

## THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 28, 1988

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.  
Prayers.

### THE HONOURABLE ERNEST G. COTTREAU

TRIBUTES ON RETIREMENT FROM THE SENATE

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I wish to draw attention this afternoon to the fact that our colleague Senator Cottreau will very soon be reaching the end of his career as a member of the Senate. In fact, I understand that today is his last day. Senator Cottreau has made plans to return to Nova Scotia tomorrow, so I thought it would be appropriate to make some remarks now.

Those of us who attended the excellent reception recently given by His Honour the Speaker for our colleague Senator Cottreau will recall that His Honour, Senator Murray and I made extensive comments extolling the career of Senator Cottreau. What was fascinating about that event was Senator Cottreau's spirited reply, which demonstrated the eloquence he possesses, an eloquence that he did not often share with us in the chamber. However, that event will certainly be a lasting memory as one that gave the honourable senator an excellent send-off.

Senator Cottreau was summoned to the Senate on May 8, 1974, but it was not until September 30, 1974, that he actually took his seat in the chamber. For his new colleagues, however, the short wait was well worth it. His amiability, efficiency and presence have been characteristic of his career in the Senate.

The appointment of Senator Cottreau to the Senate marked the continuation of a long line of Acadians, beginning with Mr. Ambroise-Hilaire Comeau, who was called to the Senate, from his riding in Digby, to take his place in, I believe, 1907. I believe it was Senator Cottreau himself who told us in a speech in the Senate that that tradition had been established by consultations between the Honourable William Fielding and Sir Wilfrid Laurier at that particular time. In any event, it has been a happy tradition and one that has been maintained almost consistently since that time.

In his maiden speech to the Senate Senator Cottreau spoke of the responsibility he felt to the Acadian community of Nova Scotia and of the role of the federal government in protecting and promoting the French language in Nova Scotia. In looking back I found that Senator Cottreau has been diligent in making points in the Senate not only about the linguistic interests of Acadians but also about their economic welfare. He has demonstrated in his own career the qualities of the Acadian people of Nova Scotia. At one time he said, "In my area Acadians have always been recognized for their ambition

and their contribution to the welfare of society." I can certainly support that statement, having had the honour in the House of Commons to represent considerable blocs of French-speaking Acadians in my former constituency.

As honourable senators know, there is a significant Acadian population in northern Inverness County, on Isle Madame in Richmond County and in an important part of Antigonish County, as well as in that area in which Senator Cottreau has resided. From my long association with the Acadians I can assure honourable colleagues of the qualities which Senator Cottreau has himself exemplified, and I can attest to those qualities from personal experience.

Honourable senators, one can never do justice to an occasion of this kind, but in my own case I am delighted to have had the opportunity of serving with Senator Cottreau for the last four years, to acknowledge today the contribution he has made and to acknowledge the important tradition in our political life which he represents.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government, Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations and Acting Minister of Communications):** Honourable senators, I listened with great interest to the remarks of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I was particularly interested to hear him point out to us the existence of important groups of Acadians in eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, which he formerly represented in the House of Commons. I could not forbear to speculate that now that our esteemed friend Senator Cottreau, who comes from the South Shore, is leaving us Senator MacEachen may have been making an argument that an Acadian from eastern Nova Scotia or Cape Breton might be an appropriate replacement. In any case, I shall certainly see that his remarks are drawn to the attention of the Prime Minister and, of course, Premier Buchanan, who, under the Meech Lake Accord, will have the right to recommend a slate of candidates for vacancies in the Senate.

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate for reminding us that our friend and colleague Senator Cottreau is about to leave. Indeed, on January 28, Senator Cottreau will turn 75 and have to retire from the Senate.

Ernest Cottreau first made a name for himself in teaching. He then went into business for about ten years. However, he finally returned to his former love, teaching, before entering the Senate on May 8, 1974.

A native of Nova Scotia, Senator Cottreau has always been a proud representative of the Acadian people of that province.