

Senator Milne's background is rich with community involvement. She has served as a trustee and chair of the Peel County Board of Education, on the Senate of the University of Guelph, as Chairman of the Brampton and District Association for the Mentally Retarded and as a board member for Rapport House, a hostel for young people with drug addictions.

• (1430)

A graduate of the University of Guelph, Senator Milne received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. She was also a lecturer with the university's physics department.

Honourable senators, "volunteerism" has been central to Senator Milne's life. She brings with her an extraordinary vitality and commitment which will be of great benefit to the work of this Senate.

Senator Marie-Paule Poulin offers this institution a lifetime of experience in an area for which we are not always noted, namely, communications.

[Translation]

She is well known for her exceptional contribution to the arts and broadcasting in Canada, particularly for her contribution to the expansion of French-language radio and television to the entire country.

She has held a number of senior positions at CBC, among them founding director of French services for Northern Ontario, president and secretary-general of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and chairman of its board of directors.

[English]

Most recently, many of us have known her as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal since 1993. Previously, she served as deputy secretary to the cabinet for communications and consultation, a position where she worked closely with the former Leader of the Government in the Senate, our friend, Senator Murray, who I know valued her advice highly.

Senator Poulin is a native of Sudbury and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Laurentian University and a Master of Social Sciences from the University of Montreal. She has a strong commitment to letter base in Northern Ontario and offers to the Senate not only important experience in a critical sector of our culture and economy but also boundless energy to contribute in new directions in the work of this institution.

These new colleagues, honourable senators, bring this house closely into balance — not quite, but close. We all know that the Senate is a place of vigorous debate, independent spirit and political enthusiasm. It is also a place for reflection, compassion and innovative initiatives. Over the years of its history, it has witnessed, on occasion, aggressive confrontations, but more often it functions on the basis of cooperation, courtesy and goodwill.

Each of the senators who join us today will make a strong and positive contribution to this place as it carries out its

responsibility to the people in every part of this country of Canada. Again, we offer our congratulations to each of you and your families, and our good wishes on this very special day as you take your seats in this chamber.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition):

Honourable senators, it is with pleasure that I join with the Leader of the Government to welcome our new colleagues, each one of whom brings, as Senator Fairbairn has so well outlined, his or her own special talents and abilities, confirming again that the Senate of Canada has available to it a collection of experience and knowledge, which, I always like to maintain, is greater than that found in any elected body in Canada, whatever the level.

The four new senators emphasize again the value of an appointed body in even this most democratic of all countries.

[Translation]

My congratulations to our new colleagues and my best wishes for success as they assume their new duties. Putting our various political allegiances aside, we share the same goal: to contribute to ensuring that any legislation we are called upon to examine serves the public interest as far as possible, and not the interests of some special group.

[English]

I trust that the new senators will ignore the interpretations circulated in some quarters — and not all non-governmental at that — that their appointment is in part intended to give the government side enough votes to bring an end to the so-called "Tory-dominated Senate."

Some Hon. Senators: Shame, shame!

Senator Lynch-Staunton: They and the Senate are not deserving of such a narrow and partisan interpretation of the nature of their appointments.

May I remind honourable colleagues, and particularly our four new colleagues, that, during the Confederation debates in 1865, one speaker saw the Upper House as:

...a tribunal for purifying the legislation of the Commons, for weighing in the balance of experience the probable consequences of their legislation.

In the Speaker's chambers, where our new colleagues will be received later today, are a number of mural inscriptions, one of which is attributed to Cicero. Properly translated, it reads:

It is the duty of the nobles to oppose the fickleness of the multitudes.

Let me hasten to say that these are not my sentiments as such. The two quotations are given to emphasize that ours is a responsibility to improve and suggest improvements where found useful, not to obstruct endlessly, and certainly not to rubber-stamp slavishly.