

This afternoon, the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) spoke eloquently on this Bill. It was certainly worthwhile to have the opportunity to discuss this legislation earlier in the committee and then speak to it today. Certainly, changes are necessary. But what I would like to speak about primarily is what this Bill means to Canadians. I believe this Bill reaches out to Canadians because Canadians in general have been far ahead of our archives. Since 1967, 100 years after Confederation, the people of Canada have looked to their past and glorified in what they found. Since that time there has been a virtual blossoming and bursting out of a desire on the part of Canadians to know our past. Who are we? Where have we come from? What have others done before us to bring us to where we are today?

● (1510)

Multiculturalism blossomed some 20 years ago or less. People wanted to know about their past, where they came from. People from different nations brought with them their legacies which are now part of Canadianism. If it were not for our archives, we would not know about our past. Therefore, it is important for us as Canadians not to hide the past, but to remove the dust, learn about the past and understand where we are today. People of many different racial origins who make up our Canada are gathering all the information they possibly can and putting it into museums, both small and large. There is a proliferation of museums all across the country, and that is to the credit of Canadians. We have a museum in Edmonton East of early Canadians of Ukrainian origin. It is an absolute delight to see young people gazing at what their grandparents and great-grandparents wore, and seeing what they looked like. There are pictures, clothes and everything else found in a museum of that nature.

It is important that we preserve and understand our origins. Our museums are virtually a living history. I wonder how many of us have slept in a homestead. I have done so many, many times. It is a home made of logs with a mud ceiling, possibly a foot thick, and whitewashed mud walls. That is where our forefathers slept when they first arrived in Canada. How many young people know about homesteads? We talk of archives and all the governmental archival materials which are necessary to be stored and kept for posterity. But then there are the other archives of the people of this country, and that is what I wish to address. In Edmonton there is a Pharmacy Archives Committee which has been active for some 25 years. I have had the pleasure of being part of it for the last 24 years. We have videotaped senior pharmacists in their 70s, 80s and early 90s, because today they are living historical figures. Since we started the videotaping of senior pharmacists some five years ago a number of them have passed away but we have the picture, sound, and story preserved and kept for posterity. We gave a copy of these videotapes, for instance, to the Glenville Foundation in Calgary for its records. We passed

### *Archives of Canada*

them on to the Alberta Museum, to the Pharmacy Museum and to the University of Alberta so everyone, everywhere, can see what our early people were like.

It is very important that this Bill will now catch up with the people who have gone ahead. The previous Bill did not provide for new archives and record management policies which have been developed since 1945 in response to the growing size and complexity of the federal Government. It did not provide for a Canada-wide leadership role by the Public Archives in the areas of professional, technical and financial assistance to the archival community. It did not provide authority for the important international role played by the Public Archives. There are many other areas which were not addressed in the present responsibility of the Archivist. However, Clause 4(2)(k) of the new legislation states:

Co-operate with and undertake activities in concert with organizations interested in archival matters or the management of records by means such as exchanges and joint projects;

And Clause 4(2)(l) states:

Provide professional, technical and financial support in aid of archival activities and the archival community;

What is so important about the Bill is that it will combine the archives here in Ottawa and in the seven offices throughout the country, including Edmonton, together with what the people of our country have done, in order to bring history to the fore, to enable us to understand what has happened in the past, to understand the present and, therefore, to plan for the future. This proliferation throughout the country, together with the new Bill, I believe will provide a tremendous impetus to work on archival materials throughout the country.

We are going to have to study this Bill and it will be discussed thoroughly in the legislative committee. Hon. Members opposite have spoken out eloquently in favour of this Bill, but have pointed out some areas of concern. That is what the debate is all about and, of course, we do respect that. However, the Government has put this Bill before Parliament to bring up to date the Archives of Canada Act. The revisions will allow the archives of Canada to work in concert with other countries and to exchange archival material so we can better understand what we have in our country. I would also like to quote Arthur G. Doughty who said: "The archives are the soul of their people".

**Mrs. Finestone:** Mr. Speaker, I would like the opinion of my hon. colleague. I wonder if he could tell us if the Bill clearly defines what the Archives is mandated to collect? The Hon. Member started out making certain observations about the importance of the maintenance of our multicultural history, and I could not agree more. I so stated in my own speech. However, does the Hon. Member believe that the Bill outlines strongly enough what is acceptable and what is unacceptable? What must the Archivist consider in order to accept or reject materials being offered?