



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 150 • NUMBER 242

CANADIAN CONSERVATION INSTITUTE

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Wednesday, October 31, 2018

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[*Translation*]

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, we have a collective responsibility for a significant part of Canada's public trust, art, furniture, and sculptures owned by, loaned to and on view in the Senate. Obviously of interest to me, this trust includes Speakers' portraits primarily by Canadian artists, though few by women, portraits of French and English royalty, some Canadian landscapes and a growing number of Indigenous and Inuit two- and three-dimensional works.

When Centre Block closes for earthquake upgrades, asbestos removal and other renovations, the collection will be moved, some to the new Senate building, some into storage and some will undergo conservation.

Senators Joyal, Eaton, the curators and myself recently visited the Canadian Conservation Institute, and before Thanksgiving I visited the new storage building. I wanted assurance it meets the museological standards for the preservation of these works. I am pleased to report the new facility does meet the primary standards.

The temperature is set at 20 degrees Celsius, with a maximum short-term fluctuation of plus/minus 2 degrees. Relative humidity will remain between 45 and 55 per cent, with a short-term fluctuation of plus/minus 5 per cent, settings critically

important for the inherent safety of the works. The maximum light level is 20 lux and the UV content is within standard. A motion sensor will turn the lights off when the space is vacant, an excellent provision. A wet sprinkler fire suppressant system is in the bulk. I want to know what the water pressure will be on activation; if too strong, the canvas structure of the works could be damaged. I am pleased staff agreed to install flood monitors to warn of water from the pipes above or natural disasters like the recent tornadoes.

Dust particulates in the air are another important factor. I await those readings and would like to receive them regularly, as this storage area is in a building which receives deliveries of all sorts.

Access doors are large enough to accommodate the works, they're secure with card entry only. I have been assured the lift mechanisms of the forklift are smooth, no jarring on stopping, important when handling heritage furniture and large works of art. The new paintings screens are sufficient for the works in question.

With a clear collections policy and an updated collections database, now noting the artist, sitter, location and all details of the works, the key aspects in managing public collections have been addressed. I hope we will develop creative ways to make this important Canadian public trust increasingly accessible. It is one we all should be proud of. Thank you.
