

by the house leader this evening, I will address my first words to our new Speaker.

I have known of Maurice Riel favourably, indeed, because of his association in the legal world with the firm of Stikeman, Elliott, Tamaki, Mercier & Robb. I have heard many fine things of him from his partners in that organization. However, when I heard him read the prayers in such mellifluous and pleasing French, and saw him garbed as the Speaker with his robe, gloves, cravat and hat, it occurred to me that he was to the manner born and that he had been just waiting for the time when he would assume the function he is occupying tonight.

I am sure his appointment as Speaker of this house will further adorn his celebrated career as a Canadian citizen and public servant. I feel the Senate can rest easy that, under his presidency, its work will continue to be useful.

On behalf of the members on this side, and I am sure on behalf of everyone in the chamber, I add our congratulations to our new Speaker and offer our best wishes for his enjoyment of the office.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Roblin: Now, I should like to say something about the man he has succeeded, because one can fairly say that the Honourable Jean Lesage is a man whose career has taken surprising turns.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

An Hon. Senator: Jean Lesage? Jean Marchand.

Senator Roblin: Wait until he hears what I have said! However, he may not be entirely displeased to be associated with a man of Jean Lesage's reputation and character. Probably my slip of the tongue arises from the fact that Jean Marchand began his political activities, as far as I recall, at the time when Jean Lesage was active in politics in this country. Jean Marchand has been a leader in the social development and the advance of his own Province of Quebec; he has developed the reputation of being faithful to his province, but, at the same time, being a strong believer in our Confederation.

When he entered the House of Commons in 1965, he was described as one of the "three wise men" coming to Parliament at that time. There are some who think he may be the wisest of the three. I offer no opinion on that score; I simply say that he qualified for the general description. While he was in the House of Commons, as Senator Guay knows very well, he occupied a number of portfolios with great distinction, and during his career there proved himself to be resourceful, candid and frank. In fact, at one time, in his assessment of the Department of Transport, he was so frank that it became a parliamentary sensation; but that, in my opinion, reflects greatly to his credit.

Honourable senators, when I entered the Senate a little while ago, Jean Marchand was a front bencher, first in the government and then, for a short period of time, in the opposition. He established his credentials, to my mind, as

being a colourful, eloquent and vigorous proponent of the views for which he stood. When he became the Speaker of the Senate in 1980, he conducted himself in that post with grace and impartiality. But I am sure that some of us must be aware of the fact that he really did not find that role sufficiently active, in the political sense, for a man of his previous record and accomplishments. Therefore, although, as I started out by saying, he is a man whose life has taken a surprising turn, perhaps we need not be too surprised to find that he has now decided to take on new responsibilities.

There is one thing about his change of venue, honourable senators, that pleases me; that is that it is perfectly clear that his age—and mine is not too far away from his—is certainly no indication that there isn't plenty of life in that old dog, if I may use that affectionate expression, for the years to come. He has now become the administrator of one of the powerful instruments of our national policy. I am sure that he will leave his mark on the office of Chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission. We are going to miss him in the Senate. We are particularly going to miss his luncheons and his little celebrations after Royal Assent, but I am sure that we all wish him well in his new activity.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Martial Asselin: Honourable senators, I think that the honourable Jean Marchand's decision to accept major responsibilities in the Canadian public service has taken some of us by surprise.

One would have thought that at his age—although he is still relatively young—he would not have assumed such heavy responsibilities. I have known the Honourable Jean Marchand for quite some time and this is the kind of challenge he likes. His whole life has been a series of challenges which he has never failed to take up successfully.

I first met him when he was fighting for organized labour. Our paths crossed again later in politics. He has always been a man of principle and never did he compromise about a principle in which he firmly believed.

All honourable senators will recall the major decision he took when he left the Cabinet on a basic question, namely the use of French in air services. In his eyes, that was a question about which his basic principles did not leave room for argument.

Jean Marchand has always fought for the cause of French-speaking Canadians. In my opinion, Quebecers are lucky to have had such an uncompromising and valiant champion sitting in the other place as minister of various departments.

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay: Not only Quebecers!

Senator Asselin: Honourable senators, he was a rough player, as has been said, a good debater. If ever you had an opportunity to hear him during electoral campaigns in Quebec, you know he could stir the crowds at will.

Others have known other aspects of his personality, but I have known him when I was fighting against him. Being of