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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

Resignation of Member

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my hon. colleague, the Minister of National Defence, and other members of this House in offering my best wishes to the member for Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley.

The member referred to the letter received back from the clerk thanking him for his letter of resignation. I am sure she was only being polite. I am sure it was not an expression of pleasure. I see she is acknowledging that that is the case. I know all of us are disappointed to see him go, although we are glad he will be staying nearby in his new role.

The member mentioned that Sir Charles Tupper, a predecessor, was here in 1896 and that he was very young at the time. After that, I hesitate to ask him what year it was that he graduated from StFX. However, I know that he has certainly upheld the motto of St. Francis Xavier, which is *Quaecumque Sunt Vera*, "Whatever things are true". I congratulate him for that.

He was first elected in 1988 and has been elected a total of six times, which is a remarkable achievement.

As my hon. colleague mentioned, he is a former used car salesman. Speaking of cars and highways, there was a time when he was known as "Highway Bill". Forgive me for using his first name in the House. Some of us can recall that the name had to do with an issue in Nova Scotia surrounding a toll highway in his riding, on which he had a lot to say. It was a topic on which he was very effective and I think that assisted in some of his elections, but that went along with the good work he did in many other areas.

I can recall, when I was on that side of the House as a minister, that he had a way sometimes of coming over after question period or after a vote to raise an issue and have a chat with the minister. The next day, sometimes we would see an article in the paper saying that he had a meeting with the minister, and it was true. The point I really want to make is that it was a clever and effective way of raising the issue, not only directly with the minister, but also getting it in the media and putting pressure on the minister to get something done on that issue for his riding. For that he is to be commended. It was, as I say, very effective.

He showed his true character, as we can all recall, when he was the only Conservative to stand up for Nova Scotia and vote against the offshore accord betrayal even though he ended being kicked out of the Conservative caucus.

I remember during his health issues last year that when he was here I would ask him why he was here. He would say that his party required him to be here, and, of course, he was his own party. He was an independent.

In a recent poll in his riding, when the *Truro Daily News* asked readers if he deserved his job as the new representative of Nova Scotia in Ottawa, 56% said that he deserved it and only 7% had a different view. I can only think that they must have wanted him to stay on in his present job because he has done a great job.

His commitment to his constituents and to his province are an example to everyone. He has always conducted himself, not only in this House but elsewhere, with dignity, humility and honour. He has been a respected role model. I cannot recall the member going over the top, raising his voice or being nasty. Unfortunately, in this House, as we all know, sometimes that happens. Sometimes we get carried away, Mr. Speaker, despite your exhortations, but I do not recall any occasion when the member has done that and for that we should all salute him. He has been a role model for us. He will be missed.

I know we all wish him very good health. I know he will be busy in his new job but I hope he will find some time, along with spending time with his family, to visit a certain establishment in my riding run by his son and daughter-in-law, Finbar's Pub in Bedford in the Sunnyside Mall. Hopefully, we will run into one another for a bite there sometime. I do wish him every good wish to him and his wife, Rosemary. I look forward to seeing much more of him.