



**Canadian
Study
of Parliament
Group**

**The Parliamentary Precinct:
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

**Ottawa
8 June 1995**

Canadian Study of Parliament Group

The **Canadian Study of Parliament Group (CSPG)** was created with the **object** of bringing together all those with an interest in **parliamentary institutions** and the legislative process, to promote **understanding** and to contribute to their reform and **improvement**.

The **constitution** of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group makes **provision** for various activities, including the organization of **seminars** in Ottawa and elsewhere in Canada, the preparation of **articles** and various publications, the establishment of **workshops**, the promotion and organization of **public discussions on parliamentary affairs**, participation in **public affairs programs** on radio and television, and the sponsorship of **other educational activities**.

Membership is open to all those interested in **Canadian legislative institutions**.

Applications for membership and additional information **concerning** the Group should be addressed to the Secretariat, **Canadian Study of Parliament Group, Box 660, West Block, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6. Tel: (613) 996-0707, Fax: (613) 992-3674.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On Thursday, June 8, 1995, the Canadian Study of Parliament Group jointly hosted a half-day seminar in Ottawa with the Library of Parliament on *The Parliamentary Precinct: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. The theme of the seminar was premised on the impact the extended renovations to the main buildings on Parliament Hill would have over the next few years — in terms of the temporary relocation of the Chamber, MPs and staff, and the redefinition of what is commonly known as “The Hill”.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who contributed so much to the success of the seminar. Special thanks to the keynote speakers: John Reid, CSPG Executive Member and former parliamentarian; John Holtby, Chief of Staff with the Special Committee on Reform of the House of Commons (1985) and co-author of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 6th edition* and Ed Riedel, Advisor to the Speaker in charge of Accommodation Planning. Thank you also to the moderator for the session, Hugh Finsten, Director General of the Research Branch of the Library of Parliament.

The important contribution made by the House of Commons through its financial and administrative support is also recognized as well as the support of my fellow CSPG Executive Committee members.

Richard Paré
Parliamentary Librarian
Library of Parliament
and Counsellor with the
Canadian Study of Parliament Group

Note - This publication represents a departure from past practice for CSPG in the format of the published proceedings which in the past have included verbatim transcripts and summary/précis reports. This is an edited transcript. It is based on the verbatim record, but edited to be as informative and enjoyable an account as possible in the least possible space.



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Introductory Remarks

Richard Paré
Parliamentary Librarian
Library of Parliament
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Hugh Finsten
Moderator and
Director General of the Research Branch
Library of Parliament

Richard Paré: Welcome to this symposium organized by the Canadian Study of Parliament Group and the Library of Parliament. My role will be very short. It's just to welcome you and to introduce the moderator of this morning's seminar, Mr. Hugh Finsten, the Director General of the Research Branch and without further ado, I will pass it on to him.

Hugh Finsten: Thank you, Mr. Paré and good morning, everyone. This morning's topic is the parliamentary precinct and we have a very distinguished panel I will be introducing shortly.

Having worked on the Hill for almost 25 years with the Parliament Buildings regularly in view, one finds after a while that they become a backdrop, often unnoticed as you carry on your daily activities. Then, every once in a while, when rushing to appointments in the Centre Block, you stop, take a moment and really look; and you experience the beauty once again, the towers, the gothic arches, the sandstone, the detailed sculpturing in the rotunda, the Hall of Honour. The overall artistry and craftsmanship really take your breath away.

Now, the long-delayed repairs are under way; the clock tower has disappeared, only the Canadian flag marking its location, and the Centre Block entrance is hidden behind a temporary wooden facade. One realizes how much we lose with even the temporary loss of part of this beautiful building.

In his authoritative text, *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, Joe Maingot defines the expression, "parliamentary precinct" as "...the premises which the House of Commons and Senate occupy from time to time for their corporate purposes. It includes those premises where each House through its Speaker exercises physical control to enable Members to perform their parliamentary work without obstruction or interference."

This morning we are going to discuss not simply the Parliament Buildings but the whole parliamentary precinct, which goes beyond brick and mortar to control and jurisdiction.

