

THE SENATE

Tuesday, December 5, 1995

The Senate met at 2:00 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

[Translation]

ROYAL ASSENT

NOTICE

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that the following communication had been received:

RIDEAU HALL

December 5, 1995

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that The Right Honourable John Charles Major, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 5th day of December 1995, at 4:45 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony P. Smyth
Deputy Secretary, Policy, Program and Protocol

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

[English]

PAGES EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before I call for Senators' Statements, I should like to advise you that we have with us today two House of Commons pages who have been selected to participate in the exchange program with the Senate this week.

I wish to introduce to you Nadine Nickner, who is from Timmins, Ontario. She is pursuing her studies in political science in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa.

We also have with us Heather Brydon. She is studying at the University of Ottawa and is enrolled in the Faculty of Arts. I must make special mention of the fact — and I trust honourable senators will understand this — that she comes from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE ROBERTSON W. DAVIES

TRIBUTES

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, last Saturday night, Canada lost a great man of letters, a man whom I admired intensely, Robertson Davies. He was one of those very special people who was discussed, argued about, respected and appreciated, not only here at home but around the world. He was, of course, famous for being a novelist, a playwright, teacher, University of Toronto professor, master of Massey College, and as an actor, having "trod the boards" with the Old Vic Company in England.

My own appreciation of Robertson Davies began back in the early 1960s when I was a student at Carleton University, aspiring to a life of journalism. To me, Mr. Davies was a terrific newspaper man, and that was high tribute. He was the lively and outspoken editor and publisher of the Peterborough *Examiner*, and he also wrote a monthly column called "A Writer's Diary." I became an avid fan of his writing then and have remained so ever since.

Using his special gift, Robertson Davies not only told Canadians in writing something about themselves, but he also told the world something about Canadians. Just as important, he educated all his readers about the mysteries and the soul of the human condition, a goal to which every writer aspires, but one that so few are able to reach. He did it with intelligence, with wit and with humour.

Honourable senators, perhaps one of the things you notice most of all when reading a Robertson Davies book is that he wrote with love and depths of insight, empathy and understanding, which I found truly inspiring. He received dozens of awards during his lifetime, and indeed, any new book that he produced always attracted worldwide attention. However, of all the attention and awards and tributes to his talent, he stated:

I never feel like a success. I always feel that the next book had better be better than the last one. I think that when you begin to think of yourself as a success, you are in danger. Never be satisfied with your own work.

The *New York Times* once said of him:

He is one of the most learned, amusing and otherwise accomplished novelists of our time. His novels will be recognized with the very best work of this century.