

Government Orders

Cultural and heritage institutions in Canada have a long and proud history.

[English]

Our first museums had an educational purpose: to organize and transmit knowledge in the natural sciences. For example, the first known museum in Canada dates back to 1831, when the Halifax Mechanics Institute opened a public museum and reading room. Later came the establishment of the arts museums. By 1903 Canada had 21 museums. Today our museums are respected and renowned worldwide.

[Translation]

The Canadian Museum of Civilization is one of those renowned institutions which attract visitors from all over the world. People come here to admire its distinctive architecture. But what would that magnificent building be without its collections? Without their artifacts, works of art and books, our museums, galleries and libraries would only be empty buildings, rooms and walls.

Bill C-93 will ensure that the collections of Canadian museums, art galleries and libraries are up to date, diversified and exciting.

• (1035)

Canadians are increasingly interested in their heritage. They expect the government to play a role in developing heritage collections. Bill C-93 is an attempt to meet these expectations.

An article in *The Ottawa Citizen* in October 1994 described the importance of gifts of cultural property for Canadian museums. Here is the story of one such gift.

Ainslie Loomis was a university student in 1939 and regularly visited Britnell's bookstore in Toronto. One day, while browsing through a box of old books, she came across an album of photographs entitled *The Antiquities of Cambodia*, which had been published in 1867. The price was marked as \$2.25, but Britnell's dropped it to 75 cents. In 1993, and now living in Brantford, she gave the album to the National Art Gallery of Canada; it was worth \$10,000.

The article went on to explain that the National Gallery of Canada came into being through gifts of works of art. At its creation in 1880, the National Gallery's collection comprised only donated works.

Leanora McCarney of Hull, Quebec, has been giving works of art to the National Gallery for 15 years. She says that when they travel abroad they see galleries with entire wings full of donated works. She does not believe Canadians are in the habit of donating works the National Gallery. She hopes to start a trend, because she feels people should understand that what is involved is their heritage.

In making it easier for people to donate cultural property to museums, galleries and libraries, the government will perhaps make Leonora McCarney's wish come true.

The implementation of measures, like Bill C-93, to consolidate our museum, gallery and library collections has an effect on other sectors of the economy besides the arts and culture. Cultural tourism is a flourishing part of the tourism industry.

On the whole, the tourism industry brings in nearly \$30 billion a year and employs over 600,000 Canadians in 60,000 tourism related industries.

In Canada, recent trends indicate most tourists visiting Canada want a cultural experience different from their own. The Department of Canadian Heritage is trying to improve heritage tourism in Canada.

Many examples may be found in Canada of the contribution cultural tourism makes to the local economy, while promoting people's awareness of cultural values and encouraging their participation.

Thus the activities proposed at the Musée de la civilisation in Quebec City are an excellent way to approach culture, community development and cultural tourism.

Opened in 1988, the museum promotes experience on a human scale with a collection of over 80,000 pieces illustrating life in Quebec.

• (1040)

The leadership role of this museum in the city's cultural and educational development is widely recognized. This museum is now regarded as an essential tool for promoting public participation in cultural heritage activities.

[English]

Clearly museums, galleries and libraries are not elitist shrines or ivory tower domains for the happy few. They are democratic, diverse institutions open to all citizens. They make a vital contribution to the cultural and scientific life of the community. In Canada, museums, galleries, archives and libraries are resources and inspiration to people of all communities, backgrounds, ages and abilities.

To all Canadians our museums, galleries and libraries represent our authentic and irreplaceable link with our history, culture and heritage. Successful passage of Bill C-93 will help to ensure that these institutions remain vibrant temples of the human spirit, a strong presence for all Canadians to inspire us and reflect who we are.

[Translation]

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this bill, this legislative jewel, for the future development of Canada as a nation. The Cultural Property Export and Import Act is currently the only legal mechanism available in Canada that promotes