

postmaster of the House of Commons. He was appointed to this assembly by the Government of Sir John Macdonald in the year 1885. None, however long their service, can compare with him in the time given to the work of this body. Not only was he well known by reason of the length of his service, but he was still better known by his achievement in other spheres in which Canadians only too rarely attain success—the spheres of science and of literature. Pascal Poirier was a great Acadian. He was the historian, the advocate and the interpreter of his race. His whole being centered around that people, the people who laid the foundations of civilized society in our Maritime Provinces. The books of which he is the author will be enlightening works not only to this generation but to posterity, especially in relation to that people. Senator Poirier's mind, I often thought, was essentially scientific. We all know with what artistry of words he addressed us when he arose to speak, an artistry that was equally excellent in both languages; but his mind and his interests, when one got to know him, were in mineralogy, in geology, and kindred sciences, and to his last day he never ceased to dream of much that was yet to be attained for the benefit of his native land in those great fields of research. To his widow who mourns him, and to her brother—one of our best known public men and a member of this House—we all extend our heartfelt and lasting sympathy.

It would be difficult indeed to compress within the boundaries of a brief speech the long record of achievement that stands to the credit of our late colleague Senator Béique. He was for more than sixty-five years at the Bar of Quebec; three decades in this House; all those years, or nearly all, a member of the governing bodies of very large industries of our Dominion, active in educational work, prominent in at least half a dozen other spheres—president of a university, president of a bank, member of the executive committee of the Canadian Pacific; and through it all one of the most vigorous advocates at the Bar that the province of Quebec has seen. All of us will agree that he was one of the best informed and most practically useful members of either House of Parliament.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I fancy some who knew him best would use the single superlative; probably my brief experience in this Chamber warrants me in adopting the more cautious term. One could not work with him or talk with him without realizing that he was possessed of a mind of ample dimensions, of comprehensive information, of

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keen analytical power, all dominated by a spirit of fairness and determination for service, which form the base and the background of all worth-while public work. He has gone now, having reached by reason of strength far beyond the three score years and ten, with the unanimous acclamation of all lovers of true citizenship, and followed by the benedictions of his people.

We all had observed for a period of many months that failing health had wrought something approaching collapse in the splendid physique and fine intellectual powers of Senator Robertson. I well remember the occasion when, now nearly seventeen years ago, I was introduced to him, he on that day entering the Cabinet of which I had been for some time a member. As he had never occupied a seat in the House of Commons, nor taken any part in the political warfare of his day, he was to his future colleagues comparatively unknown. His admission to high public office had been attained, certainly not because of service to any party, for such service he never had given, not because of advocacy of any special policy or theory on the hustings, but because of high qualities shown in the realm of organized labour, to which he had given his life. Starting as a telegrapher at the age of eighteen, in the course of a decade and a half he became chairman of the board of the telegraphers of this country. This gave him scope for his splendid, indeed unexampled, talents as a mediator—and a born mediator he was. To the order of which he was the head, and to organized labour in general, his heart was attached, his energies were devoted; around these things all his interests centered and for them he lived. He was not in those early times, nor indeed was he ever, a partisan in the sense in which we usually understand the term. As a member of a party government he doubtless had party affiliations, and to those affiliations he was loyal, but beyond the allegiance by which as a colleague he was bound to his associates and leader, he knew not the meaning of the term at all. His interests were elsewhere, his whole mission and purpose in life was foreign to any such sphere. I know that his closest associate—certainly an associate closer to him than was any member of the Government to which he belonged—was the honourable senator from Parkdale (Hon. Mr. Murdock). He can in a personal way speak of him better than can any of the rest of us. Mediator in some of the fiercest and most dangerous disputes which ever shook the social fabric of our country, Senator Robertson conducted himself with credit in all, and with almost