

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. William J. Petten:** Honourable senators, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of previous speakers.

I first met Senator Paul Lafond when he was General Secretary of the Liberal Party. He was most kind and helpful and always ready to lend a helping hand to those of us who were not as well versed in the political field as he. Under pressure, he was one in a million, never losing his cool and steering the rest of us on the right course.

I remember on one occasion a meeting went on too long. The next day the same group was assembled to continue the meeting. After an hour, an alarm clock went off in a drawer. Senator Lafond, as chairman of the committee, said, "Gentlemen, the meeting is over," and he returned the clock to the drawer. The meeting the following day went smoothly and quickly.

As has already been mentioned, he served with distinction in the RCAF from 1940 to 1945 and was awarded the D.F.C.

Honourable senators will remember his devotion to his work here in the Senate as Liberal caucus chairman, as a member of various committees and as chairman of the Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence. The excellent reports of that committee were due in no small part to his dedication and tenacity.

I will long remember him. With his passing, Canada has lost a distinguished son and I a great and dear friend. To his wife, Stella, and his sisters I extend my most heartfelt sympathy in their sad loss.

**Hon. Hartland de M. Molson:** Honourable senators, most of the things we think of in connection with Paul Lafond's life in the Senate have been said, and very appropriately said, but I would not like the day to pass without adding a few comments of my own.

To begin with, I did not know him—as I am sure the great majority of you did—when he was carrying out his work as an active member of a political party, but I did know him extremely well in committee work here. He and I were both members of the Canada-United States Parliamentary Group which studied Canada-U.S. relations. We also worked together on the Special Committee on National Defence from its inception.

There are one or two points that have already been made but could still be emphasized. One was his extreme modesty. His modesty did not prevent him from being able to lead. I am thinking at the moment of his chairmanship of the Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence. He showed all the qualities of leadership in a very quiet way and without any force or obvious effort. We all followed him cheerfully and he got extraordinarily good results. He earned the respect not only of the members of the committee but he also earned the great respect of the members of the armed forces. His reports had considerable influence on the trends developing in national defence.

A second thing we should remember is that under previous governments the Canadian Forces had been let slide to a far

less respectable level over the recent years before the Special Senate Committee on National Defence was established. The strength of the armed forces had been greatly reduced and the equipment was obsolescent or obsolete. In fact, the Canadian Forces were suffering badly.

In spite of this, in travelling around the country with the committee, one of the constant surprises to us was the fact that we were fortunate to be able to attract the finest Canadian men and women to the armed forces. Whenever the committee travelled, we met hundreds of members of the armed forces. In our discussions, we expressed quite often our great pleasure to see the extremely high quality of young Canadians who joined the armed forces.

A third point is that, of his own choice, Paul Lafond chose to sit with our independent group. I will not say that he was unencumbered with political loyalty, because he was a Liberal, but I will say that he wanted to sit with us and to be his own master in the matter of his decisions on the issues in the Senate.

Finally, I should like to say that he was, undoubtedly, a very, very good friend. He never carried his feelings on his sleeve; it was never too obvious what he was thinking, but he was a reliable, constant and warm friend we were lucky to have. He will be greatly missed in the chamber; he will be very greatly missed in the nation; and he will certainly be sadly missed by all of us here who were his friends.

I would like to add my word to the expressions of sympathy and condolence that we are sending to Stella, his wife, and his sisters on his death.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat:** Honourable senators, I wish to join in the very well deserved tributes paid this afternoon to our colleague Paul Lafond.

Although we met through politics, I wish to speak now as a friend. My first dealings with Paul go back to the time when I was active in politics in Manitoba myself and he was a party worker. As in any organization, there were chairmen, former colleagues here, Senator Connolly, Senator Stanbury who is still with us, but in fact, the one we worked with was Paul Lafond. When we had to make a contact in Ottawa, Paul Lafond represented the Liberal Party in Ottawa for us.

As Senator Murray pointed out, the Honourable Paul Lafond and I later entered this Chamber on the same day, as it happened, in October 1970. Afterward, we worked together very often. That was how I could admire Paul Lafond's talent, such a calm man, who never got angry but was always at work, always on time for committees and totally reliable and always good-humoured. He was a man of keen intelligence and great spiritual depth. We have all lost a great man today. I wish to express my most sincere condolences to his wife Stella and his whole family.

● (1430)

[*English*]

**Hon. Charles McElman:** Honourable senators, I wish to join with those who have already spoken in tribute to the memory