There is no shortage of players with the parliamentary precinct: three levels of government, the National Capital Commission, the Department of Public Works, the Speakers of the two Houses, the RCMP and a number of unknowns.

A few words concerning the Library of Parliament. The Library, of course, has had a past and present as part of the parliamentary precinct and is directly implicated in the plans for the future which include consideration of concurrent uses.

With regard to Mr. Maingot's definition, the Library serves the corporate purposes of the two Houses and is under the direction and control of the two Speakers, assisted by a joint committee.

In fact, the Library figured in an important early precedent establishing the geographical precincts of Parliament and the authority of the House and the Speaker. Although library staff are not known to have violent tendencies, in 1866 an issue of privilege was raised involving an assistant librarian who "came to blows" with a Member of Parliament over a newspaper article.

The Speaker asserting his authority over the parliamentary precinct, found the librarian to be in contempt and he was subsequently dismissed. Library staff have been keeping a low profile ever since.

As you can see from this brief introduction, there are a multitude of interesting issues to be discussed this morning and we have a most distinguished panel to enlighten us about the parliamentary precinct of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

On my immediate left and speaking on the historical aspects, how we got to where we are and some of the problems, is **John Reid**, a member of the Privy Council, former Minister of State for Federal/Provincial Relations under Prime Minister Trudeau and Member of Parliament representing Kenora-Rainy River from 1965 to 1984. Prior to entering politics, John was a sessional lecturer and came to Ottawa to work on his Ph.D thesis, ending up working for a minister and then on to electoral politics. Currently he is a private consultant and President of the Canadian Nuclear Association.

Next to John Reid and dealing with the present situation — the physical plant, the grounds and the various players — and sure to raise some controversial ideas is **John Holtby**. John is a past

president of the Canadian Study of Parliament Group. He has served a number of legislatures, parliamentary committees and individual parliamentarians in both the House and the Senate. He has co-authored the 6th edition of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, and he comments on parliamentary matters when so inclined.

Finally, peering into the future and informing us as to why the chamber will be temporarily relocated to the cafeteria rather than the bank or the former railway station, and perhaps taking issue with some of the proposals of the other panelists, is **Ed Riedel**. Ed has spent 17 years in the public service in various administrative and financial positions. He was Comptroller and Administrator of the House of Commons for the past 14 years and currently is Special Advisor to the Speaker of the House of Commons on long-term accommodation planning.

After we have heard from our panelists, we will be inviting the audience to comment and to ask questions.

I turn it over to you, John Reid.

The Parliamentary Precinct: Yesterday

The Honorable John Reid
Former parliamentarian and
Counsellor with the Canadian Study
of Parliament Group

John Reid: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the approach that I'm going to take is that of one of the inmates of this institution. I was here for 21 years; 2 years as an executive assistant and special assistant to a minister and 19 years as a Member of Parliament and Minister. I've seen a lot of changes take place in the physical facilities available to Members of Parliament.

When I came to Ottawa in 1963, the Liberals had just replaced the Conservatives. I came to Parliament Hill not to work in politics but with a far more noble ambition in mind. I had just completed my Ph.D. oral examinations at the University of Toronto and I had come to write my thesis. My father, an old-time politician, had advised me to ask my Member of Parliament for permission to use the Parliamentary Library. My MP turned out to be the Hon. William Benidickson, Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys. He did make arrangements for me to use the library but he also offered me a job working for him, dealing with constituency problems.

Being a political historian, this was a great opportunity, but I did want to get my thesis out of the way. We compromised, I was to work mornings for my thesis and afternoons for him. Alas for my thesis, I found working for him to be far more fascinating than my thesis and within three months, I gave up my thesis and went to work for him on a full-time basis.

Never having worked in an office environment before and never having worked outside the academic environment I found the Parliament Hill facilities in 1963, as a Minister's special assistant, to be more than adequate. I shared a large office with the Executive Assistant and since he spent most of his time in the Department and I was assigned to the House of Commons, his office was mine. There I was, a real nobody with an office that was very significant in terms of size and with all the facilities that were available at that time.

However, it was my responsibility from time to time to visit Members of Parliament in their digs, and what I found in those days was that two, three, four Members would be crammed into one office with one secretary, hired on a sessional basis, and

one telephone. Life for those folks was very miserable and very mean. Compared to them, I was looked after in the most lavish fashion possible.

