

# The Standing Senate Committee on the Clerestory of the Senate Chamber

## Evidence

Ottawa, Wednesday, May 7, 1975

The Special Committee of the Senate on the Clerestory of the Senate Chamber met this day at 9.30 a.m. to consider the question of the installation of stained glass windows in the clerestory of the Senate Chamber.

**Senator John J. Connolly** (*Chairman*) in the Chair.

**The Chairman:** Honourable senators, before we begin our morning's proceedings, I should like to make one correction to the proceedings of April 10. At page 1:9 of those proceedings it is stated in Mr. MacNeill's testimony that the Honourable Frank Black was the Leader of the Government. Mr. MacNeill has asked that a correction be made: Senator Black was, in fact, the chairman of the Senate Banking and Commerce Committee.

Honourable senators, this morning Miss Eleanor Milne is our witness. As you all know, for many years Miss Milne has had the responsibility in this building of seeing to the carving, particularly of stone, that has gone on and, generally, for the decoration and embellishment of the building. More particularly, she designed the stained glass for the House of Commons chamber and then supervised its installation.

It is really superfluous to add that over the years Miss Milne has made an immense contribution to the enhancement of the beauty of this magnificent building. We are more than delighted to have her here.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**The Chairman:** The insertion of the stained glass in the Senate chamber clerestory windows will obviously embellish the building further in a significant place. However, it is not simply to provide more beauty to the chamber that the stained windows are to be added; there is as well the practical purpose of stimulating interest in the institution of Parliament and its processes, and of inspiring the visitors—and perhaps ourselves—as much as possible with the majesty of this country.

Miss Milne, I suggest that it would be helpful to the committee if, in the course of your discussion, you dealt with the project itself, the windows, the existing design, the fitness of that design to have stained glass installed in it, the use of colour and sources of materials. And, of course, we will be asking you questions about your experience in the House of Commons. After that part has been handled to the satisfaction of the committee, we will ask you to say something about a theme which might be proposed for the Senate clerestory windows.

**Miss Eleanor Milne, Federal Government Sculptor:** Honourable senators, I think the best way to begin is by trying to explain how these windows are built. With that in mind, I have brought some samples to show you, since it is

difficult to describe in words something with which people are not familiar. I have here several pieces of coloured glass which you can examine at your leisure. When we make a colour in glass, it is not done by painting the glass; the colour is in the glass itself. I also have here some examples of proposals for the Senate windows, and these are simply paintings.

**The Chairman:** Miss Milne, how does the colour get into the glass? Is it baked in?

**Miss Milne:** Chemicals and ground-up rock are mixed with white glass—ordinary window glass, for example.

**The Chairman:** In a flux?

**Miss Milne:** In a flux, yes. Then the sheets of glass are hand-blown on a pipe, just the way a jug is blown or anything is made in glass if it is made by hand. In this case we are using hand-made glass because we want the most beautiful colours we can possibly have.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps we could pass these samples around to the members of the committee.

**Senator Beaubien:** Where would that glass be made, Miss Milne? Would it be made in Canada?

**Miss Milne:** Unfortunately, no. We did have someone making this type of glass somewhere near Perth, but unfortunately they could not survive owing to the costly process.

Here is a rather unusual piece of glass which you might like to look at. This piece of glass shows you how it is actually done. You can see that it is very rough.

**The Chairman:** Unfortunately, we cannot do anything to record what we are looking at at the moment, but for the record I might say that there are various pieces of coloured glass that have been submitted to the committee and the members are now examining them against the light.

**Miss Milne:** These pieces of glass which you are examining are bits left from the windows which we installed in the chamber of the House of Commons two years ago. When a window is assembled—when the colours are brought together to make a picture—we cut the glass as you can see and mount it in lead. That is really how the picture is made. Some people like to paint, but I prefer to use much simpler colours.

**Senator Hicks:** But all the good stained glass is made by chemically colouring the silica that makes the glass.

**Miss Milne:** That is right. There are two types of glass. In this case it is hand blown, although you can buy what is called "cathedral glass" in the trade, which is made by machine.