

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault: Honourable senators, the Senate is in the process of sustaining four severe losses. Had I arrived in the chamber earlier today I would have begun my schedule by paying tribute to Senator Asselin, who will assume new and important responsibilities in the province of Quebec. He has won the respect of all of us during his time of service here, and I wish him well. He is well liked; he is a good friend to all of us; and we are sorry that he is leaving.

For a number of years Jacques Flynn and I opposed each other vigorously across the floor of this chamber, when he was Leader of the Opposition and I was Leader of the Government in the Senate. In our moderate ways we have discussed many issues in this chamber. Occasionally, our voices became raised—on rare occasions. We have discussed and debated frequently, disagreeing more often than not.

It is difficult to accept the fact that Jacques Flynn is about to depart this chamber to go on to other interests and responsibilities. We will certainly miss this active adversary. I will miss him, especially during Question Period, as I contend steadfastly that every question requires deserves an adequate and appropriate preamble, even though that preamble may consume a few minutes or more. I feel it is important. Senator Flynn, in his quiet way, disagrees on occasion, and I concede his right to disagree.

Senator Flynn has always been a very energetic senator, a senator of great ability with a knowledge of the parliamentary system. If we could harness Senator Flynn to the national power grid, every bulb in the nation would light up simultaneously. I have often wondered, had he at some point in his career become persuaded as to the merits of the Liberal Party, what progress he might have made in the "Natural Governing Party" of this country. He might have done extremely well.

Jacques Flynn has been an effective leader and a good senator. During his entire distinguished career he has always believed in a strong and united Canada. We hail him for that. Together with his many colleagues and friends I wish him well as he leaves us. As well, I wish the very best to his wife, Renée. She has been a pillar of strength during his entire career. Honourable senators may recall that it was Maryon Pearson who said that behind every successful politician there is a surprised wife. I suspect that that applies to the Flynn clan. As well, I should like to join in all the other tributes that have been paid to Senator Flynn this afternoon, including the eloquent tribute paid by our house leader, Royce Frith.

● (1510)

Honourable senators, I too regret that Senator Anderson did not come to the Senate sooner. She has really been an outstanding senator, serving with great ability on a number of committees, always placing the welfare of the nation ahead of any partisan concerns and considerations. Her incisive and knowledgeable questioning during her committee work is an example to all of us. Senator Anderson's record of selfless community service is exemplary, and we are certainly going to miss her.

[Senator Asselin.]

Senator Sherwood, during his time of service, has been a dedicated senator who has represented the province of New Brunswick with great distinction. I join in all of the tributes paid to him this afternoon.

The loss of these four senators is a severe loss for the Senate. It will be a less lively place without them. We hope that in due course replacements will come along, but they will have some very difficult shoes to fill.

[Translation]

Hon. Rhéal Bélisle: Honourable senators, I could not forgive myself if I did not say a few words on the eve of my good friend Jacques Flynn's departure. Several of our colleagues will want to emphasize just how clever and articulate he is, and I fully agree with them.

I wish to congratulate him and thank him for his great leadership. A leader's first responsibility is to define reality. His last is to say thank you. In between, the true leader becomes the servant of his men. Jacques has certainly done that. He always made a point of presenting problems in such a way that we could deal with them without getting discouraged. Never has he asked us for the impossible. Invariably, with a finely-tuned strategy in mind, he would always come up with lots of ideas.

Although we pay you this tribute upon your retirement from the Senate, I would not want to make it a sad event, for you leave behind you tremendous achievements first as a famous lawyer, and then as a Parliamentarian held in high esteem both in the House of Commons and the Senate. It is regrettable that the laws of the land should dictate a compulsory age for retirement, for you certainly still rate among our most active, interested and informed colleagues.

It goes without saying that, in view of the recent events concerning the Meech Lake Accord, if in the future the option of an elected Senate should be accepted, the compulsory retirement clause will no longer apply.

When you took your oath of office in 1961 as Minister of Mines, I had been a member of the Ontario legislature since 1955. I felt that the Minister of Mines was a most influential person. Gilles Vigneault may sing that "My country is made of snow", but personally I feel that my country is much more than snow, it is made of rocks filled with nickel, gold, silver, altogether 14 very precious minerals. That is the reason why I should like to thank you for taking the time to study our problems and minerals. During your very short tenure as Minister of Mines, your department demonstrated an understanding attitude by developing various expansion projects which greatly contributed to the development of all the mining centres in this country, including those in Sudbury and surrounding area.

I have had the good fortune to spend the past 28 years with you in the Senate and I have had the honour to serve the cause and support you in your efforts. I must confess that at times I felt that you were not quite conservative enough. Sometimes in your comments you displayed a certain candour which greatly irritated or aggravated some of our colleagues. But they were