

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 3, 1974

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

GEORGES POMPIDOU

TRIBUTES ON DEATH OF PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we were deeply grieved to learn of the death of Mr. Georges Pompidou, President of the French Republic.

The range of his talents, the variety of his careers had made him known to Canadians much before his accession to the presidency of the Republic. A man of letters, high official, financier and politician, success had become rightly familiar to him. President of the Republic since 1969, he had won renown for his particularly intense activities in the field of international relations as well as on the national scene. Thus the influence of his action expanded beyond the French borders.

Tried by illness, he recently gave to all of us the example of a sense of duty which brought out the stamp of his character.

[English]

President Pompidou's death will be regretted by Canadians. His moderation and realism, qualities which he owes as much to his origins as to his wide and worldly experience, have been reflected in relations between France and Canada. Under President Pompidou our relations have developed within a framework of concrete co-operation. I am sure that this House and the Canadian people join me in offering our deepest sympathy to the family of President Pompidou, to the government of France and to the French people—a people to whom we are closely linked by language, by culture and, above all, by friendship.

I should like to add, Mr. Speaker, that on behalf of the government and the people of Canada I shall be attending the funeral ceremonies in Paris. At this time I should also like to apologize to those Canadians in Saskatchewan and in Ottawa who will be forced to see me postpone events in which I was to partake with them.

[Translation]

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, France is mourning today the loss of its president. Mr. Georges Pompidou was a great statesman. He devoted most of his life to the service of his country playing an important role within the European Community.

[English]

His contribution to the construction of a better world equilibrium will often be cited as an example to be followed. President Pompidou never rejected great challenges; on the contrary, when he was called to serve he

always responded, well aware of his duty to work for the welfare of his fellow citizens.

● (1410)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, that man will go down in history as having been the man of great times, the wise man who always sought negotiation rather than confrontation, the man of the happy medium, the man of *détente* and conciliation.

Mr. Speaker, we all know in this House how difficult it is for the political man to resist the wear and tear of time. Still, Mr. Georges Pompidou managed to keep the high esteem of everyone, thanks to the deep sense of honesty and devotion which characterized him throughout his life.

On my own behalf and on behalf of my party, I therefore wish to pay a last homage to Mr. Georges Pompidou who always pursued his task with the greatest respect for the individual and deepest love for political institutions.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, the warm relations between Canada and France are deeply-rooted in Canadian history. It is therefore with special sorrow that Canadians learned of the death of President Pompidou.

He was a statesman whose greatness extended beyond the boundaries of his country as far as the European Economic Community and the world. He was a man who left the imprint of his character and ideas on his times.

On behalf of my colleagues, I extend our deepest condolences to the French people, Madame Pompidou and his family.

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, one is always stricken by the death of a famous man, especially when he was head of state.

The death of French President Pompidou is all the more impressive and particularly afflicting for us because of the historical, linguistic and cultural links between our two countries.

His predecessor, one of the greatest statesmen of the century, passed on to Mr. Pompidou the delicate responsibility of making more harmonious the relations between the Canadian and French governments. In spite of some susceptible dispositions of the Prime Minister of our country towards France, after the now famous events of 1967, we must admit, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Pompidou showed magnanimity in the circumstances and we must recognize that his actions made possible good and sound relations between our two countries.

For these reasons, the death of the President of the Republic of France afflicts us deeply.

On behalf of all my colleagues and as a French-speaking member from Quebec, I extend to the family of Mr. Pompidou and to all of France my most sincere condolences.