

THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 13, 1990

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker *pro tempore* in the Chair.

Prayers.

THE HONOURABLE DAVID A. CROLL

FELICITATIONS ON CELEBRATION OF NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold: Honourable senators, yesterday marked an important birthday for one of our most distinguished members. I refer to Senator Croll who, on March 12, celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Buckwold: As we are aware, Senator Croll is the senior senator here. He is the dean of the Senate and is probably one of the best-known and most admired senators in the history of this chamber.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Buckwold: As a matter of fact, the story goes around that one night, at about three o'clock in the morning, Senator Murray received a collect phone call from an inebriated gentleman who—after the call was accepted—said that he thought that Senator Murray was one of the finest senators that ever graced this chamber. Senator Murray graciously then responded by saying, "You must be referring to Senator Croll." The drunk came back and said, "That is true, but he would not accept the call."

Senator Croll was born in Moscow, Russia, in the year 1900. He came to Canada at the age of five and settled in Windsor, Ontario. Twenty years later he then took his law degree. It speaks so well for the opportunities that exist in this country that by the time he was 25 he was a graduate lawyer, and by the age of 30 he was an outstanding mayor of the city of Windsor. That is a real accomplishment.

He was then elected to the Legislature of Ontario in 1934. He served in the government of Premier Hepburn as Minister of Labour and in several other portfolios. He is reputed at that time to have made a statement that will go down in history. When the workers of General Motors went on strike for the purpose of trying to organize a union, the Minister of Labour of the government of the day marched with the strikers, saying that he would much rather walk with the workers than ride with General Motors.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Buckwold: Honourable senators, I am sure we have all heard that story many times. I merely put it on the record because it is symbolic of everything that Senator Croll has done. He has a great heart. He is a true liberal in the small "I"

sense. He has a feeling for those who need assistance. Senator Croll should be credited with much of the social legislation that we see in this country today. If he was not instrumental in devising it, he was certainly active in supporting and encouraging it.

Senator Croll was elected to the House of Commons in 1945, after serving in the Canadian army from 1939 to 1945. During that six-year military period he enlisted as a private and ended up as a colonel, while winning the esteem, admiration and respect of all those who served under him. As I say, he has had a very distinguished career in every possible way.

Along the line he has made friends. Although he has been so active politically, I personally have never heard of anyone who disliked Senator Croll. Some may not have always agreed with him, but they always respected his integrity and his sincerity. Senator Croll served in the House of Commons from 1945 until 1955.

I would now like to say something that I want on the record. I think most of us know about it. We all know that Senator Croll is of the Jewish faith, as I am, but some of us may not know that he should have been in the cabinet of the day.

Senator Perrault: Hear, hear!

Senator Buckwold: I am sorry to say that even as late as the 1950s that was an unthinkable appointment; unthinkable. Looking back now, it is hard even to imagine that a man of the calibre, integrity and ability of Senator Croll would be denied his rightful place in the Government of Canada. I do not think it is any secret that in 1955, in order to respond to the pressure to do something for Mr. Croll, he was named to the Senate. He was the first Jew ever to be appointed to this august chamber. To many of us he is a hero. I must say that, while I was very proud to be appointed a senator, my real satisfaction on that day was being able to walk down the aisle here with Senator Croll, my ideal, who held my arm and escorted me to the Speaker's Chair. To me it was a very real honour to be escorted by my mentor, a man of his great stature, on that particular day.

During his career in the Senate—and keep in mind that it is of 35 years' duration—he has lived up to every commitment he has made. I think that he has been the conscience of this chamber. Regardless of politics, he has advanced any type of social legislation that has interested him. To this day he is a firm supporter of our social systems and our universal programs. As chairman of the well-known and highly recognized Senate Committee on Poverty, he brought forth, many years ago, a report that is quoted to this day. Each year he revises his report and sends to all of us his estimates of the current level of poverty in this country.