

This points to a general reality, which is that Quebec is a mystery to many Canadians. It is easy to involuntarily slip up and confuse the facts.

Having followed Jean Marchand's career since we are classmates at the courses given by Father Levesque, it is perhaps appropriate in the circumstances—if Senator Guay would allow me to address him directly—to recall as Senator Rousseau did a while ago, that Jean Marchand was at the very heart of things. He was even involved in the heart of what I would call the reality that may have created a number of problems in the rest of the country, and I am referring to the building of what has been referred to as "French power" in Ottawa. He was even at the heart of the making of a Prime Minister. Not many people will come out and say this, but in fact, when the three "doves" arrived on the federal scene, he played a part in the coming to power of individuals who otherwise would not have done so. Within this process, Jean Marchand was a strong personality, with solid roots in union activity. In 1965, he had a significance that went well beyond that of others in the Quebec milieu. He had a very special significance in the eyes of the then Prime Minister, Lester Pearson. I will not elaborate, except to say that Jean Marchand was at the heart of many events in the evolution of Quebec and Canada.

He will now continue to be active in an institution that has become a very significant part of Canada's development. As far as his leaving the Senate is concerned, knowing Jean Marchand as I do, I cannot say his decision came as a complete surprise. I have always had the impression that his attitude as Speaker of the Senate always betrayed some impatience with the passive role of the Speaker, which is understandable considering his temperament, which is that of an active man. It was therefore not surprising that he should find another outlet for his energies. The Transport Commission is offering him that opportunity. I am glad that he will be able to make as effective a contribution as the one he made in helping to build Canada and Quebec. I wish him the best of luck.

● (2020)

[English]

Hon. Robert Muir: Honourable senators, first of all I would like to express my congratulations to our new Speaker. I wish him well in his new job. Regrettably, I do not know him as well as I know his predecessor, but we in the Senate are proud and honoured that he has reached this high position in which we wish him every success.

I now wish to say something regarding the Honourable Jean Marchand. I entered the other place in 1957; he came some years later, and we then had the pleasure of working together—and, many times, of working against each other.

As has been said by many senators on both sides of the house, the Honourable Jean Marchand spent decades working in his native province as a social worker, and as a union worker and organizer of unions, and he reached the pinnacle of his union, as was mentioned by Senator Frith. During those days in Quebec a man like the Honourable Jean Marchand was

certainly needed. Frankly, had I lived in Quebec then I would have been by his side, regardless of our political differences.

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay: Hear, hear.

Senator Muir: Although I never reached the top, as did the Honourable Jean Marchand, I was involved in organizing unions and was, of course, a member of a union. I was also on strike, as was the Honourable Jean Marchand. During those days of strikes and picket duty, the Honourable Jean Marchand and I had to resort to measures that we do not like to talk about today, but that was part of our job. We had to do certain things in order to reach our goals.

I was a member of the other place when the Honourable Jean Marchand was the Minister of Transport. He also held other portfolios, including that of Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, under which the Cape Breton Development Corporation came. Often we would have fierce and violent debates, but he was the first to come along afterwards, slap you on the back and say, "Bob, you were in great shape today." That is the way a democracy works, and I certainly believe in that. Both of us had strong opinions and we argued violently, but nothing was ever taken personally by the Honourable Jean Marchand. He is that kind of man.

It is easy for pseudo-journalists and pseudo-intellectuals immediately to take quill in hand and write in an uncomplimentary fashion, but some of them are not old enough to remember people such as Duplessis, or to remember what was done by men such as the Honourable Jean Marchand. They do not even take the time to refer to the history books to learn what took place in those days. So quickly these things are forgotten.

The Honourable Senator Roblin mentioned the age of 65, but some of the greatest wisdom has come from people slightly older than 65, and there are a number of us in the Senate who have reached that age. I have not yet reached it, but it won't be long.

What has been done by former and present members of this chamber is quickly forgotten by the scribes, if one can call them that. How quickly they castigate individuals, regardless of their political leanings. This chamber has had, and still has, as members former provincial premiers and many others who have done a great deal for this country and continue to serve it well.

Honourable senators, just as there are bonds between those in the legal fraternity, there are bonds between those who are, or have been, involved in the union movement, but they are unwritten bonds. I recall that on many occasions I went to see the Honourable Jean Marchand with what I thought were serious problems and he was always willing to listen to my arguments. He would try to get his point across, and I would try to get mine across, but I found him to be a fair person at all times. I have no doubt that he will do a very good job in his new position.

I wish him good health, every success and, as I believe tomorrow is his birthday, a happy birthday.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.