By the time I was elected in 1965, the West Block had become fully available to Members of Parliament and there was, for the first time, an opportunity to provide single offices for Members of Parliament — a real breakthrough for the 265 Members of Parliament.

What happened then was that you each had an office and you shared that office with your secretary, again, hired on a sessional basis. This was a considerable step down from what I had enjoyed as a Minister's aide in terms not only of the space, the privacy, the noise level, but also a whole host of other facilities like copy machines, two telephones and a whole range of things. Life was more adequate, but it certainly was not gracious.

The next step was the opening of the Confederation Building. This was interesting because here was the opportunity, for the first time, for Members of Parliament to have space equal to a ministerial aid in 1963. I can recall an interview with Mr. deSalabury, who was then the Administrator of the House of Commons, who invited me into his suite of offices and showed me what he had. He said, "Don't you think something like this would be appropriate for a Member of Parliament?" I was amazed and I said, "None of us aspire to this kind of grandeur."

When the Confederation Building opened, there was the possibility to provide office space for Members of Parliament. What happened, however, was that the Cabinet decided this was a wonderful opportunity to reform the House of Commons, and their idea of reform was to remove all Members of Parliament from the Centre Block and put all the Ministers in the Centre Block, banishing the Members of Parliament to the West Block and to the Confederation Building. Eventually, when the scheme became known, it was stopped and the Prime Minister, understanding what had happened, appointed Marc Lalonde to set up quarters in the Confederation Building. Ministers were scattered throughout the parliamentary buildings, as they were known at that time, and Members as well, the same pattern that we have even today.

When I was elected in 1965, I had the choice of staying in the Centre Block or coming over to the West Block. I spent about three months after the election working out of an office in the Centre Block. After taking a tour of the West Block, I couldn't understand why anybody in his right mind would want to have an office in the Centre Block. The offices were small, dingy, poorly lighted, didn't

have the proper electrical connections and only one telephone. Remember we still sat long summers in those days. In the West Block you had air conditioning, which was an important factor, and larger offices. You had the West Block cafeteria, which had just opened and was really quite spectacular for its time, and you had all of the facilities plus the tunnel to take you to the Centre Block. The committees were in the West Block so the advantages were all there.

It was interesting to see how Members fought to stay in the Centre Block because they felt that was the place to be. In point of fact, the reform that began to take place began to devolve power away from the House of Commons into committees, and the West Block became the place to be because that was the only place where you had sufficient committee rooms.

Now, many of the things that have happened to the House of Commons have happened under the guise of trying to do things the right way. For example, the government decided in the 1970s to increase the parliamentary precinct by engaging in a massive expropriation of properties from Elgin Street all the way down the street including the Sparks Street Mall. Why the Sparks Street Mall I never understood, but that's what they decided to do.

Having done that, they then recognized they'd made a terrible mistake because they didn't know what to do with all of this. So they appointed the Abbott Commission, an extremely powerful and distinguished group of individuals who worked very hard and produced a superb report. It dealt with the problems facing Members of Parliament, the inadequacies of the space and so on.

It dealt with the problems of the expansion of the precincts of Parliament, with the expansion of the parliamentary demands that were being placed on these facilities, and it provided a plan for dealing with these problems.

The government, in its own way, cherry-picked the report. The report itself was never fully implemented. Because these problems facing Members of Parliament had been dealt with so inadequately, the McGrath Committee, appointed after the Mulroney Conservative election, spent a considerable amount of its time looking into the situation.

What both Abbott and McGrath found was a complete absence of responsibility for the parliamentary precinct. If you look at how we try to organize the parliamentary precinct, what you find is one of the great aberrations in the way we carry on government in Canada. We carry on government in Canada normally under the code of responsibility.

The government is responsible, the ministers are responsible, the deputy ministers are responsible. In our system, we know who's responsible and we can move to do something about it.

When it comes to the parliament precinct, there is nobody responsible. Since nobody is responsible, nobody does anything. When something is done, it tends to be done on an emergency ad hoc basis because that's what happens when nobody has the responsibility.

