

To all of this, honourable senators, I would add one other thing: While Senator Lafond concerned himself primarily with matters of defence, he was himself a most calm and placid man. No one would have called him warlike in any way, and when he addressed himself to the subject of the armed services of Canada, he was concerned about their defensive aspects—their preservation of Canada's security and perhaps Canada's sovereignty as well. We shall miss his leadership; we shall miss his pleasant personality; we shall miss the calmness with which he presided over committee meetings and dealt with his colleagues. I join the two honourable senators who have preceded me in extending my condolences and those of the other members of the Defence Committee to Madame Lafond and other members of Senator Lafond's family. Farewell to a great senator, a great Canadian and a great citizen.

Hon. Daniel A. Lang: Honourable senators, I would like to intervene at this point, if I may, because of a very long acquaintance with Senator Lafond. This acquaintance came about originally in the late 1950s in the depth of a Tory government reign, when Senator Lafond was Executive Secretary of the National Liberal Federation, and I think our colleague, Senator Davey, also had some official position at that time.

Senator Lafond's experiences and my own in this chamber followed somewhat parallel paths inasmuch as we came here as Liberals who had laboured in the political vineyards and had ended up being not large "L" Liberals but small "I" liberals and independents. I think that progression exemplifies the modifying influence of a span of years in this chamber, and I hope that it will set an example as to how both Paul and I felt this chamber should operate.

Paul's significant contribution as chairman of the Subcommittee on National Defence, which later became the Special Committee on National Defence, should not be minimized. I am quite familiar with the reactions to the reports of that committee amongst those who are knowledgeable and concerned with national defence, both in academe and in Reserve Forces capacities. The cumulative effect of those four reports forms the basis of the consciousness of this country today in military matters, and for that we owe Paul a debt of infinite gratitude.

Paul was, first of all, a Canadian. You need only look at his distinguished war record for evidence that. Second, he was an ardent Quebecois, and you need only to look at his stand on the constitutional issue of 1982 for evidence of that. Third, Paul was a small "I" liberal, and that is an order I would fully endorse.

If I may, I would like to quote from a poem by a mid-nineteenth century poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon, which, I think, rather epitomizes Paul as I see him now, in retrospect:

Question not, but live and labour
 Till yon goal be won,
 Helping every feeble neighbour,
 Seeking help from none;
 Life is mostly froth and bubble,

[Senator Hicks.]

Two things stand like stone,
 Kindness in another's trouble,
 Courage in your own.

To Stella I send my personal sympathy and prayers.

Hon. Duff Roblin: Honourable colleagues, I am privileged to offer some words of respect and appreciation for the life and labours of our late colleague, the Honourable Paul C. Lafond, D.F.C., with particular reference to the Special Committee on National Defence, of which we heard something this afternoon. Unfortunately, I did not know him in his other role or his other activities, but I must say that I am unbounding in my admiration for the way in which he conducted his duties as chairman of that committee. In the first place, he was an excellent chairman. He knew how to give every committee member room to breathe and he knew how to bring out the best of the information that was available from the witnesses who appeared before us. He had a gift for synthesizing this mass of material into the concise and, in my opinion, effective reports that the committee issued from time to time. Make no mistake about it, Paul Lafond was the original animator and driving spirit behind the work of that committee. It reflects his leadership; it reflects his influence; it reflects his good judgment, and all that can be found by those who look at the reports with attention and with informed opinion.

● (1420)

I was a member of the committee, but I can tell you that it was Paul Lafond's committee. He was the man who led us through the work we had to do. I think he made a contribution—which is perhaps not as widely recognized as it should be—in bringing the question of national defence once again into the arena of public debate and consideration. It had languished for years in the shade.

While it is true that Senate reports are not what one would call "best-sellers," his reports had a significance that is still reflected in the discussions that take place on national defence in this country today. The recommendations contained in those reports are reflected to some significant extent in the white paper and certainly in other policy pronouncements that are being made from time to time with respect to that very important aspect of our public affairs.

I think Senator Lafond's gift was to provide a platform for those who wanted to discuss this topic, a forum for opinion to develop, and a focus on the essential points involved in the development of national defence policy. It seems to me that, along with those other important and significant contributions which he made to political life in this country, the contribution he made as chairman of the Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence will stand as a tangible memorial to the part he played in the evolution of Canada as a self-respecting and as a self-reliant nation. We have every reason to be satisfied and proud of the record he leaves as a Canadian parliamentarian and as a leader in the affairs of our nation.

I would like to add these words of appreciation and respect to those that have already been offered and to express to his wife and those he leaves behind our sincere condolences.