

More important than all of that are the times we had together in the parliamentary dining room. We generally dined there at the same time and had some very dynamic discussions at the round table. We did not always agree. Joan's view was often different from my own, and she has a good legal mind with which to argue her position. However, I am quite sure that I influenced some of her actions in the committee, and may have influenced her to bend somewhat, as Senator Keon has said that she did.

I will miss you, Joan. I hope that my next seatmate will be as young and as beautiful as you, and as easy to get along with. We will all miss you. May you have a very happy retirement.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Joan Neiman: Honourable senators, I thank you for all the lovely bouquets. I will press them in my memory book and trot them out for my children to read every Mother's Day.

George Burns said that you can tell that a man is getting old when he bends down to lace his shoes and wonders what else he can do while he is down there. I gave up high button shoes a long time ago, so this date is coming as a bit of a shock to me, I must say.

When I think back over the years that I have been here, I realize how much this chamber has changed. Senator Olson and I were talking yesterday about how different the chamber is, and how differently we conduct our business today.

When I arrived here, I was perhaps only the seventh or eighth woman senator to have been appointed. This room seemed to be filled with white-haired people, overwhelmingly male. They were courtly; many of them were portly; a number of them were very good speakers, in fact orators.

They were so kind to me as a new member. They taught me. Senator Choquette, who sat in front of me, prided himself on his command of the English language. He used to listen to me very carefully, and correct me if I was not using proper grammar at any time. He would then give me a little lecture about how we really should not read our speeches. Unfortunately, that is still a bad habit of mine.

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Mr. Fortier, a wonderful man, was the Clerk of the Senate at that time. He not only knew his rules, he knew parliamentary history. He loved to chat about what had gone on here. He reminded me so much of Senator Forsey who came along a little later. Senator Forsey became my great friend and mentor. From time to time, we did get into some rebellious actions. He stimulated exciting thought and controversy in this chamber. It was a pleasure to have served here with Senator Forsey.

When I was first appointed to this place, our committee meetings were run somewhat differently. As Senator Olson said, in those days we took a rather cavalier attitude to legislation, with a bill sometimes being dealt with in one day. Obviously,

there was not as much controversy then as there is today. The opposition at that time was very small; and only a few committees had any permanent staff.

My committee beginnings were on the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and on the Special Senate Committee on Science and Technology with Senator Lamontagne as the chairman. It was an eye-opening experience because my training and interests had been in the humanities field. It was a wonderful experience to be on that committee with Senator Lamontagne and to realize, in the end, what a special study in this Senate could accomplish. That study certainly changed, immeasurably, the national and government institutions, and indeed the progress of science in Canada.

To be a member of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee under Senator Goldenberg was a wonderful learning experience for me. I thoroughly enjoyed being a member of that committee all the years I was here.

Honourable senators, as parliamentarians, we have many opportunities in the Senate to accomplish things outside the legislative field. I decided early on that I would confine myself to one parliamentary committee, and that was the Inter-parliamentary Union. That involvement provided me the opportunity to learn about and understand people around the world. I was especially fortunate to become active in the human rights field.

One of my greatest feelings of accomplishment stems from my travels to Malaysia and Indonesia as a representative of the Human Rights Committee. Two of us went there to persuade the heads of those countries to release political prisoners, one of whom had been in prison for over 20 years. It was a delicate and difficult mission. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction when all those people were released over the next couple of months.

Honourable senators, it is progress on difficult issues such as that that I believe the Senate can accomplish. Senators have tremendous opportunities to realize significant goals, not only as part of their parliamentary functions, but also outside their duties in parliament for the good of Canadians and the peoples of the world.

Of course, there are frustrations. I have been frustrated more than once in my time here. I can recall within six weeks of being here that I mentioned to Senator Connolly that I thought I would make a speech one day on the reform of the Senate. He said to me, "Now, Joan, just sit back for a little while and listen to what is going on and you will begin to understand that this business is a little more complicated and harder to untangle than you think it is right now." That was good advice. We are still struggling with that issue.

Honourable senators, I hope there will be changes. I always hoped that I would be here when there were some significant changes made, not only to the Senate, but to the parliamentary system. I hope this government will find the will to go ahead with some of them.