The plans developed by Abbott and particularly, the more specific plans developed by the McGrath Committee, were happily ignored by everybody because those people who are engaged in trying to make the Parliament Buildings run basically find chaos to be a major cottage industry for them.

So, what to do about the mess we find ourselves in today, where the House of Commons is under a 15- or 20-year plan, depending on how you want to look at it, with major reallocations of people and places going on and all being done because we are told the Centre Block is falling down. That tells you that this process of lack of responsibility or chaos has resulted in one of our national monuments not being adequately maintained.

I don't think anybody would want to say that a system that can't adequately maintain its facilities, particularly when they have the status of a national monument and a major tourist attraction, has been a success.

Further, if we look at the experience of the system in dealing with the expropriated properties, we find the government seeking private partners to throw in \$300 million or so just to be able to bring the buildings up to standard, because the government and this system has been unable to maintain them appropriately.

What I see is a total failure in the way the House of Commons, the Senate, the parliamentary buildings, the West Block and all of the parliamentary precinct have been administered. I blame no individual. I blame simply a system that provides no responsibility.

Now, we have some solutions at hand. My idea is that we should take the experiment that has been developed with respect to the parliamentary residences — that is to say, the Speaker's farm, the Leader of the Opposition's house, the Prime Minister's residence — where there are advisory bodies that recommend on maintenance and other matters.

Governments have found these very useful because when the advisory committee comes out with a report, the government can say, "It's not us doing it. We are being advised by our experts and

we have to do these things.” The result of that is that there has been a distinct improvement in the maintenance of those facilities since those committees were created.

However, the problem we have with the parliamentary precinct, it seems to me, where nobody has responsibility, is far deeper and therefore the suggestion that I would make — I strongly make — is that we create a national body to oversee the parliamentary precinct. It would hire staff. McGrath recommended somebody called an intendant to take on that responsibility. The organizing committee would be appointed from citizens from across Canada with responsibility for the administration of these facilities for short, medium and long-term planning and it would report to the House of Commons and to the Senate. There should be a joint committee made up of equal numbers on both sides of the Senate and the House of Commons to receive this report for both Chambers.

Right now there is not a joint committee of the House and the Senate to deal with the parliamentary precinct, or even to deal with the Centre Block. It seems to me to be an absurd situation, but those are the facts.

It would mean that the House of Commons and the Senate under this proposal would continue to be tenants in their own buildings. That's no big change because that's the way they are now, except that it's not clear who they are tenants of.

This also provides an opportunity for involving citizens from across the country to participate in the renovation and development of one of our major national symbols. This is a country that doesn't have many symbols, but the Parliament Buildings and the parliamentary precinct are a major symbol and they should be recognized and dealt with as such.

The House of Commons is a short-term membership body — the average term of a Member of Parliament is still less than six years, about five years and ten months. Tenure in the Senate is much longer, the Senate does not appear to have been interested in this subject because it has not participated in much of what has been going on. The House of Commons has taken the lead.

However, the government and the House tend to be much more short-term oriented than is good for a national monument. I judge that both Houses, in a sense, have not met their obligations to deal with the parliamentary precinct. Therefore I think the time has come to involve the real owners of the process and the real owners are the citizens of Canada. There should be a national body established with full responsibility for the maintenance, the upkeep and the forward planning of the parliamentary precinct.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hugh Finsten: Thank you very much, John Reid. Now, John Holtby.

Parliamentary Precinct: Today

John Holtby
Chief of Staff with the Special Committee
on Reform of the House of Commons (1985)
and co-author of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary
Rules and Forms*, 6th edition

John Holtby: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was assigned the task of dealing with the present, but I learned a long time ago from the Greek philosophers that you can't step into the same stream twice, so I'm at a bit of a loss. I have to deal with the past and I have to deal with the future.

I want to go back to the Abbott Commission and recall a few things that happened at that time. It was established as a result of the report of the Beaupré Commission. T.N. Beaupré, Marc Lapointe and Arthur Maloney were appointed members of the Advisory Committee on Parliamentary Salaries and Expenses which reported in 1970. That report drew attention, as Mr. Reid has said, to the totally inadequate working arrangements and facilities on the Hill for Members and staff. In 1973, we had the expropriation of the quadrant south of the Hill, the Wellington-Sparks-Elgin-Bank rectangle. The stated purpose was to protect the environment of Parliament from any development which could adversely affect it and simultaneously provide the land for an appropriate expansion of parliamentary facilities and other government requirements.

