

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government, Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations and Acting Minister of Communications): Honourable senators, I want to thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for having drawn our attention to the departure, soon, of our esteemed colleague, Senator Ian Sinclair. I am sure that Senator MacEachen would not expect me and my colleagues on this side of the chamber to share his enthusiasm for all of Senator Sinclair's senatorial initiatives or for all of the precedents he set while a member of this chamber and a member of its various committees, but I do agree that he embarked on them all and saw them through with enormous energy, enthusiasm and dedication and, really, with incomparable skill and eloquence.

● (2010)

Senator MacEachen has alluded to the fact that our friend, Senator Sinclair, has had, in succession—contemporaneously, really—three careers: one in the law; one as a business executive; and another as a parliamentarian. It is his career as a parliamentarian that is now drawing to a close. While he is not as active as he once was in his profession and in business, still, wherever intellect and strength of character and conviction are respected in this country or anywhere else, Ian Sinclair is certainly a force to be reckoned with.

Senator MacEachen has referred to Senator Sinclair's early career, when I believe as a native of Manitoba he took law and later lectured in the subject at university, and to his distinguished career in business, in particular with Canadian Pacific.

I should note that our colleague was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1979 and that we have had him here as a colleague since 1983. During the past five years he has proven himself to be a very spirited debater—certainly, he rarely shrank from argument. I noticed a quotation attributed to him a couple of years ago in which he is alleged to have said: "Guys like Ian Sinclair don't back off. I mean, we press." I must say we have seen that characteristic demonstrated not once but many times during Senator Sinclair's senatorial career. It was the melancholy lot of Senator Finlay MacDonald to serve as deputy chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce under Senator Sinclair's chairmanship, and, while his spirit is not completely broken by the experience, he does have scars to show for it—and he may reveal some of them tonight before we finish this brief exchange.

I must say that my own experience with Senator Sinclair, when I was chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce and he was deputy chairman, was totally different. One could not have asked for a more "docile", cooperative colleague. Future generations who may want to read *Hansard* should note that these things are being said somewhat in jest and in good humour, especially since Senator Sinclair is going to have the last word! Certainly, the word "docile" in reference to Senator Sinclair is hardly justified at any time. He has been a most robust debater and a very effective participant in the work of this chamber.

Honourable senators, on behalf of my colleagues on this side and, indeed, on behalf of the Prime Minister and the government, I do want to wish Senator Sinclair the best. I want to express our appreciation that his contribution to parliamentary debate and to the parliamentary process has been of the highest quality, as have been his contributions to the professional life and business life of the country. So we say, "au revoir" and "bonne chance" to an esteemed and respected colleague.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, over the last number of years I have come to dislike these occasions, but, if the purpose of this exercise is to usher Senator Sinclair into a life of affluent obscurity, I should like to tell you that I wish to participate with great enthusiasm. If this is the last spike, I should like to help drive it.

Senator Cools: Dream on!

Senator MacDonald: I wish to tell honourable senators that in the few years during which I had the pleasure of serving as deputy chairman to Senator Sinclair my main task was to comfort and to apologize to the many witnesses who appeared before Senator Sinclair, witnesses whose spirit and almost physical condition were broken as a result of facing the senator.

There is a book—I think you pay \$25 for it and I think Senator Sinclair has bought most of the copies—called *Lords of the Line* in which there is a chapter called "The Bucca-ner", and that is Senator Sinclair.

I must say that he was a great teacher. I found him to be a rather rough individual, sometimes tending to the obscene. I think that in another life he should have been a Supreme Court judge, because when he grabbed something he grabbed it like a bulldog and would never let it go. He was horribly frustrating to work for, but extremely fair and always straight. As for those of us who worked on committees with him, even though we disagreed on a number of occasions we never had reason to question his integrity or the truth that he sought.

I remember that on one particular occasion he gave a group of union members the roughest time I had ever seen given to a group of witnesses, at the end of which I said to them, "Gentlemen, you have to understand that what the chairman is seeking here is the truth." They were worried about job security. It was a privatization bill and they were worried, of course, about their future. I said, prophetically, "You might be pleasantly surprised by what this committee finally comes up with under the clear influence of the chairman." Indeed, one of those men wrote to me afterwards and said, "We would not have believed it." All that Senator Sinclair was seeking from them, in a very difficult period of questioning, was to know what they wanted, why they wanted it, and why they felt that they deserved it. The committee report gave them just what they were asking for.

I considered it a great pleasure to work with Senator Sinclair.