

A man of sensitivity who adhered strongly to principles of the highest order, the Honourable Henry H. Stevens will go down in history as one of Canada's more notable parliamentarians. He had a substantial parliamentary record over a period of some thirty years, three times serving, between 1911 and 1940, as a senior cabinet minister.

Appointed Minister of Trade and Commerce in the Meighen cabinet in 1921, he played an important part for Canada, both then and later during the Depression, in opening world markets to Canadian products, personally negotiating vitally important Trade Agreements with Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries.

In the early nineteen-thirties at the height of the Depression, as Minister of Trade and Commerce in the federal government of the day, he became famous as a crusader against contemporary economic and business practices. Most notable was his work as initiator and chairman of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads in 1934. This was the first substantial investigation in Canadian history into the economic and social disparities caused by practices in business and industry, investigating in particular price-fixing and wage structures. Through this Commission, and his efforts at correcting some of the appalling conditions it revealed, "Harry" Stevens became known across Canada as a champion of the industrial worker and small businessman. His outspoken

criticism of the conditions brought to light led him into conflict with a number of his government colleagues. Bent on speedy reform and a cleaning up of economic ills, he resigned his portfolio and left the Conservative Party late in 1934 in order to form and lead a new political body, the Reconstruction Party. In the 1935 election the Reconstruction Party's campaign played a highly significant role in that it virtually captured enough of the popular vote to bring about the defeat of the Conservative government.