In announcing that, Public Works Minister Dubé said: "This action will provide the National Capital Commission with a splendid opportunity to plan the urban development of this most critical piece of land which is at the heart of the national capital and which constitutes a bridge between Parliament and the City of Ottawa. My department will be working closely with the Commission to marry the architectural requirements of Parliament to the exciting possibilities this location raises. For this purpose, it will be important that Parliament be at the heart of this process and I wish to announce that it is the intention of the government to appoint a Commission comprised of present and former Members of Parliament representing all parties in the House and the Senate. The government will be consulting with leaders of all parties with respect to appointments to the Commission."

As we know, in April of the following year, Mr. Douglas Abbott, a former member of the Supreme Court, former Member of the House of Commons and Minister of the Crown was its chairman. As Mr. Reid has said, the membership of

that Commission was distinguished indeed. There were twenty members, two of whom are still in Parliament today, Senators Eymard Corbin and John Stewart.

Incidentally, when the statement was made by Minister Dubé, a very interesting thing happened. There was a complaint made by Stanley Knowles which echoed a situation which occurred when Minister Dingwall made his statement last October. I found it interesting to read what Stanley Knowles said. Last October the Bloc and Reform parties complained vigorously that they didn't have advance copies of Minister Dingwall's statement and this is what Stanley Knowles said in 1973: "Mr. Speaker, for some reason, an advance copy of this statement did not reach me; but even so, I have the pleasure of indicating on the spur of the moment our strong approval of the announcement that has been made by the Minister of Public Works."

He carried on in support of the statement. What struck me was here was a parliamentarian of weight, I think one would say, Mr. Knowles, who was wanting to carry on the parliamentary discussion. What we had in the case of Minister Dingwall in October, unfortunately, demonstrated a significant problem that we have in this Parliament: We have gutted the institutional memory of this place and all that Members could do was complain that they didn't have the statement. There was nothing further. There was no sense of being a part of the body.

I'll skip over the Abbott recommendations. They're there for anyone who's interested in them. You should also take note of J.D. Livermore's excellent history of parliamentary accommodation in Canada, which is an appendix to the document.

Abbott was recommending that by the year 2001, there would possibly be more than 500 MPs and Senators with accommodation needs. The final phase for 2001 would have seen the construction of a new building: "...principally a parliamentary building housing Members of Parliament, personal staff and related support services, and would also include new facilities which might not be possible to include in the Centre Block due to the inflexible configuration of the older building." This is a major problem on the Hill.

The commission completely ignored one aspect of its charge. In the Order in Council establishing it, it was asked to inquire: "...into the manner in which parliamentary needs are met or may be met in other jurisdictions."

Abbott focused entirely on questions of model offices and spatial needs with modest references to matters of heritage and tourist reception facilities. This ought not to surprise us because the

Order in Council also specified that the staff and facilities for the Commission would be provided by the Minister of Public Works and the Secretary and Technical Advisor to the Commission was the former Chief Architect of the Department of Public Works, J.A. Langford.

The Abbott Commission was a bricks and mortar exercise, and that was the priority of 1976.

When I was discussing this with a long-term parliamentary observer, he said "How could this have been allowed to have happened, that the Centre Block is in the condition it is in." I think the answer, as Mr. Reid said, lies in the mishmash of competing jurisdictions and responsibilities which complicate the management of the parliamentary city.

Everyone has said the same thing: Everyone is responsible and no one is responsible. The Crown in Parliament acts in some capacities, each House acts independently, Crown agencies act unilaterally and sometimes in concert. Many rice bowls are filled from management and servicing attached to the parliamentary precinct. This often results in agencies running afoul of assorted power bases when they do something controversial. Who can forget the lilac incident during the speakership of Lloyd Francis when the lilacs in front of the Centre Block were ripped out. There was royal hell over it. But he, as Speaker of the House of Commons, had no jurisdiction over the lilacs on the front lawn.

