

Government Orders

One could say that the concept of heritage cannot be separated from our identity. In the present economic situation, the concerns of heritage and identity are sometimes seen as redundant or of lesser importance.

[English]

Heritage and natural identity lie at the heart of economic and fiscal matters, for they animate and inspire the people and activities that drive the economy.

[Translation]

As a result of the various ways in which it interacts with other commercial enterprises, the arts and culture sector generates considerable expenditures which stimulate a direct demand for goods and services produced by other industries.

In 1992-93, the direct and indirect financial impact on GDP totalled more than \$24 billion.

• (1725)

More than 600,000 corresponding jobs were created directly and indirectly the same year. The amendments we are proposing to the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act will consolidate the sectors of the arts, culture and heritage by making it easier for those who give valuable cultural property to museums, art galleries or libraries.

Investing in our arts, culture and heritage is investing in our collective future. These amendments are therefore of the highest importance to all Canadians, and particularly to the 60 million visitors to our art galleries and museums annually.

I would like to point out here that Canada's museums were the first of its cultural institutions to be established. For example, what is now the Canadian Museum of Civilization was founded in 1881. It can be difficult for museums, galleries and libraries to acquire new collection items. They have not escaped the financial challenge of these difficult times.

They have had significant cuts to their funding. Our museums, our art galleries and our libraries must therefore depend on the generosity of Canadians from all walks of life, on people who could have made money selling their artifacts, on people who, instead, have generously given them to us forever.

To offset the drop in funding faced by our museums, art galleries and libraries at the moment, it is our job to come up with ways these cultural and heritage institutions can acquire cultural property that will enrich their collections. Collections are not simply the irreplaceable assets of museums, art galleries and libraries, they are their *raison d'être*.

Policies and activities involving collections are among the basic mechanisms museums, art galleries, archives and libraries use to define and carry out their mandate. Museums, art galleries, archives and libraries may find it very difficult to complete their collections, for reasons such as rapidly increasing costs.

That is especially true for some art galleries, following the rapid increase in prices on the art market. The speed with which new products appear on the market make it very difficult for museums of science or history to show up to date collections. Donations of cultural assets to the collections are of definite financial value.

For instance, the Cultural Property Export and Import Act concerns a very large range of cultural items, including works of art, historical artifacts, natural science specimens, archives or scientific and technological material of historic significance. Our government has committed to supporting the cultural sector in Canada. Data produced by Statistics Canada show that the Government of Canada remains by far the one that supports the most the cultural sector in Canada. The government wants to go on doing so by continually seeking new ways of promoting the development of the cultural sector.

Innovative structural changes such as Bill C-93 will support the cultural sector without increasing the burden of Canadian taxpayers, so that they can donate their cultural properties instead of selling them to other countries. Canadians must be able to benefit from tax incentives such as those resulting from this legislation. These incentives encourage people to increase their support for our museums, art galleries and libraries.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary will certainly have the opportunity to conclude her remarks after the deferred division.

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LAW COMMISSION OF CANADA

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-106, an act respecting the Law Commission of Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.30 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 45 the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the second reading of Bill C-106, an act respecting the Law Commission of Canada.

Call in the members.

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)