

Friday, October 7, 1932

The house met at three o'clock.

THE LATE MR. THOMAS McMILLAN

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there being no orders of the day, I rise for the purpose of expressing on my own behalf as well as on behalf of all those who sit to the right of the Speaker our deep sympathy with the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) and those associated with him in the passing of the late member for South Huron (Mr. Thomas McMillan).

Thomas McMillan was one of that band of Scotch Canadians who have contributed so mightily to the upbuilding of this Dominion. Although he was born in Canada his love of Scotland manifested itself in his familiarity with and love for the writings of the immortal Burns, and those of us who have listened to his speeches in this house recognize how strong was his love of Scotland and how he manifested it in almost every speech that he made by references either to Burns or to some other of the great national poets.

He was a farmer by calling, and early in life manifested an interest in the local government of his county. Blessed with a facility of speech, he was a popular lecturer, if that term might be applied to agricultural subjects, and in due course came to this House of Commons, where his strong convictions, his earnestness and his ability to express himself made for him a very unique position. He had strong opinions, which he expressed with great clearness and with great vigour. But I should like myself to bear witness to the warmth of his sympathy and the kindness of his heart, for on more than one occasion after great and seemingly acute differences of opinion he has expressed to me his appreciation of the work in which I was engaged and was good enough more than once to indicate his approval of the way in which I was doing it—not that he shared my beliefs or my political faith—but he did it out of the kindness of his heart and a warm-hearted desire to express his goodwill towards a fellow-Canadian and fellow-member of this house. I cannot do more than say that the community in which he lived has lost a great and useful citizen. This house is the poorer for his passing. Perhaps I could not do better than say of this Christian citizen, what I said on a previous occasion with respect to one other:

Life's race well run,
Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won;
Now comes rest.

That at least may be applied in all sincerity to the life and work of Thomas McMillan.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I thank the right hon. the Prime Minister for the sympathy which he has expressed with other Liberal members and myself in the loss of our colleague, and for the tribute which he has paid to the memory of the late Thomas McMillan, who was a greatly respected member of this House of Commons, and one deeply beloved by those who knew him best. By all in this chamber Mr. McMillan's presence will be greatly missed. Those who sit on this side will experience a sense of deep personal and party loss, but no one more so than myself. No leader ever had a more loyal supporter or more sincere counsellor, or a more devoted personal friend.

In many particulars, Mr. McMillan's death means much in the way of loss to this parliament and to Canada. Both in parliament and in the country his life was a link with the past. At the time of his death, Mr. McMillan was living on the farm which his father, some ninety years before, had literally hewed out of the forests and cleared and fenced with his own hands. He was, at the time of his death, the representative of South Huron, the constituency which also his father before him had for many years represented in this House of Commons. If, in our country, there is one class above another to whom honour is due, and whose memory we should hold in reverence, it is the pioneers, in settlement and in government, of early days. In his life's activities and associations, Mr. McMillan's presence was a constant reminder of this debt which the Present owes to the Past. He carried on and exemplified many splendid traditions of the early pioneers.

At the time of his death in Huron county on the 7th of June last, Mr. McMillan was approaching the allotted three score years and ten, being in his sixty-ninth year. Having started life on his father's farm, he soon began to share his father's interest in various pursuits. Long before he entered parliament, he became deeply concerned in the problems of agriculture, and as a practical farmer, and one who was gifted in speaking on agricultural subjects, did what he could to further the interests of agriculture in our Dominion. His sympathies, however, were not restricted