In 1992, the Auditor General presented a report to both Houses of Parliament entitled, *Report to the Senate and House of Commons on Matters of Joint Interest*. That report dealt with, among other things, security, upkeep of the buildings and existing and potential joint services. This was the first major attempt to begin to address the cross-border issues in any significant way.

I'd like to summarize the ten pages of comments they had about the buildings and the Hill. They mentioned that the Parliament Buildings are a unique heritage asset. We know that. Relationships among those responsible for major capital repairs, maintenance and long-term planning for the parliamentary precinct reflect the presence of many stakeholders with different needs and perspectives.

The primary relationship is between the Minister of Public Works and the Senate and the House of Commons. The two Chambers and the Library of Parliament are essentially tenants in buildings for which the Minister of Public Works is the custodian. I would have been happier if they had used the word "stewardship" instead of "custodial relationship". However, the report continues that no one organization — and this is the damning statement

in this report — no one organization has clear responsibility for the parliamentary precinct.

Historically, Public Works is the lead agency, responsible for capital expenditures and ongoing operation and maintenance of the buildings and related services. The National Capital Commission is responsible for grounds maintenance and urban planning aspects of the precinct; and the House of Commons, Senate and the Library have focused on their individual space needs. Thus financial responsibility for the upkeep and renovation of the buildings is, in practice, shared.

Reports to Parliament and the public on the total capital and operating costs of maintaining and improving the Parliament Buildings and grounds are fragmented and incomplete.

They attribute to the complexity of the relationships the fact that funding and planning decisions can take years and that the \$200 million, ten-year plan which we are now seeing, represents "...only a portion of the basic structural and electrical work which has been identified. Most of the necessary major repairs and renovations identified in the 1970s and 1980s have not yet been undertaken."

One example they cited is the 1910 wing of the East Block still awaiting renovation; most of this wing has been sitting empty for eight years. One should recall that that is the 1992 report by the Auditor General.

The auditors acknowledged that much of the work had been delayed because of financial restraint policies and then added this: "A further explanation, we are told, is the reluctance of the government to be seen as unduly favouring Hill projects over others required elsewhere."

The Auditor General continues: "Partly in response to these difficulties, the House and Senate have funded more and more of their own renovations in recent years." After acknowledging that Public Works had established a special unit to serve Parliament, the auditors repeated their assertion that special funding arrangements were needed for Parliament with more publicly available consolidated financial information.

They also recommended the appointment of "a small, independent voluntary non-partisan advisory group which they styled the "Parliament Buildings Council" which would advise Parliament and the government on the quality of the buildings, maintenance and the state of repair and on the appropriateness of long-term planning to deal with repairs and the appropriateness of current organizational funding and accountability arrangements."

Finally, the auditors noted that the government has a policy of designating certain buildings as having "a special purpose" and under that designation, responsibility could be transferred to the occupants. They also noted that the British Parliament had recently established the Office of Parliamentary Works and recommended that Canadians monitor this situation.

The Auditor General also discussed the possibility of joint services, which I don't want to get into, but on page 7, there is this important point.

"Among Senators, there is a concern that House needs will receive priority over Senate needs. In our 1990 survey of Senators, between 61% to 90% of those replying answered they would oppose joint services such as cleaning, messengers, purchasing, security and travel reimbursement, even if they were shown to be more efficient or effective."

"In the House of Commons, between 80% to 94% of those responding, had no objection to jointly provided services. However, in our interviews, we discovered that to many Members of the House of Commons, "jointly provided" meant that the House would provide the services to the Senate. They usually did not imagine the situation reversed with the Senate providing services to the House of Commons."

The Auditor General noted that relations between the Senate and the House were sometimes strained in other areas and cited the aborted attempt to establish a joint committee on administrative matters which flowed from the McGrath Committee.

The Auditor General says: "We noted that the joint committee ... to deal with common administrative matters had never met, because the Senate did not appoint members to the committee. We were told that some Senators objected to a joint committee which would have only 30% of its Members from the Senate. As an equal Chamber they felt the Senate representation should be equal."

