

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: Monday, October 22, 1984 2:30 p.m.

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER: God our Father, we ask you to receive our colleague, Grant, into Your everlasting kingdom. We offer our thanks for Your abundant blessings to him and for his unstinted, dedicated, and persevering service in this House, this province, and this country. We ask that You give comfort and strength to his wife and family in this time of trial. Amen.

MR. LOUGHEED: Mr. Speaker, I, and I sense all the colleagues of the distinguished Member for Spirit River-Fairview, wish that this House stand adjourned until next Friday at 10 a.m., and I so move.

On this occasion, on behalf of all of us, I wish to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the others involved in this tragedy. Our prayers are with them all.

We extend deepest sympathy to Sandra Notley and the family of Grant Notley on the tragic and untimely loss of their husband, father, and son.

I'm sure all MLAs and Albertans wish to express to his family their very deep appreciation for the dedicated public service of Grant Notley in helping so much to improve the quality of life in our province through his service for 13 years in this Legislative Assembly, as the leader of his political party since 1968 and, most recently, as Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition. Mr. Notley's career reflected a high degree of personal and family sacrifice in public service to his constituents as well as to all citizens of Alberta.

Those of us who toil in this chamber of parliament recognize the natural adversarial nature, but there is also a very special bond. I recall that when Len Werry died, Jim Henderson, the then Leader of the Opposition, made this observation: in moments such as this, there are no two sides of the House.

Our caucus has the highest regard for Grant's integrity, character, and commitment to the province. It is perhaps difficult for those who are not so intimately involved in the parliamentary system to appreciate the degree of mutual respect that emanates from those of us who are here in this Assembly.

Grant Notley made important, major contributions to the quality of life in Alberta, including his direct input into numerous public issues, which in many cases resulted in a modified consensus reflecting his personal ideas and concepts.

Grant Notley will be missed by all of us who care about the future of our province. It is a sad and tragic event in the history of Alberta. God bless him.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to add my condolences to Grant's wife, Sandra, and their three children, as well as to his mother and other members of the immediate family.

Grant and I entered politics nearly 25 years ago, when we were both very active in campus politics at the University of Alberta. Grant was leader of the New Democratic Party, and I was leader of the Social Credit Party. We shared our experience at that time with Joe Clark, Jim Coutts, Jim Foster, and others such as Peter Hyndman, the brother of our Provincial Treasurer. I raise that because at that time Grant displayed some great qualities, qualities that he has displayed to us as members of this Legislature, to the public of Alberta, and as leader of the Alberta New Democratic Party. He was sincere, a hard worker, committed, dedicated, and always a fair-minded

person. He respected the opinions of others even though he might have disagreed.

Working very closely with Grant in our role as opposition in the province, I found him always to be trustworthy, always keeping his word. When Grant told us where he would be, you never had to look for him, as you knew he would always be there. Grant was not only a colleague in this Legislature but a very close friend whom I always respected very much and will respect, in memory, for many, many years.

Grant gave excellent, moderate, and responsible leadership to his political party. This leadership earned him respect from all Albertans — many of my constituents, I know — and that respect will live on. Grant had compassion for those in need. Many individuals will remember him because he cared.

Today I, with many others, mourn the loss of a longtime friend and a legislative colleague. He will be missed very much.

MR. ADAIR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay my respects to Grant Notley, MLA, Leader of the Opposition, and friend, and to extend my deepest sympathies to Mrs. Sandy Notley and the children; and, if I may, to extend my sympathies to all the families who lost loved ones this past weekend, particularly to a good friend of mine, Norm Blaskovits, and his family, in the tragic loss of their mother and wife, Pat.

Mr. Speaker, Grant was a colleague, a friend, a northerner in the truest sense. On a number of occasions we worked together in the interest of serving our constituencies, which bordered each other, regardless of the politics.

