

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 8, 1987

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Government's response to Petitions Nos. 332-3292, 332-3325, 332-3340 to 332-3356 inclusive, 332-3358 to 332-3366 inclusive, 332-3383 to 332-3413 inclusive, 332-3416 to 332-3422 inclusive, and 332-3424 to 332-3435 inclusive.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE

PRESENTATION OF TENTH AND ELEVENTH REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton South): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present the tenth report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, in both official languages. The report is entitled "Accommodation Requirements of the National Archives of Canada". Our study and recommendations stem from the committee resolution adopted on June 19, 1987. Pursuant to Standing Order 99(2), the committee requests that the Government table a response to this report.

[English]

Our major findings are as follows. First, the Archives is short of space to store its archival holdings and government records. Second, the space now available for storage, laboratories, and offices is spread over 14 different buildings in the National Capital Region. The third and most important finding, in the committee's opinion, is that the available

storage space does not meet acceptable, recognized environmental standards for the long-term preservation of our national heritage.

The unacceptable environmental conditions in which archival holdings and government records are kept accelerate the process of deterioration of Canada's archival heritage and, in some cases, have threatened their survival.

We found that 100 per cent of archival holdings, and not only 75 per cent as the National Archivist stated in June, are stored in substandard facilities with insufficient or no environmental controls, and that important records of government Departments and ministerial papers were threatened with serious damage.

[Translation]

In our estimation, the archival heritage, the nation's collective memory, is in danger because our national archival treasures are kept in inadequate accommodation. With a view to preserving them properly and with all the care they deserve, and so as to show future generations that we are concerned over their heritage, it has become imperative that we provide adequate accommodation.

[English]

The committee has considered a variety of options to rectify this unacceptable situation. The committee therefore recommends that priority be given to the construction of a new facility which would meet the accommodation needs of the National Archives of Canada until the year 2010.

Aware of the Government's policy of fiscal restraint, the committee also recommends that the Government consider entering into a lease-purchase agreement with a private sector developer for construction of the new facility.

I have the honour as well to present the eleventh report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture on the Order in Council appointment of Mrs. M. Elizabeth Burnham as a director of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

[Translation]

The committee considers that this person has the titles, qualities and qualifications to discharge the duties of the position for which she was appointed.

[Editor's Note: For text of above reports, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]