

The substantial number of valid projects in Québec in relation to available funds is only part of the problem. Several museums face serious requirements regarding exhibition, protection and preservation of their own collections. For example, to name only a few in Montreal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the McCord Museum, the Musée d'Art contemporain, the David M. Stewart Museum and the Musée des arts décoratifs are all seeking new funds to complete renovation and expansion projects required to adequately preserve collections they are already responsible for.

Therefore, I would like to make sure that in looking at the proposal to further examine the new proposed museum of oceanography, we keep in mind that many other important projects, in Quebec as well as in the rest of the country, have long been confined to a priority list awaiting for a favourable response.

Our enthusiasm towards a new project, as legitimate as it may be, should not lead us to forget that several other valuable and well prepared projects deserve as much consideration and support from us.

In concluding, M. Speaker, I would like to say to my honourable colleague from Ottawa—Vanier that his proposal is certainly valuable, interesting and surely very creative. However, on the one hand, we should consider that in a context of budgetary restraints where funds and resources are no longer flexible, as we had hoped, it is not possible for the time being to envision such a venture.

In a context of budgetary restraints, the funds that remain available for everything that relates to culture should be directed first at reinforcing the existing institutions, particularly the museums which have a history and a tradition and which already have collections that, for a lack of funds, cannot be developed, and at the same time, at making available to these institutions funds to expand, or at least to renovate the structures that accommodate these collections.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, should we have enough funds available, I would suggest to my hon. colleagues that we implement the numerous initiatives which are as good as the one proposed by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier and which have already been considered and found to be meaningful and profitable for the whole country. It has already been planned that these initia-

Canadian Museum of Oceanography

tives would be implemented throughout Canada to enhance the various regions of our beautiful country.

Thirdly, I would like to remind my colleague whose motion stated that:

the Government should consider giving serious study to the establishment of a Canadian Museum of Oceanography in the National Capital Region—

— that even though my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) said that it did not cost anything, we have to realize that as soon as the Government undertakes a study, it needs money. A study of this magnitude cannot be conducted without the allocation of funds and, should it find this project warranted, we will have an addition to the long list of projects that are considered priorities. We should not be naïve enough to think that, should this project be accepted, the next step would not be to ask the Government for funding. Our colleagues in the House are all aware of the financial problems we are facing as a Government.

In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I recognize the validity of the motion presented by my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier. I think that his proposal is indeed very worthwhile, creative and interesting, but at the moment, I suggest that we postpone it until a later date and give priority to other projects that have already been found to be worthwhile.

Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester): Mr. Speaker—

[*English*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I know it is close to six o'clock and I can well understand why my colleague from Carleton—Gloucester would like to have the floor at this time. I also know that there are certain negotiations going on about the debate tonight at eight o'clock and that there are certain things which possibly could be done now that would allow for the debate tonight to be a little more focused. Could the time allocated to my colleague from Carleton—Gloucester be just taken up until negotiations are terminated so that we can come to the House before we adjourn for supper so that we can pretty well get our understanding here as to what happens after eight o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is it so agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.