Grant was a strong believer in the parliamentary system. He always had the greatest respect for it and for his constituents. I know that Grant and his family were very, very much committed to serving Albertans. They were committed to the long hours and the trials and tribulations. Grant personally was very committed to his family. I appreciated the opportunity to have served in this Legislature with Grant and with my colleagues, and Grant will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, we will also miss the others, who, in the case of three, were servants of the public and members of the government — Mr. Swanson, Department of Agriculture; Mr. Vince, Department of Social Services and Community Health; Mr. Peever, Grouard vocational school — and also the families of Mrs. Noskey and, as I said, Mrs. Blaskovits. Mr. Speaker, they will all be missed.

DR. BUCK: Mr. Speaker, on rising on an occasion such as this, I guess we who sat in opposition probably were as close to Grant as even some of his colleagues in his own party, because our group was quite small. Also I had the opportunity always to be sitting relatively close to Grant. When you come into this Legislature as a rookie, you need a little bit of help. You always lean over and say: "When do I stand? When do I sit? What do we do now?" So I cherish those memories of Grant saying, "You know, this is an awesome place, and I need a little bit of help."

But at the same time that I say that, Mr. Speaker, Grant was always willing to help other people. He was a man who was never down. At the times when the few of us survived some of the landslides, I thought he'd say, "You know, maybe they don't like us." But he'd never say that that was any reason to quit. What we will probably remember Grant for more than anything is that he would never quit. So I think the legacy he will pass on to his colleague, the hon. Member for Edmonton Norwood, and to members of his executive is that the man would never quit.

Mr. Speaker, it's on occasions such as this that I'm proud to say I was a friend of Grant Notley's.

MR. M. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, members of the Assembly, I would like to extend my sympathies to Sandra Notley and to Grant and Sandra's three children, to other members of the Grant Notley family, and to the families of the other five people whose lives were so suddenly and tragically ended last Friday evening. To the Member for Lesser Slave Lake and the other three survivors, I wish a speedy recovery from the injuries and the trauma they have suffered.

Mr. Speaker, I first met Grant Notley in 1970, when he and I were both campaigning for nomination in our respective political parties, and again later that year, when we were campaigning for representation in this Assembly in the 1971 general election. Throughout that 1971 campaign and the three provincial campaigns since that time, I have had an opportunity to campaign in the constituency of Spirit River-Fairview, and Grant has campaigned in the Smoky River constituency and indeed all of Alberta.

Throughout the 13 years since August 1971, I've often had the occasion to work closely with Grant Notley on issues which affected our region of the province. As an MLA he often contacted my office when he had concerns in agriculture, municipal affairs and, more recently, transportation. On every one of those occasions, he put the people he served above political concerns.

I remember in the early years we used to drive an awful lot. Then when better flight service came in to Grande Prairie, for five or six years he and I were very often on the same flight on Monday morning and returned on the same one on Friday evening. I remember his delight when the joint efforts of many of us finally saw extended air service into communities like Fairview and High Prairie.

Throughout the election campaigns and through 13 years of service to the people of Spirit River-Fairview, Grant always conducted himself with a high degree of courtesy and with real concern for the people he served. He gained respect and honour amongst all of us for the unselfish way he gave of his time and his talents to serve all his constituents. Mr. Speaker, he was truly a representative of the people.

The service of Grant Notley to his constituency, to this Assembly, and to our province will long be remembered. We pray for his family. We pray that he may rest in peace but that the goals and standards that he set in service to this Assembly and to his constituents will live on forever.

MRS. EMBURY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the members of the government caucus, I want to express our sorrow and deep feeling for the loss of one of the members of our Legislature, who was killed in the tragic airplane crash of October 19. We join all Albertans in extending our heartfelt sorrow and sympathy to Mrs. Notley, the children, and other members of the family.

The government members think of Grant's great dedication and service to Alberta, to his constituents, to his family, and also to his elected colleagues in this Assembly. On committees, at meetings, and at social functions, there was an ease of friendship and an opportunity to discuss and respect mutual hopes and dreams for all Albertans. This Albertan, gentleman, worthy member of the opposition, and friend of government members will be deeply missed and yet remembered for his outstanding contribution to all Albertans.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, as Government House Leader, I would like to add some remarks with respect to the late Leader of the Opposition. As House leader and he at the same time being Leader of the Official Opposition, we had many occasions to meet and discuss the progress of the House business. The issues that would be brought forward in the House

were often the subject matter of our conversation. In such circumstances, Mr. Speaker, one comes to know a person in yet a greater way — comes to know him as a person.

