

by the finesse and delicacy he showed in organizing very complicated leadership conventions.

His interest in politics had obviously prepared him for the active career he followed in the Senate. In a sense, it is unfortunate that the work of the Special Committee on National Defence has not received the wide currency in Canada that it deserves. The work is well known among defence specialists, but his conclusions are not as well known among the general public as a whole. Of course, Senator Lafond was a key person in that particular work.

I should like to conclude by referring to Paul Lafond's war service. He served for a number of years in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was decorated with an important award, which he wore most modestly but which was an indication of an achievement in service that not many attain. It is most unfortunate for all of us to have lost his presence, because he has been associated for so many years with the Ottawa scene.

I join with Senator Murray and others in expressing our deep sympathy to his widow, family and friends.

Hon. Henry D. Hicks: Honourable senators, the two senators who have preceded me have covered very well the career of our lately departed friend, Senator Paul Lafond. I need not go over that ground, but there are one or two points referred to by both of them that I would like to make brief comments upon, just the same.

First, Paul Lafond was, throughout his life, a citizen of Hull. But operating from that community so close to the national capital he became a true Canadian who comprehended this country as a whole, as a unit, and was more concerned with Canada as a whole than he was with its several parts—although, as Senator Murray said in referring to the oration of the presiding priest at his funeral this morning, he became well known for his concern for the poor and unfortunate people in the community in which he was brought up and in which he commenced his education.

I should also like to refer to Senator Lafond's war service, though much has already been said. He was doing research with the RCAF when war broke out. He became an officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force and served as such for five years, winning the Distinguished Flying Cross—no mean accomplishment. From that time on he continued his interest in Canada's armed forces—not only the air force but all of Canada's armed forces as an integrated defence unit. This was what enabled him to preside so well over the Committee on National Defence when it was a subcommittee of our Committee on Foreign Affairs and when it then achieved the status of a special committee of this house.

I am also glad that Senator Murray referred to, and Senator MacEachen continued to speak of, his service for 20 years as General Secretary of the National Liberal Federation.

Our system of Parliament, towards which our system of government is responsible, depends on party organization. Largely, the stability of our government owes a great debt to political parties. Those who serve them do a great service not only to their party but also to the country. As Senator Murray

pointed out, Senator Lafond did not operate in an antagonistic manner with his opposite number in the Progressive Conservative Party. He was a professional person in this respect as well. That is something which in these times our political parties urgently need. As has already been said, he discharged those duties well.

Finally, in this chamber he will largely be remembered for the service he rendered as chairman of the Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence. The committee has issued four reports already. The first was entitled: "Manpower in Canada's Armed Forces." We have already seen some progress towards implementing the recommendations that that report made—not as rapid progress as those of us who are on the committee would have liked, but some progress—and some of us on that committee feel that we deserve some credit for having made a strong statement advocating policies which have been followed since then.

The second report had to do with Maritime Command. Here, again, we made the recommendation which resulted in—I do not say that we were the only ones, though—the beginning of the acquisition of the Canadian patrol frigates. We also recommended the acquisition of further submarines. However, we did not at that time consider nuclear-powered submarines, and that is a matter to which this particular committee has not yet addressed its attention. Our second and third reports had to do with Canada's territorial air defence and the fourth one with military air transport.

• (1410)

Shortly after we began what will probably be the committee's final study, an investigation into Canada's land forces, Senator Lafond's health caused him to retire as chairman of the committee. It then became my unhappy duty, honourable senators, to succeed him as chairman, and I am doing my best to bring the final report to a conclusion, with the able assistance of the senators who have been so faithful in supporting the work of the committee. I hope that we may be able to append to the report at that time a summary, together with a cost-updating, of all of the recommendations that we have made in our series of reports covering the whole of Canada's armed forces.

Honourable senators, perhaps I have spent a little too much time talking about these matters, but I have done so deliberately, because I say to you, honourable senators, that had it not been for Senator Paul Lafond's intimate knowledge of Canada's defence forces and his more personal knowledge of the key players who occupied the position of Chief of the Defence Staff and other top positions in all three services in Canada's forces, I do not think the committee would ever have made the progress that it did in putting together those reports. His personal hand was very active in the writing and composition of the reports and in thrashing out with the other members of the committee the recommendations that were made. Truly, Senator Paul Lafond was eminently qualified to do this job, and I regret exceedingly that he did not survive long enough to see the completion of our fifth and final report.