

C 138321

House of Commons Tribute

January 25, 1934

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, once more it is my melancholy duty to record the passing of two of our members during the recess. We had barely separated after prorogation when death called one of our not very well known but very well beloved members, Mr. Thomas Merritt Cayley, member for South Oxford.

I sometimes wonder whether or not a recess has ever passed without death claiming one of the members of this house. Mr. Cayley's death was not unexpected; I think he himself realized that his days were numbered. He had lived for many years in the county which he represented; he was a representative of the very finest type of citizenship of the old province of Ontario. In his younger days he had been a teacher, and it is a matter of comment that during the last contest in the county which he represented he was supported very warmly and enthusiastically by large numbers of young men and women who had received instruction at his hands.

He was not very active in the business of this house, yet his fine business sense and his wide knowledge of insurance matters always gave singular importance to any observations he was pleased to make in this chamber. We will mourn his passing as a loss to that membership in the house which is represented by those who have passed through various stages of political life in the counties which they represent, and who in my judgment are the finest representatives of the finest type of Canadian citizenship. I offer to the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the members of his party my sincere sympathy in the loss of a very excellent hard working and distinguished member of parliament.

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 friend, and his very sincere regard for the friendship and very sincere regard for 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.

W. L. M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939  
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