

THE SENATE

Monday, November 24, 1980

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

THE LATE JULES LÉGER

TRIBUTES TO FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, a great many moving tributes have been paid to the late and distinguished former Governor General, the Right Honourable Jules Léger, who passed away last Saturday.

Jules Léger was truly a great Canadian with a record of outstanding service to this nation. Tonight, I know I reflect the sentiments of all honourable senators as I rise, with a great deal of sadness, to note some of the reasons why we grieve his passing.

[*Translation*]

He started his career as a newspaper man for the daily *Le Droit* in 1938 and then was a professor at Ottawa University until 1942.

In 1942, he was appointed secretary to the Canadian embassy in Chile. From 1943 to 1949, he performed the same duties in London. In 1951, he became Assistant Under Secretary of State for External Affairs. Later on, he was appointed Canadian Ambassador to Mexico, Ambassador to the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty (NORAD) and Ambassador to Italy.

[*English*]

Jules Léger became Canadian Ambassador to France in 1964 and held that post at a time when relations between our two countries became particularly strained as a result of General de Gaulle's visit to Canada in 1967. Canada was fortunate to be able to count on someone of Jules Léger's experience and character at such a time.

[*Translation*]

In 1968, Jules Léger was appointed Under Secretary of State responsible for arts, culture, bilingualism, education and citizenship.

● (2205)

[*English*]

Before being named Governor General, Mr. Léger was named to his last diplomatic post as Ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg.

In 1974, Jules Léger became Canada's twenty-first Governor General, the fourth Canadian and only the second French Canadian to be so honoured. Only six months after assuming his functions, Mr. Léger suffered a severe stroke, leaving him

partially paralyzed. Yet he refused to resign and his will to recover became a symbol of courage to all Canadians. Within two years, Mr. Léger had recovered enough to work full days and he managed to visit every Canadian province as well as the two territories.

However, Mr. Léger's most important accomplishment may have been the Canadianization of the office of Governor General. He excelled in this task, contributing to Canadian unity and lending a sharper perspective to the concept of Canadian identity. His perseverance and his courage in this regard will serve as an example to all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

We offer our most sincere condolences to Madam Léger and her daughter Hélène.

[*English*]

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I feel very humble tonight because of the fact that I have to replace my leader and pay tribute to the late Jules Léger, former Governor General and a great and distinguished Canadian, but I feel it an honour and a privilege to act in this capacity.

● (2010)

Unfortunately, because I am a relatively new member of the Senate, I did not enjoy the privilege and honour of knowing the former Governor General, but I followed his career and was astounded by the humanitarian aspect of it, and the manner in which he brought the high office of Governor General to the people of Canada.

As a veteran, I was struck by the fact that, despite suffering a stroke, he insisted on continuing his duties. In doing so, he had the comfort and assistance of his wife, Gaby Léger. She helped him carry out those duties—duties which meant so much to Canada.

I join the Prime Minister and many distinguished Canadians more worthy than I, in paying tribute to a great Canadian. We, in this party, and all Canadians, in line with the words of the Leader of the Government, feel that we have lost a part of Canada and a most distinguished Canadian.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I had the good fortune of being a personal acquaintance of His Excellency Jules Léger. His good humor, lack of pretence, his sense of duty and devotion to the service of his country will reserve him a special place in our memories as a man who was always equal to the tasks inherent in the important posts he held. With the courageous assistance of his magnificent wife, he worked and reworked, like some master ploughman, the ter-