

While Senator McGeer was not a member of the Senate for as long as some others whom we mourn today, he made an outstanding contribution here. It seems to me that the greatest tribute that was paid to him was something that I read about in a Vancouver newspaper. As his funeral cortege passed through the streets of Vancouver thousands upon thousands of people, some of them in the most lowly circumstances, stood with bowed heads, visibly affected by the passing of one whom they considered a friend. I remember that once in Nova Scotian history someone said that the greatest tribute that could be paid to a man was the respect of those who had known him best and longest.

The Honourable William James Harmer was born on October 16, 1872, the son of James Harmer and Agatha Walker. He received his early education in Napanee, Ontario. He became a telegrapher and went west in 1891, where he was engaged in railway operating and traffic departments, and in telephone management. For three years he served as Superintendent of Operation of the Alberta Government Telephone System, and when the government of the province created a Department of Railways and Telephones he became Deputy Minister, in which office he served until his appointment to the Senate on February 5, 1918. He passed away on September 9, 1947.

As honourable senators know, he was one of the senior members of this house. He did not often participate in our debates, but he faithfully fulfilled his duties and responsibilities as a regular attendant at the sittings of the house and its committees. I am sure that those who have so long looked upon him as a familiar figure here will feel that with his passing we have lost one of our most outstanding members.

The Honourable Walter Edward Foster, P.C., LL.D., was born at St. Martins, New Brunswick, on April 9, 1874. His parents were Edward H. Foster and Elizabeth Pattison Foster. He attended public and grammar schools in Saint John, and in 1889 entered the service of the Bank of New Brunswick. Ten years later he became a member of the firm of Vassie & Company, wholesale dry goods merchants in Saint John. In 1900 he married Johan Mary Vassie, the daughter of William Vassie.

Senator Foster's interests and activities were numerous. He served as an officer in the New Brunswick Regiment of the Canadian Artillery, retiring in 1903 with the rank of captain. In 1906 and 1907 he was Vice-President of the Saint John Board of Trade. He twice served as arbitrator in labour disputes in the Port of

Saint John, and on both occasions was successful in adjusting the differences and securing agreement.

In 1916 he entered politics as leader of the Liberal party in opposition in New Brunswick. In 1917 his party was elected to office, and on April 4 of that year he assumed the premiership of his province. At the general election of 1920 he was again elected to represent Saint John. On February 1, 1923 Senator Foster resigned the premiership to become a member of the advisory board for the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes Waterway, and in 1927 became chairman of this board. Meanwhile, in 1925, he was appointed a member of the Privy Council, and Secretary of State in Mr. Mackenzie King's Cabinet, but was defeated in the general election held in the same year. He was appointed to the Senate on December 5, 1928, and became its Speaker in 1936.

The late Senator is survived by his widow and three daughters. His only son, Captain Walter W. V. Foster, died in 1944 while serving with the Canadian Army overseas. Senator Foster himself passed away on November 14 of this year.

I am sure it will in no way reflect upon the memory of the other two honourable senators to whom I have referred, if I say that my personal relationship with the late Senator Foster was very close indeed. Whether it was because he was a fellow Maritimer, or that I appreciated and came under the influence of his charm of personality, his integrity and good judgment in matters of public office, I do not know; but I do feel that in his passing I have lost one of my best friends.

On your behalf, as well as my own, I attended the funeral ceremonies which took place in the beautiful cemetery between Rothesay and Saint John, and there paid my last respects to a great Canadian.

Honourable senators, with most tragic suddenness death has removed another of our colleagues. We feel it inevitable that with the efflux of time members of advanced years must sooner or later be removed from our midst; but I am sure the news of the death this morning of the Honourable John Joseph Bench, K.C., came as a tremendous shock to everyone within this chamber and to many people outside.

Senator Bench was born in 1905 at St. Catharines, Ontario. He was admitted to the Ontario Bar in 1928 and was created a King's Counsel in 1937. The late senator was a retired officer of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, former chairman of the St. Catharines Separate School Board, and former president of the St. Catharines Chamber of Commerce.