

Museums

times of emergencies, providing communication services in times of disasters and the like. They perform a great service and I believe they should be acknowledged for that here in the House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

• (1250)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

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MUSEUMS ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)) (for the Minister of Communications): moved that Bill C-12, an Act respecting museums, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise again in the House today in support of Bill C-12. With the permission of the House I would yield the floor to the Hon. Member next to me who I am sure has a good deal to say on the subject. Perhaps we could have that consent, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Is there consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Madam Speaker, museums are an important part of our cultural reality which consists of our broadcasting system, cultural industries, a technological infrastructure including telecommunications, and last, but not least, performers and creative artists.

The latter, together with our researchers and scientists, help build the collective memory of Canadians by exhibiting their works in these institutions which as such provide a benchmark and promote and enshrine our

values for the greater benefit of present and future generations.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I regret that I have to interrupt the Hon. Member. While I explain to the public, perhaps she could move one row back. A Member cannot be recognized by the Chair when he or she is not in his or her assigned seat. Unfortunately, the Chair did not see the mistake at first. I am sure the House will bear with me as I give the floor back to the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mrs. Gibeau).

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gibeau: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you for excusing this procedural mistake.

In these times of media technology, museums have turned into cultural institutions responsible for preserving and putting on public view the artifacts that put their mark on an era, a society and the attitudes of that society. In doing so, museums reflect a way of life and translate values that bring us closer to our past and give us a better understanding of the present.

This function of collecting and preserving the signs and traces of humanity's relationship to its environment, an extension of the of encyclopaedic approach to knowledge, became a vehicle for communicating with the public when the museum, as an institution, opened its doors to the public in eighteenth-century Europe.

In Canada, this function developed during the last century, based on the concept of a museum as a public institution that has a duty to promote museum activities among all groups and all classes of society.

No longer catering exclusively to the academic constituency, as it did in its early beginnings, the museum has now become a vehicle for communication that ensures that references to skills, artifacts, and aspects of daily life of the Amerindian civilization, for instance, are preserved and indexed according to scientifically sound procedures. This guarantee of an authentic witness is the assurance that our cultural identity will be perpetuated and disseminated and that our knowledge will be maintained.

The importance of actual specimens to historical awareness is also revealed by the size and growth of Canadian collections. In 1985, the Canadian Heritage Information Network and the Museums Assistance Program surveyed the museum community and found 37 million artifacts of various kinds, from archeology to