Mr. Speaker, it so happened that on Saturday last I was walking in my constituency during part of the afternoon. By then the news was generally known. Many people stopped me to express shock, disbelief, regret, and sadness. Some who had not heard all the events wondered if I could confirm the terrible news. When I did so, they were deeply affected.

Mr. Speaker, the late Leader of the Opposition was a very intelligent parliamentarian and an industrious one, a credit not only to the Legislative Assembly but to all Albertans. We will all remember him as a very sensitive and honourable person.

DR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to add a number of remarks in giving respect to the memory of a good friend and colleague, Grant Notley. All of us in the Assembly give thanks to Almighty God for the fact that a number of people did indeed survive that crash, and in particular we give thanks to God for the survival of our friend and colleague, Larry Shaben. In the midst of those thoughts and concerns we, as other members have expressed, do indeed have our concern for the families of those who died in that crash.

On Saturday afternoon, after I had learned of the events, I was in conversation with Sandy Notley. Having met her on at least two other occasions, I know her to be a very strong individual, a person who has great faith, and a person who will be a real pillar with respect to the ongoing upbringing of their children.

I know that all members of the Legislature also express our concern and regret to the staff members who worked very closely with Grant, because an incident such as this has a cutting depth which lasts not only for years but for all time.

Earlier in this year, on March 22, the first person to stand in the Legislature to welcome back Neil Webber and Harry Alger after their near miss with death in a plane was Grant Notley. Mr. Speaker, all of us would to God that we could stand in our places today to use the words of welcome Grant extended at that time to both Neil and Harry.

At Mrs. Notley's request, yesterday I celebrated a memorial Eucharist in the parish church of St. Clement's Balzac. As has been expressed by others, there's a real shock throughout all Alberta — a shock throughout Canada — because Grant was recognized as a man of integrity, a man of concern.

The other comments I offer today, Mr. Speaker, flow from the fact that in the Legislature one is able to go beyond party ranks. There are many committees where there is joint membership, where one has a chance to get involved with issues that greatly affect the everyday workings of the province of Alberta. It is there that we can come to know each other in a more intimate way as persons instead of as political people. It was there, especially since 1979, that I've been privileged to know Grant in serving on the Legislative Offices Committee, and more recently the amount of work he carried out, the fantastic amount of reading required as we searched for a new Ombudsman for this province. Those of us involved in that committee came to know and appreciate his hard work and his sense of humour. I'm sure many of us here today can visualize that quizzical, raised right eyebrow as he came to the end of one of his hearty laughs.

In June of this year, I was present in Fairview for the opening of a facility. As the MLA, Grant was there, and he said something that I greatly appreciated at the time. He introduced me to the people there as being his friend and colleague in the Legislature. Those are very important words, very meaningful words.

Later that afternoon we had three hours. He drove me around his constituency so that I could see his constituency in part through his eyes. We went down that road towards Dunvegan, and we went past their home high up on the banks of the mighty Peace. What a glorious sight. Then we went down to Dunvegan. The first place we went to was the old church, the old mission there. We walked around the site and, as we did, Grant was reaching out and saying hello. He could call the people by name, those that were working for the highways department or for parks and rec. Then we went over to the old fort site, and the Alberta Opportunity Corps were brushing timber. Again we visited, and it was the smile and the handshake which was Grant.

In early July I was fortunate enough, with Bud Miller, with the Ombudsman, and Grant Notley, to travel to Sweden and Finland for the Ombudsman conference — and I have here on my desk some photographs of happier times this year — where we were able to enjoy each other's company in the interests of learning more about the role of Ombudsmen in this world. There's a very real sense in which being an MLA is being an ombudsman. There's a very real sense in which being an MLA is ministry and reaching out to people. Grant was one who truly was dedicated in that respect.

Grant had a sense of humour, a freshness. To me, he also had a certain naive innocence, which I wondered how he could keep for the length of time he had been in political life. I admired the fact that he had those gifts.

