

THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 10, 1979

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

THE LATE HON. MAURICE BOURGET
THE LATE HON. CLAUDE WAGNER
HON. HAROLD CONNOLLY
HON. EUGENE A. FORSEY
HON. WILLIAM McNAMARA
THE LATE RIGHT HON. JOHN G. DIEFENBAKER

TRIBUTES

[*Translation*]

Senator Flynn: Honourable senators, the Senate that I see today is not quite the same as I remember it was six months ago.

First I would like to refer to some changes which have nothing to do with the election held on May 22 last.

I wish to speak of several senators who have left us.

First, Senator Maurice Bourget. He was a friend of all and had been a personal friend of mine for years.

I sat with him in the House of Commons to which he was elected in 1940, 18 years before I was. However we were defeated the same year in 1962. I remember that I was then more sorry for him than for myself.

Senator Bourget served his country some 40 years. At first, in the capacity of a member, as I said. And since 1963, he was a senator and for some time the Speaker of this house.

His contribution to the study of legislation was invaluable. As an engineer, he was a stickler for meticulousness and accuracy which often enabled him to find oversights that had escaped the attention of most of us.

Endowed with a very attractive personality, his knowledge of international matters led him on several occasions to be a highly valued Canadian representative abroad.

On behalf of the government and the Progressive Conservative caucus, I extend to his wife Margot and his children our deepest sympathy.

We also had this summer to mourn the death of the Honourable Claude Wagner, that great Quebec statesman whose stay in this house has unfortunately been far too short.

I have known few people to be gifted with as great an influence as Claude Wagner was. He will have left his mark on public life in Quebec and Canada where his followers were many. His health never allowed him to participate in the work of this chamber as often as he would have wished; yet, he did

manage to make a few remarkable interventions. And each time, it was obvious that we were fortunate in having the opportunity of listening to a man of such outstanding national importance, a man whose knowledge and love of country were exemplary.

His wife Liselle and his children, whose support never failed him, know that we have all suffered bitterly from his loss.

Less sad but equally regrettable is the departure of Senator Forsey who has retired. The moment he chose to do so allowed him to retire discreetly; after a fashion, of course, since he has reached the age of compulsory retirement. But the influence he exercised on our assembly is such that we are all saddened at his no longer being able to be one of us. In short, it is extremely difficult to get used to the idea that he will no longer sit among us.

I believe it can be said without fear of hurting anyone that Eugene Forsey was the best known Canadian senator. His dynamism and tireless devotion guarantee him a very special place in the hearts, and especially the minds, of all Canadians who read the newspapers. Through his works, he in a way contributed to popularizing the Senate. That entitles him to all our gratitude.

● (1405)

[*English*]

Senators, let us be thankful that there is more than one way to leave this place. Senator Forsey will be with us for a good time yet. His work, and, Lord knows, the need for his wisdom, is not nearly at an end. I am quite sure that we will see him around. We should arrange to be able to seek his advice as often as possible.

I would also like to pay my personal respects to Senator Bill McNamara, who took his leave of us over the summer just ended. As a man of the west who served for 12 years as Chief Commissioner of the Wheat Board, a position of vast consequence, Senator McNamara had an appreciation shared by few of the difficulties and yet the potential facing those who farm our great Canadian bread basket. Not surprisingly, therefore, his views on transportation, agriculture and related matters in particular were incisive and always relevant. His expertise cannot, I think, be easily replaced in the Senate. I extend to him the warm wishes of his friends here and of the Government of Canada.

Senator Harold Connolly also retired this past summer. The good senator had been in ill health for a number of years and, regrettably, his participation in debate was restricted as a result. With him go our best wishes for the future.