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Lok Sabha pays rich tributes to Rajaji

Express News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb 19.

The Lok Sabha paid rich tributes to C. Rajagopalachari, eminent freedom fighter, Parliamentarian and former Governor-General, when it assembled today for the Budget Session. "Rajaji was a guardian of human culture, and an outstanding statesman; in his death, we have lost not a person, but a force", the Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, said.

The House also paid tributes to Shaikatullah Shah Ansari and six other former members of Parliament, who also passed away during the inter-session weeks.

In a moving tribute to Rajagopalachari, the Prime Minister said he was one of the greatest Parliamentarians the country had produced. His eminence was not of the kind derived from the many distinguished posts he had held, but came from within, from his sharp and powerful intellect and his deep concern for the cause of mankind. He had served the Congress party for 40 years, and had founded the Swatantra Party, "but no party could really contain him", she said. An eloquent exponent of Indian culture, "he was a guardian of human culture", the Prime Minister added.

Rajagopalachari was "first and last a great patriot", the Speaker Mr G. S. Dhillon, said. His missionary zeal had made him an institution by himself. Describing Rajaji as a great patriot and administrator, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said his death meant that another link between the old and new India had been severed. The passing of Rajaji was like the loss of a "rishi" he felt.

Mr S. N. Mishra (Cong-O) praised the utter simplicity of Rajagopalachari's life and said it should be an example to all. He felt Rajaji's statements about democracy should be inscribed in Parliament.