which is proud of its history and its place in our country.

The last time I saw Mr. Matthews was during last summer in Brandon. It was typical of the friendship which exists among the members of this house that one of those who extended courtesies to me while I was there was Mr. Matthews. In his genial and kindly way he made it quite clear that, with him, service in the House of Commons could never interfere with personal friendship, no matter what differences of opinion there might be as to the way in which the political affairs of this country can best be conducted.

The same thing was true of Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas was always generous and friendly, not only to those of his own political party but to those of other political parties as well. It seemed to me that both these gentlemen displayed that measure of understanding friendship which, after all, is the basis of our freedom.

I wish to join with the Prime Minister and the other members of this house in extending sincere sympathy to Mrs. Matthews and Mrs. Douglas and to their families, and we all hope,