

The first example may not be well known for it dates back a long way. Our colleague had just been elected to represent the riding of Québec-Sud in the other place. At the time, a serious problem was creating tensions between Quebec and Ottawa: the federal government was granting money to Canadian universities but the Duplessis government was forbidding the Quebec universities to accept the grant. That was cause for serious concern, and several members representing Quebec in the Diefenbaker government were understandably worried. So, they undertook to resolve the problem.

Jacques Flynn was chosen by his colleague to meet with Premier Duplessis and explore with him various possible arrangements. The meeting was apparently not as successful as Senator Flynn had wished. A few days later, if I remember correctly, he was attending a wedding reception also attended by Mr. Duplessis, and a guest who knew about the meeting asked him how it had gone.

Jacques answered as diplomatically as possible: "We had a good discussion. We exchanged ideas and views."

Mr. Duplessis overheard the conversation and retorted immediately in the way he was well known for: "Not at all. We did not exchange ideas, we each kept our own."

The exchanges of ideas were more productive the following fall, when Jacques Flynn and a few others helped the Premier, Mr. Sauvé, and the federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Fleming, develop the formula named after them.

The Sauvé-Fleming formula set in exact terms tax points, adjustment payments, in short the financial compensation. This became, under the Lesage government and after, the so-called opting out formula which reconciled to a large extent, at least at the time, the exercise of federal spending powers with respect for areas of provincial jurisdiction.

This is the first reason why I wanted to pay tribute to our colleague today: because he played a role in defining a key issue.

The second event is more recent. It happened during the debate on the 1981 proposed resolution to repatriate the Constitution. On December 8, 1981, this resolution had been passed by the Commons and the Senate was going through the last interventions before the final vote.

Senator Flynn said at that time, and I quote:

Honourable senators, until this morning, I had hoped that the Prime Minister, and the government, would have realized that it was of the utmost importance to bring about immediately certain changes which would have met the main objections raised by Quebec. Here again, when I say Quebec, I do not refer necessarily to the Government of Quebec; I am referring to the province of Quebec in general.

He goes on to say:

I had hoped that those amendments, especially the one relating to the financial compensation [. . .], by which clause 23 would have been made applicable subject to the approval of the Quebec National Assembly, would have

been accepted. then I would have been able to join with the majority in this house in welcoming the passage of this resolution. Unfortunately, such is not the case. Within a few hours, the Canadian parliamentary stage of the constitutional process will be an accomplished fact.

Once the results of the final vote . . .

It is still Senator Flynn talking.

. . . have been announced by His Honour the Speaker. I know full well that honourable senators on the other side of this house and certainly some on this side as well, because I do not consider myself as the spokesman for the entire official opposition since various points of views are held within our party—a large number of honourable senators will want to rise and sing O Canada. As for me, I will abstain. I will not be in the mood to sing. I believe that it would be extremely difficult for me to act otherwise. I will rise with all of you. [. . .] I do not want my refusal to join with you all to be misinterpreted.

● (1530)

He has added, however, that he would abstain from singing. I will add that I did not sing either on that day, and I fully agree with what Senator Flynn said to conclude his speech. Here is what he said:

Before resuming my seat, I will simply say that this resolution contains a germ of disunity, the virulence of which we will not have to wait long to see. Yes, Pierre Trudeau has finally put Quebec and Quebecers in their place. I pray to God, since I have given up begging this Parliament and this Senate, that Quebec having been put in its place, we will not, to our sorrow, discover that place to be outside of Canada.

End of quote.

Honourable senators, those words were said on December 8, 1981. The two episodes I just referred to happened far apart, but do reflect, in my view, some of the permanent features in Senator Flynn's career: clear-mindedness when analyzing situations; loyalty to his fundamental principles; and courage when expressing his beliefs.

I heartily thank him for his legacy to our generation and other generations to come.

In the fall of 1979, when I was summoned to the Senate, Senator Flynn held concurrently the positions of minister of Justice and leader of the government in this House. So, he was the sponsor who introduced me to the strange customs of the Senate, which I found at the time, and maybe even now, quite disconcerting, and even unpredictable. Anyway, since he introduced me to the intricacies of the Senate, you will understand how affected I am by his departure.

As someone mentioned, with Senator Flynn gone, the Senate will never be the same. Personally and fortunately, thanks to the friendship we and our families have developed throughout the years and the fact that we are neighbours in Quebec City, I shall be able to pursue as before our conversations and exchanges, from which I so often benefited in the