

THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 27, 1990

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

[*Translation*]

THE HONOURABLE MARTIAL ASSELIN, P.C.

FELICITATIONS ON APPOINTMENT AS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Federal-Provincial Relations)): Honourable senators, I wish to pay tribute to one of our distinguished colleagues, Martial Asselin, who is soon to become Lieutenant Governor of Quebec.

Senator Asselin, I would like to start by offering you, on behalf of all senators, our sincere congratulations and best wishes for a successful term. We all know that you are worthy of this very high office.

The position of Lieutenant Governor requires a great deal of savoir-faire and diplomacy, two attributes that have become second nature to Senator Asselin.

His career in public service goes back to 1957, when he was elected mayor of La Malbaie, which he remained until 1963. He was so popular that he was re-elected by acclamation.

Almost simultaneously—in 1958—he started his career in Ottawa as the member for the riding of Charlevoix. Except for a brief interruption between 1962 and 1965, Martial Asselin was a member of Parliament until, in 1972, he became a member of the Senate, representing the district of Stadacona.

Senator Asselin is one of those rare individuals whose competence was tangibly recognized by four prime ministers. The first was the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker who appointed him Minister of Forestry in 1963. In 1972, Prime Minister Trudeau raised him to the Senate. In 1979, Prime Minister Clark asked him to sit in his cabinet as Minister of State responsible for the Canadian International Development Agency and La Francophonie. Today, it is Prime Minister Mulroney who has called on his services by appointing him Lieutenant Governor of Quebec.

Senator Asselin has also had important duties at the international level, as vice-president of the International Association of French-Speaking Parliamentarians.

Senator Asselin, you have reason to be proud of your record of service. Throughout your career in politics, in the House of Commons and in the Senate, you always represented your constituents with competence and dignity. You were tireless in your efforts to serve and have earned the respect of us all.

Now you are being asked to meet a new challenge. There are few people who are as qualified and well prepared as you are to accept the position of Lieutenant Governor of Quebec,

and I am sure you will be a credit to all Quebecers and to all Canadians.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to Senator Asselin that he has only friends in the Senate, and that we all wish him and his wife Ginette the best of luck.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise, with great pleasure and enthusiasm, to support the remarks of the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

[*English*]

Our tribute is as much a congratulation as it is a farewell, because, as Senator Murray has said, Senator Asselin is leaving us to become Lieutenant Governor of Quebec.

At a time when the country continues to be concerned about its perpetual constitutional evolution, and in particular the role of Quebec in the Confederation, all Canadians can be glad to know that someone with Senator Asselin's experience and understanding—and particularly his experience in an institution such as the Senate, which is bound to continue to play an important role in the constitutional evolution—is leaving to become Lieutenant Governor of Quebec. We are glad to know that he will be constantly at an important place in our country's evolving history.

It is no surprise to anyone who knows him that Senator Asselin should reach such an important plateau. As Senator Murray said, Senator Asselin has been a member of the bar since 1951. Senator Flynn and Senator Asselin were both elected to the House of Commons in 1958. Senator Asselin stayed there until 1972, at which time he was summoned to the Senate by the Governor General, who had seen fit to accept the recommendation of another great Quebecer, Prime Minister Trudeau. It was a recommendation applauded on all sides at the time.

In his maiden speech Senator Asselin made a passionate defence of the rights of Quebecers, and that is emblematic, honourable senators, of his entire career in this place. He has always been a proud champion of his home province and of its securing its vital place within Confederation. That is a goal with which I am sure all senators are in agreement, regardless of any differences there may be on the methods employed for its achievement.

Senator Asselin has been involved in matters other than our constitutional problems. Particular attention should be paid to the time he spent in Mr. Clark's government as the minister responsible for CIDA and La Francophonie. At CIDA he developed a lasting concern for the critical problems of Africa. With respect to La Francophonie, many honourable senators here will remember how he expanded that association's role in