

democratic system that has made possible the development of this great mind, that has permitted this man of lowly origin to attain so high a place in the political sphere and do so much good to his fellow-citizens. Today, I repeat, in a deep feeling of brotherliness we console one another. Let us all hope that this brotherly spirit which animates us at present will continue throughout the difficult times which lie ahead, so that we may preserve the great spirit of national unity which is so necessary to Canada and which was so dear to the man whom we now mourn.

Mr. Speaker, I heartily subscribe to the sentiments expressed by those who have spoken before me. With deep emotion I bend in thought over this great tomb and mingle my sorrow with the chill rays of our winter sun, which, at this moment illumines with a sad smile the humble corner of Canadian soil where rest in peace most sure the ashes of a great Canadian.

Mr. L.-PHILIPPE PICARD (Bellechasse) (Translation): Mr. Speaker, I may, at this moment, use the words of the French writer: "The man whose irretrievable absence leaves in the hearts of those dear to him a void which can never be filled again, was one of the dearest friends fate had bestowed on me," and, shall I add, an incomparable teacher whose acts have been my inspiration as well as an example of civic devotion.

I shall not be alone, Mr. Speaker, to miss this great figure who is no more. All the members of this house, irrespective of political convictions, will feel his absence; this fact is amply proved by the speeches we have just heard. This brave, frank and open face, reflecting all that our race, attached to its soil, has given us of goodness and fortitude, tempered and refined by culture, taste and economic independence, will remain graven in our minds and his memory will hover over this house long after we, who have been fortunate enough to know Mr. Lapointe, have disappeared.

I have, Mr. Speaker, neither the gifts nor the ability to relate his life and draw the useful lessons it could teach us, or to paint a portrait of a man with whom you were so well acquainted that it is useless to endeavour to eulogize him, but I should feel that I had not shown all the friendliness, affection and admiration that I feel towards him, if I restrained from doing homage to his memory even in a very inadequate manner.

It has often been said that at each period of a nation's life some men appear who, whether called or made by circumstances, exemplify national thoughts and aspirations and become the interpreters of their fellow-

citizens and, often, determine their evolution. Destiny sets these men up and the people recognize them when their time to serve has come. Such has been the case all through the history of the French-Canadian people. There has always been someone, at the opportune moment, to attract the attention of the masses and acquire the desired degree of ascendancy over them. One such man is now mourned by French Canada. This providential man has gone at the height of his career and at a time when his countrymen were in the greatest need of his stabilizing influence, his support, his advice.

Ever since the advent of our constitutional liberty, very few men have played so great a part as Ernest Lapointe in the development of our national destiny. The first among them, and perhaps the only one to assert himself through combativity and almost through violence, was the patriot Papineau. The others, Lafontaine, Cartier, Laurier and Lapointe were brought upon the scene through the course of events and they were selected by their fellow-citizens. They were trained political men. They all passed through a more or less lengthy period of gestation. They prepared themselves while remaining constantly in contact with the people, and when their moment came, they brought to the councils of the nation, besides a cultured mind, a deep knowledge of popular reactions, which is an essential equipment for the leaders of a free nation, of an enlightened body of electors.

For Lapointe, that preparatory period was comparatively long, but as it had begun early, he was still young when, in 1916, he brought himself to the attention of the whole country. Three years later, when he became the member for Laurier's constituency in Quebec, he was only forty-three years old, but he already had fifteen years of experience in dominion politics, and the young small-town lawyer, devoted to the interests of his rural electors had become an experienced parliamentarian, quite familiar with matters of national importance.

Lapointe was selected by his fellow-citizens as being the one who best embodied their opinions, their wishes and their mentality, and he preserved to the end those traits that had brought him to their attention; to the end of his life also he never ceased to understand his electors and to interpret their thoughts in matters of public administration.

The knowledge that he was interpreting the opinion of the great majority of his compatriots imparted to him a perfect equanimity and an absolute confidence, even in spite of the petty attacks to which public men are