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## CANADA TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS INDEMNIFICATION BILL

**Second Reading—Debate Adjourned**

**Speech by:**

**The Honourable Vivienne Poy**

**Wednesday, June 2, 1999**

## THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 2, 1999

### CANADA TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS INDEMNIFICATION BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Vivienne Poy** moved second reading of Bill C-64, to establish an indemnification program for travelling exhibitions.

She said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to speak in favour of Bill C-64, which proposes a win-win situation for all Canadians. It is a fact that our museums, galleries, libraries and archives house some of the finest treasures in the world. It is a fact that most Canadians never get to see even a part of our magnificent collections.

[*Translation*]

On one hand, the vastness of our territory represents an obstacle for many people who have neither the means nor the time to see a collection or an exhibition in a facility far removed from them.

[*English*]

The cost of circulating a major exhibition can be exorbitant, sometimes prohibitively high. However, all citizens should have access to their cultural heritage. It would benefit all Canadians and our foreign visitors to know Canada better. It would be to the advantage of our heritage institutions to be able to provide better access to heritage collections.

Honourable senators, this bill is part of the solution to the problem of access. A significant cost associated with travelling exhibitions is the cost of insurance that can sometimes approach \$1 million in premiums for a single exhibition. At a time when institutions must make every penny count, the cost of insurance is a factor that argues against travelling exhibitions. With this bill, we can eliminate the high cost of insurance by replacing it with an indemnification program that would fall under the responsibility of the federal government.

That is not a new idea. That is a concept that is already well established. As many as 14 industrialized nations have successfully operated indemnification programs for travelling exhibitions for many years. We have closely examined the administration and successful track records of indemnification programs in a number of countries, including the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and France. In all cases, these programs provided access to greater numbers of exhibitions.

[*Translation*]

When one insures a travelling exhibition, it is as though one were to make all the preparations for a trip and then find oneself unable to pay for a tank of gas.

[*English*]

A program of indemnification will allow travelling exhibitions to hit the road. Instead of requiring advance payment in the form of an insurance premium in anticipation of a possible loss, an indemnification program involves expense only where loss or damage actually occurs.

To take the example of the United States, in 23 years of operation their indemnification program, with an annual indemnification value of \$3 billion, has paid out a total of only U.S. \$100,000 for two claims. In my book, those are pretty impressive odds. The United States is not an isolated case. All other countries with an indemnification program report similar results.

Risk for the indemnifier is at a minimum because there are stringent eligibility criteria. Security plans, environment control and how the artefacts are handled are all taken into consideration before an exhibition is indemnified.

[*Translation*]

Other conditions, such as a scale of deductibles and a minimum value, eliminate any possibility of minor claims.

[*English*]

The total amount of indemnification coverage provided by the government each year will be limited to \$1.5 billion.

There are other benefits that are equally important in this equation. If indemnification enables more exhibitions to travel, we are looking at more jobs, more spending and more tax revenue. These economic benefits will apply to the institutions housing the exhibitions, to the local municipality, the region and all levels of government. An indemnification program will provide benefits for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

This bill will help increase access to Canada's heritage and stimulate the economy.

[*English*]

Honourable senators, I trust you will agree that this is a very useful bill that should be passed to help the government serve the needs of all Canadians.