

of the representation of the provinces in the House of Commons and to provide for the readjustment of such representation in accordance therewith.

Bill read first time.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West) moved that the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting.

Motion agreed to.

THE LATE SENATOR BLAIS

TRIBUTES

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, before the routine proceedings are called, I rise to say how very sad I am sure we all felt when we heard that our distinguished colleague, the Honourable Aristide Blais, died on Tuesday, November 10 last. Perhaps it was significant that Senator Blais should have died on the eve of Armistice Day, having served in World War I in the Medical Corps as a surgeon. He carried the rank of major for most of the war, and was subsequently promoted to lieutenant-colonel.

Senator Blais was appointed to the Senate in 1940. He served all but a quarter of a century. I am sure that I speak for all honourable senators when I say that he was highly respected and dearly beloved in the Senate.

Senator Blais was born in the County of Montmagny in the Province of Quebec. He studied medicine and graduated from Laval, Canada's oldest university. He did graduate work in surgery in Paris. He went to Western Canada just after the turn of the century. He settled in Edmonton and there practised his profession, in which he achieved a reputation of great distinction. People who knew him in those days have remarked about the high regard for his professional competence. They have also testified to the respect to which he was held by people in all parts of his home community.

Senator Blais' life exemplifies a fine Canadianism. Speaking in the Senate on one occasion in 1942, he reflected upon this aspect of his life without drawing a conclusion. It is for us to draw the conclusion now. This I think we can do very well from the remarks he then made. He said:

It has been my privilege to live in Edmonton for the last forty-two years. When I went there in 1901 I was made very welcome by my English compatriots. The French-Canadian population was then very small, and my practice soon began to develop amongst my English-speaking fellow citizens. At that time, to my great sorrow, I could hardly speak English, but I knew enough of the lan-

guage to appreciate their hospitality and their great qualities of mind and heart. I have learned a lot from them in many ways but first of all I have learned to love them. Today some of my best friends are English-speaking citizens, with whom I can discuss in complete frankness all problems confronting Canada. I have always lived in harmony with them without surrendering any of the principles which underlie our faith and our traditions. I often feel that if most of my compatriots in Quebec were given a similar opportunity a better understanding would prevail among us.

What is dividing us? It is the lack of a common medium of exchange—language. That is why I have always advocated, indeed urged, that English language and literature should be made compulsory subjects in our universities, especially for those who will be our leaders in the future. I am confident that if we knew each other better, all obstacles would soon disappear. We could benefit enormously by a knowledge of our respective cultures. Mutual esteem would unite two great forces, and these forces pulling together would accomplish a miracle and make this Canada of ours a veritable Promised Land.

These are remarkable words, uttered more than 20 years ago.

When Senator Dan Riley died in 1948, Senator Blais, with his capacity for friendship, told of Senator Riley's great personal qualities and particularly of the regard in which he was held, especially by the Indian tribes of southern Alberta. He said on that occasion:

No Calgary stampede was a success if Senator Riley was not seen riding in a parade at the head of the Indian tribes who had gathered there for that occasion.

It seems to me that this man, born in Montmagny County, Quebec, through these few phrases delivered in the Senate, somehow epitomized the spirit of the west.

We shall miss his friendship, honourable senators. We shall miss his great courtesy. We shall be consoled with the thought that he died full of years and invested with much honour by his colleagues here.

Hon. A. J. Brooks: Honourable senators, as has been well said by Senator Connolly (Ottawa West), we have been greatly saddened by the recent death of one of our oldest and most respected fellow senators.

I did not have the opportunity or the honour of knowing Senator Blais very well, for he was ill most of the time I have been a member of this house, but I knew him well