

*Archives of Canada*

In the Sudbury basin which I represent we have experienced loss-leadering being used by large chains to force out small entrepreneurs or small-businessmen. Once they are forced out, the price goes sky-high and they have a controlled market.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

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[Translation]

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**M. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I suggest that all the other questions be allowed to stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** May I inform the House that because of the ministerial statement and responses, Government Orders will be extended by 42 minutes beginning at 1 p.m.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

#### ARCHIVES OF CANADA ACT

##### MEASURE TO ENACT

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications)** moved that Bill C-95, an Act respecting the Archives of Canada and records of government institutions of Canada and to amend the Copyright Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, "of all our national treasures, the Archives are the most precious. They are the legacy of one generation to another, and the quality of care we give them testifies to the quality of our civilization". This was said more than 50 years ago, by a former Dominion Archivist, Arthur G. Doughty. I am reminded of these words now that I am about to introduce new legislation for the Archives of Canada. If a people is not aware of its past, it has no identity. It suffers from amnesia. It does not know its strengths, it does not know its weaknesses and cannot build on its experience. It cannot leap forward because it lacks the starting block of history. It cannot legitimize its institutions or identify their responsibilities, anymore than it can determine the rights of individuals and groups.

The original identity of our country, which we defend and strengthen, each in our own way, is partly reflected in our institutions and our present day way of life, but also in the roots of the present which we can find through the archives. These, according to Doughty, are the soul of a people, its

collective memory. They are essential to a people's understanding of itself, its past, its present vitality and its aspirations for the future.

It is because archives are so important to this country, for the Government and to our developing self-awareness, that I am introducing legislation that will make the Archives of Canada better able to respond to present and foreseeable needs. I would first like to recall the purpose, function and clientele of the Public Archives of Canada, and then indicate why the existing legislation is no longer adequate in today's context and why new legislation is required and, finally, I review the main characteristics of the Bill now before the House for second reading.

First of all, the purpose and function of the Public Archives. The Public Archives of Canada have been in existence since 1872. At the time they were already referred to as the Canadian Archives. Historical records of all kinds were collected in Canada, and records concerning Canada were copied in France and in England. In 1903, the Archives were assigned the task to preserve the Government's historic records. In 1912, the Public Archives of Canada Act made the institution autonomous and gave it a mandate for collecting records of historic interest, because in addition to the Government's records which had to be preserved indefinitely for legal reasons, for the protection of rights or for administrative purposes, there were also the records of the public and private sector, individuals, families, associations, and commercial, industrial and financial businesses, which were to be preserved in order to promote research and constitute what was already referred to as the "memory of the nation".

Today, with a budget of \$42 million for the year 1986-87 and nearly 800 employees, the Public Archives provide, in essence, three major services. The collection and conservation of significant historical archives, both public and private; since 1945, the organization, management, and disposal or preservation of current records from various departments and Government agencies; and finally, although still on a modest scale, assistance to the Canadian archival community and cooperation on the international scene.

The first function, of an historical nature, remains the best known and the oldest one. Indeed, the mandate of the Public Archives is to select records from the Government of Canada that are of permanent interest, to document the history of the various departments and the Government itself and to build up the necessary recollection of these organizations, and also to assist in recreating this country's history. Once they are no longer needed for administrative purposes, those records having an ongoing value are transferred to the historical Archives. There they are stored whatever their format. The Archives also acquire private records of significance. They make them available, subject to legal requirements, not only to researchers but also to the general public, as through exhibitions and publications for example.