

APPENDIX

The
UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL PLAQUES
at the
REOPENING OF THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT
on
Tuesday, June 19, 1956

Address of His Excellency the Governor General and speeches of the Honourable Wishart McL. Robertson, Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable L. René Beaudoin, Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Honourable Robert H. Winters, Minister of Public Works.

Hon. Wishart McL. Robertson (Speaker of the Senate): Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker of the House of Commons, ladies and gentlemen: The object of this gathering is to be present at and participate in the official reopening of the library of parliament. His Excellency the Governor General has graciously consented to officiate at the reopening of the library and the unveiling of the plaques. The English version of the plaque is as follows:—

Library of Parliament

This building, begun in 1860 and completed in 1876 was opened in February 28, 1876, by the Earl of Dufferin, Governor General of Canada. It survived the great fire which destroyed the parliament buildings in February 1916, but was severely damaged by fire in August 1952. After restoration it was reopened on June 19, 1956, by the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor General of Canada.

(Translation):

Hon. L. René Beaudoin (Speaker of the House of Commons): Your Excellency, Mr. Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen: We are gathered here today to witness the reopening of our library.

To preside over such an important ceremony, it was fitting that we should invite that personage who symbolizes parliamentary authority. On your behalf and on behalf of the members of the joint library committee, I am happy to thank His Excellency for having so graciously accepted our invitation.

Certain historical notes concerning our library have been transcribed on a plaque commemorating today's solemn event. The inscription reads as follows:

Library of Parliament

This building, begun in 1860 and completed in 1876 was opened in February 28, 1876, by the Earl of Dufferin, Governor General of Canada. It survived the great fire which destroyed the parliament buildings in February 1916, but was severely damaged by fire in August 1952. After restoration it was reopened on June 19, 1956, by the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor General of Canada.

From August 1952 until today our librarians and their assistants, in spite of the difficulties and inconveniences of temporary quar-

ters, have managed to provide us with the valuable help to which we had for so long become accustomed on their part.

I am happy, on your behalf, to pay tribute to their devotion and to thank them for their loyal services.

While restoration work was in progress, the library was entrusted to the care of the hon. Minister of Public Works (Mr. Winters) who is now pleased to let us resume its use and possession. I congratulate him and thank him for a magnificent achievement on behalf of parliament, and now invite him to address us.

(Text):

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Public Works): Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister, honourable Speakers, ladies and gentlemen: The interest of the Department of Public Works in the library of parliament goes back as far as 1859, when the erection of the parliament buildings was approved. Thanks to the foresight of the architects and the contractor, several steel fire doors were installed in the library when it was built. It was prompt closure of one of these doors that saved the historic building from serious damage, if not total loss, during the disastrous fire of February 3, 1916, which destroyed the centre block.

The second fire, which occurred on August 4, 1952, dealt this historic structure a heavier blow. You know the story of that day—how many thousands of books had to be moved quickly and dried to minimize the damage by water and smoke. Following the immediate investigation into the cause and extent of the fire, the Department of Public Works undertook the removal of everything inside the building and immediately started planning rehabilitation.

This, it subsequently turned out, involved a great deal more than replacement of charred timbers and redecoration of smoke-fumed walls and ceilings. It was discovered that in order to ensure greater protection against further disasters, the entire interior of the building would have to be rebuilt using fire