

Canadian Museum of Oceanography

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like to bring to the attention of the Hon. Member that I have a clock in front of me. It was not quite five o'clock. That is why I proceeded with the vote. I regret I cannot watch every clock in the Chamber. The clock that is in front of me is the one that I watch. Therefore, it being 5.05 p.m. we will proceed now to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
BUSINESS—MOTIONS**

[*Translation*]

MUSEUMS

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH CANADIAN MUSEUM OF
OCEANOGRAPHY

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved that, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider giving serious study to the establishment of a Canadian Museum of Oceanography in the National Capital Region, which would include among other things a national freshwater and saltwater aquarium containing specimens of all of Canada's aquatic fauna.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to debate a motion that is very important for the National Capital Region and I am even happier that my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) has kindly agreed to second this motion.

Mr. Boudria: With pleasure!

Mr. Gauthier: I hope that all the people of the beautiful riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell will have the opportunity to visit this fine museum, this wonderful aquarium, which I am sure will be built somewhere in the National Capital Region, which perhaps some day will extend to Plantagenet, as the Hon. Member for that riding and many of his constituents would like.

Mr. Speaker, I first thank the members of the Committee on Elections, Privileges, Procedure and Private Members' Business for choosing my motion and thus allowing it to be debated in this House for up to five hours.

Also, I wish to congratulate the task force on the National Capital Aquarium, a committee headed by the Aquarium Lovers' Society of the Ottawa Valley. This committee of businessmen and professionals from our community has laid the foundation for a project that I trust will soon take shape. Sincere thanks for their

perseverance to people like Alan Emery and Robert McFethridge, who spared no effort to obtain the human and financial resources needed to move this issue forward.

[*English*]

This project is not new. It has been with us for some 20 years. In my case, it dates back about 10 years where it was the object of debate in my riding in 1979. Last year and in years gone by I did have the occasion to present a similar motion in the House for debate. Unfortunately, it was not always drawn. It sometimes happens that parliamentary initiatives just do not come to debate. But I am very happy today to have the privilege to debate this most important project.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, economic growth and increased tourism in the National Capital Region over the last few years have prompted attempts to find new attractions that could make our National Capital Region worthy of all Canadians, attract Canadians to their National Capital and interest them in our national institutions and museums. I, for one, believe that a Museum of Oceanography would do just that. Aquariums are very successful. Unlike some other cultural institutions, they are capable of supporting themselves. Of the 10 major aquariums in North America—and Ottawa's would be a major aquarium—none are going broke. Their financing sources are as diverse as the fish inhabiting their tanks. The National Capital Commission chairman, Jean Pigott, welcomed the idea when it was proposed in 1986. She said:

We welcome the idea and would like to be very encouraging to the museum. Aquariums throughout North America are drawing large crowds and we recognize this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, what are the advantages of a national museum of oceanography and a national aquarium?

A museum of oceanography with freshwater and saltwater aquariums would, in my view, be an essential adjunct to our cultural network. Looking at the various aspects of a project of this kind, we see there is a lot more to it than just a tourist attraction. There are any number of benefits, and these include meeting the educational, community and cultural needs of the Canadian people. A study carried out in 1986 showed that 60 per cent of the visitors interviewed visited a historic site and 40 per cent a museum. In addition to being an activity centre for all Canadians, offering shows and entertainment and showcasing Canada's aquatic life (mammals, water, plants), the Museum of Oceanography would be an educational centre for research and conservation, concentrating on pollution—a major concern today—, reproduction physiology and propagation, the impact of acid rain, and behaviour of fish and marine