

THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 1, 1971

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

FELICITATIONS

HON. PAUL MARTIN, P.C.—RECIPIENT OF HUMANITARIAN AWARD

HON. RHÉAL BELISLE—RECIPIENT OF HONORARY DEGREE

Hon. Jacques Flynn: Honourable senators, I rise to extend my most heartfelt congratulations to two of our colleagues who were recently honoured in recognition of meritorious services.

The Leader of the Government had bestowed upon him last week a singular honour. He was appointed a "Grand Officier de l'Ordre Académique de l'Union internationale du bien public" which, in translation, is even more impressive—"Grand Officer of the Academic Order of the International Union of Public Welfare". Few of us knew of his being so honoured because with characteristic humility he did not direct his office to apprise us of the fact.

This award is granted for excellence and devotion in the service of humanity, and I can think of no one more deserving than the Leader of the Government.

The other senator is our colleague on this side, Senator Rhéal Belisle, who had conferred upon him last Saturday by the Laurentian University of Sudbury an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. I deem this to be an appropriate way of honouring a man who has for so long given unstintingly of himself in the service of his province and of his beloved Sudbury. Senator Belisle's noteworthy efforts in the preservation of the French language and culture in Northern Ontario, plus his significant contributions in the field of education, make him fully deserving of all the grand awards his fellow Franco-Ontarians may wish to give him. We offer him our most sincere congratulations, and we firmly hope he will not cease to labour to spread the French culture throughout Canada.

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Honourable senators, I should like to join in congratulating both the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Martin) and my good friend the honourable Senator Belisle. I know this is not an unusual event for the Leader of the Government. He has received many degrees and many honours throughout his lifetime, and I am sure he will pardon me if I spend a few moments more on my colleague Senator Belisle than I do on him, because I believe this is the first time Senator Belisle has gone through this.

I have consulted the "red book" and I know the list of degrees after Senator Martin's name. It is probably the longest list of honorary degrees of those presently in Parliament. However, there is one thing that pleased me

about Senator Belisle's degree and that is that it was a local boy receiving honour at home. There is an old adage which says that prophet is without honour in his own country. I do not suggest that Senator Belisle is a prophet; he has the proportion for one, he has the wisdom for one, but he does not have the long, flowing beard one normally associates with the prophet. It is pleasing to see someone who has laboured so much for so long, through many different ways for his own area, honoured within his own area.

Senator Belisle received this degree on the 25th anniversary of his entry into municipal, provincial, and federal politics. Recently I saw a reprint of an article which showed Senator Belisle opening his 100th school, counting both public and separate schools. By an odd coincidence, this was the same place where as a small boy he had attended a much smaller school. Today it is a beautiful multi-million dollar building. I am sure he received much satisfaction from opening that school.

Then he went on to obtain in his own quiet way a teachers' college for French-speaking people in northern Ontario. That was school 101. He then took an active part in the development of Laurentian University, and after his summons to the Senate he became a member of the Board of Governors and then Chairman of the Board of Governors of Laurentian University. He opened that as his 102nd educational facility.

I like to think of it in this way, honourable senators, with Senator Belisle beginning with small public and separate schools, going through to the high schools and then to the universities. Certainly, we can be proud of Senator Belisle and in a way envy him the fact that he has contributed so much to education. One hundred and two ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the inauguration of facilities must inevitably make Senator Belisle the champion ribbon-cutter of the Senate.

Incidentally, in all fairness I must advise honourable senators that Senator Belisle is very active in the finance committee of Laurentian University, and it is quite possible that you will hear from him in that regard. He has received many honours in Sudbury and is highly thought of in that area. On the occasion of Sudbury's 75th anniversary this spring, the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce patented and developed a special honour for those members of the Chamber of Commerce who had particularly contributed to the development of the north. The honour takes the form of a most interesting desk set which is composed of ten minerals from ten different mines which are moulded together in the form of a smelter, including the four highest chimneys in the world. This honour was awarded to only a very few people selected by the Chamber of Commerce. I mention this fact to illustrate just how highly regarded Senator Belisle is, not only by the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce but by his own area.