On the way back from Russia — and I know that in some respects, Russia was a very difficult experience for Grant. While he was there, he was always off inquiring. In the last incident I wish to relate, we came back in the railway compartment, where you must sit in a certain allocated place. Grant, of course, was always trying to move around and go up and down the hallways. We had a couple in the same compartment with us, and they were very, very close, very guarded about wanting to relate to the rest of us in the compartment. In actual fact, it was Grant who got them to open up first. He did it by speaking through our interpreter. He asked them how they farmed their land and how they took their goods to market. He talked about life in their village, and then he talked about his constituency of Spirit River-Fairview. All of this opened up to our sharing a little bit of very strong Russian brandy. I have here a very great picture of Grant Notley, a very happy picture. It shows not only a bridge across our political lines in the Legislature but also the fact that he was able to reach out and make other bridges with people of other lands, other nations.

So I too join all here in saying how much we appreciated the many talents of Grant Notley. We do indeed miss him as a colleague but, most important, we will miss him as a friend.

Rest eternal grant unto Grant Notley, oh Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him. Amen.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I feel very alone today. My mentor is not here. As you can appreciate, it feels very strange.

I also would like to extend my sympathies to the other families whose loved ones went down in the plane. I would like to express gratitude to the Premier, to your office, Mr. Speaker, and to the Clerk's office for the help you have given me. I appreciate that very much.

The terrible loss we have all suffered is immeasurable. The death of Grant Notley stills one of the great voices in the history of Alberta public life. To his friends and co-workers, he is irreplaceable. He loved this House, and he respected and liked all the members in this House. I know all of us here know that, and we have no doubt about that.

To the people of Alberta, for whom he worked tirelessly all his adult life, his death has come as would that of a friend. To us, like myself, who loved him, we will never fill the vacuum that he has left. We find what comfort we can, Mr. Speaker, in the sure knowledge that Grant Notley will live in the hearts and minds of all people of good will.

We extend to his wife and three children our deepest sympathy and regrets. We shall not see his like again.

MR. SPEAKER: In a few moments, the members will be voting on the hon. Premier's motion to adjourn out of respect for our colleague Grant Notley, Leader of Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition in this parliament of Alberta.

Before putting that motion to a vote, it would seem appropriate to speak of my own admiration for Grant Notley, which is based not only on his service in this House but also on a long acquaintance with him inside and outside this Assembly. In this House, as in other parliaments of the Commonwealth, that give-and-take of differing points of view, especially between oppositions and Speakers, which arises naturally out of the special roles of oppositions and Speakers, does not diminish mutual respect. Neither does it, nor did it in the case of Grant Notley and myself, detract from a valued association going back to the early '60s, when he and I expressed differing points of view from the same platforms and negotiated broadcast time with the CBC. That relationship goes back, too, to the early '70s when, after the election in which he and I were first elected to this House, he and I shared, in this building, the services of a single secretary and the same small general office.

It is a treasured memory that after last Friday's adjournment, Grant and I happened to meet as we were leaving this Chamber and had another of our positive discussions on matters relating to the House.

Something which compels the special admiration and respect of presiding Speakers is a member's sense of parliament, which is a mark of a real democrat. Grant Notley developed that sense to an outstanding degree, as clearly shown by his consistently thorough preparation of speeches, his grasp of the practicalities of the rules of procedure, his quick mind and ready wit, and his skill in expression and in debate. Even in the most vigorous debate, he maintained a high standard of courtesy and expression. In Grant Notley, these marks of the true parliamentarian were combined with persistent hard work and a year-in and year-out unswerving dedication to duty and to service, which may be envied but which must be admired and respected.

With that admiration and respect must be combined gratitude to his family, who shared, as families do, the burdens of public office and public service. Grant's family is now in firm possession of the precious legacy of an outstanding career of unstinting service and dedication.

I suggest that the House now observe, standing, a moment of silence and tribute.

[Members observed a moment of silence]

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

Having heard the motion for adjournment, moved by the hon. Premier, do you all agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is passed unanimously. The House stands adjourned until Friday morning at 10 o'clock.

[The House adjourned at 3:06 p.m.]

