

nity that he will have as Leader of the New Democratic Party to put a motion before the House of Commons.

He made mention of the fact that throughout his long and distinguished career in federal politics he has been very concerned about issues related to poverty. Indeed, over the years we have seen that this hon. member has been in the forefront of the fight against poverty at all levels.

He mentioned the struggle that was led by the Hon. Stanley Knowles on pension reform, on the rights of seniors. The hon. gentleman from Oshawa was there at all times as well strongly supporting any initiative which could reduce poverty. Indeed, he talked with considerable eloquence and force about the commitment he made earlier this year in all of the speeches which he gave, with the exception of two which dealt exclusively with the Constitution, that in every instance he raised the issue of child poverty because of a sense of deep personal commitment.

I think it is probably appropriate, knowing the hon. gentleman and the depth of his commitment, his sincerity, his compassion for people who have fewer benefits than the rest of us, that he would put as his last motion a motion which is forward looking, which tries to provide for the children of the future, which is compassionate, and which recognizes that there are far too many Canadians who do not share the benefits that the rest of us do. It is a motion, as well, which in its very tone and its phrasing is non-partisan, which seeks the support of members on all sides of the House.

I think it was striking, and I know that members of the press gallery will have noted as well as other Canadians that the tone of the hon. gentleman's remarks today was one which was non-partisan and an appeal for Canadians transcending all differences of philosophy, all differences of region, culture, class, faith and of language to work together to try to deal with the common goal to ensure that all of Canada's children have an opportunity and to ensure that the scourge of poverty is ended. I think the extent to which we can work together in trying to achieve that goal will be a fit legacy for the hon. gentleman for the contribution that he has made to Canadian public life.

Supply

There was some speculation in the news media today as to where the hon. gentleman is going after he leaves the federal Parliament. It is not for me to speculate on that and, indeed, I do not know. But I do know that on the strength of having sat in Parliament with him for some 17 years that there is a depth of commitment there to public service which will lead him in whatever capacity, whether in Parliament or outside of Parliament, to continue to have a concern about the welfare of Canadians and to continue to work conscientiously for the betterment of all Canadians. Parliament has been better and the country has been better for his service in Parliament and our best wishes go with him for the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, I would be more effusive in my praise if I had not had the experience last time there was a major party leader's resignation back in 1979 when Mr. Trudeau announced that he was stepping down. The news struck me and I was moved to write a column for my weekly newspapers, praising Mr. Trudeau and his contribution to Canada, saying things which never could have escaped through my lips while he was still party leader, talking about what a tremendous contribution he had made to Canada because I was absolutely confident that he was going.

• (1050)

Two weeks later the government was defeated. We were back into an election campaign and the first thing that greeted me in my weekly newspapers was a column by me praising Mr. Trudeau and saying what a great guy he was. Until the NDP convention is actually over, and until I see the results, this is the last of the praise that I will be offering in the direction of the hon. member for Oshawa.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Beatty: The motion which the hon. member put before the House today asks that the House express its concern for the more than 1 million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. Members of the opposition would like to see us agree with this motion, and indeed we do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!