

The late John Mouat Turner

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Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, before we enter upon the business of this session I should like to make a reference to the passing of one who to-day is very much missed in this House of Commons. I refer to our friend the late hon. member for Springfield, John Mouat Turner. As hon. members will recall, Mr. Turner was in this house for some ten years, having been first elected in the general election of 1935 and again in 1940. He had just been renominated in the constituency of Springfield as Liberal candidate to contest the riding at the next general election.

The constituency of Springfield because of its great extent, the variety of its industries and the mixed character of its population, is not an easy constituency either to contest or hold. Agriculture is the principal industry, but there is also much in the way of manufacturing and various business concerns. In the constituency there is also a large number of railway workers. The constituency might be regarded as a cross-section of the province of Manitoba. Mr. Turner followed different occupations in his early years. He was one who always kept closely in touch with his fellow men, enjoyed the sharing of their interests, and sought so far as opportunity afforded to do what he could to further their well-being. The fact that he was able to carry the constituency as he did on two occasions, and to merit the recognition accorded him of being asked again to contest it, proves that he possessed in rare measure personal characteristics of the kind that gained for him not only many friends in his constituency but also friends on all sides in this House of Commons. It might be added that in his election contests he had been opposed by formidable opponents.

Mr. Turner did not take much part in the debates of the house. He was however faithful in his attendance and when he spoke never failed to make clear the breadth of his human sympathies. He was always ready to do what he could to further measures for the well-being of his fellow men, showing particular interest in improving the lot of the less privileged members of society.

I shall always personally be deeply grateful to the late member for his personal loyalty, and for his loyalty to the principles and policies of his party. While some of the government's policies may not wholly have met his views, nevertheless he stood firm in his sup-

[Mr. Speaker.]

port in the belief that the larger and general interest was more important than that of any one particular interest.

Mr. Turner's father, who was of Irish descent, was one of the pioneers of Manitoba. His mother was Scottish. When one recalls the personal characteristics of the late member one realizes that he possessed in full measure the quality of humour and cheerfulness so characteristic of most of the Irish race, and also that of loyalty, which is the very essence of the best Scottish character. This house and particularly the party of which throughout his life he was so staunch a member, is the poorer today for his passing, all the poorer in that he had not yet completed his forty-fifth year.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, it will be the wish of all hon. members that you convey to Mrs. Turner, and also to the late Mr. Turner's mother and to his brothers an expression in the loss its membership has sustained in his passing and an expression of sincere sympathy to them in their bereavement.

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make only one addition to what has been said by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King), and that is that in the passing of John M. Turner, the late member for Springfield, the house loses a member who upon his return to the house in 1936 was numbered among the seven or eight younger members. While I have not checked the record, certainly this is the first time since I came to the house in 1936 that we have lost a member who was born in this century. I mention this only to indicate the uncertainty of life and to emphasize the sorrow felt by members of this party and members generally at the passing of one so young.

The Prime Minister has referred to Mr. Turner's friendliness. I should like to emphasize what he has said in that regard. After all, in political life, and particularly in parliament, there are certain fundamentals which go much deeper than may appear on the superficial political surface. John Turner passed from this earthly life with perhaps as many personal friends as any other member of parliament. I think no better tribute can be paid a man than that upon leaving his fellow men in parliament or elsewhere, he leaves with the friendship of all and the enemy of none. It is with deep sorrow that we mourn his passing. John Turner was not a man who took a very prominent part in the debates of the house, but when he did speak, to use street parlance, he spoke straight from the shoulder, and did not hide his words under piles of oratorical straw. Not only does