The Senators were right, in my opinion. I can't imagine that on an issue of this sort, they should in any way expect anything other than parity, but there is another aspect. When this committee was struck, the Conservatives were in control of the House of Commons, the Liberals were in control of the Senate. We have official residences in existence because of Parliament and there's no reason why they couldn't be transferred to the stewardship of the intendant. That would significantly alter the responsibility of the National Capital Commission, which, in my mind, is an agency sometimes looking for a purpose.

Both the Lefebvre and McGrath Committees also altered the governing structure of the House of Commons by enlarging the membership of the Board of Internal Economy. I want to draw attention to the fact that Minister Dingwall was a member of the Board in 1990 when briefings were going on about the need to make improvements to the building. He was there as an Opposition Member. He then took office and was aware of these parliamentary problems.

I want to congratulate him and the officials of the department for bringing this project as far as they have because it is an amazing achievement.

The Livermore document, which is an appendix to the Abbott Commission report should give us some caution. In the discussion of the reconstruction of the Centre Block, the fifth and sixth floors — you have to remember that the first war was on, with great pressure to get this national building reconstructed, and planning was going on while the building was under construction. Standards, which were in place for the first three floors, were not maintained above. There were cutbacks.

I think the lesson is that the renovations, which are now under way, will have to withstand great political pressure in the future. With the best of intentions, costs escalate and politicians react to the heat at home. It is simply too easy in this country to gain points by attacking public expenditures on political institutions.

Parliament has few friends and it is easier for those running for public office to run against this building than to defend it. This can result in injudicious and unbalanced pruning of plans. So how can Parliament, as a whole, make the sort of commitment to this project that will mitigate against this? I have a couple of proposals and I'll come to them in a moment.

Another aspect that the Auditor General dealt with was security and public safety. I prefer to address it as a question of public safety. We want our public figures safe and we want the people who work here to be safe. There's also the issue of safety for Canadians who come to visit. I think there should be a public debate about important decisions which are to be taken before further restrictions on the ability of the public to approach Parliament occur.

The House of Commons Board of Internal Economy at its meeting of December 13, 1994 approved in principle a list of occupants and uses for the Centre Block, retaining the Prime Minister as an occupant of the Centre Block. Perhaps he should be, but should he occupy space a few yards from public

galleries which are often filled with touring children? Wouldn't it make more sense for the Prime Minister to move to what is now the American Embassy which has the added benefit of a pleasant view of the Hill for official visitors?

In passing, I want to note that in the same decision the Board continued to discriminate between Ministers and Members in the size of their House of Commons offices. While this deference might be understandable, it is the sort of distinction which is very costly to the public when it comes to the games which the Whips play in assigning offices and when walls have to be moved to accommodate the preferences of individuals who come to high office.

One should note also in passing that the minutes of that meeting refer to the retention of Room 237-C which they call the Reading Room, but I think that is a false hope.

The Auditor General's report was not complimentary on matters of safety and called for a complete review of the security arrangements and modifications within three to five years of the 1992 report.

On April 28, 1994, at a meeting of the Commons Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Daphne Jennings, M.P., inquired of the Clerk of the House as to the current state of cooperation between the House and the Senate. The Clerk replied that there were ongoing meetings, primarily on matters of security and then added this: "There are two political cultures there, some of which is far beyond the administration's grasp or control and that applies to both the Senate and the House."

At the same meeting, the Sergeant at Arms spoke of liaison and common equipment after noting that there had been security exercises held. He concluded by saying that "I am confident in the next five to ten years we'll be pretty much of a tight force there."

So we have a situation where there is an attempt at coordination at the level of officials, but there is no interrelationship between the Members of the two Houses. There is no overall approach being taken to the wider geographic parliamentary precinct. Witness the ad hocery of the signage on the Hill, which is confusing enough for locals, and pity the poor tourist.

We tend to concentrate on matters of dramatic personal security, passes and controlling movement within the building, but safety has other aspects and I want to place on the record of this meeting that I understand changes to the fireworks displays around the Parliament Buildings are going to take place this year. Mr. Duncan tells me that he has

ordered these changes to remove explosive hazards from the buildings and the crowds.

The potential for damage to the buildings had, in the past, been made secondary to the expediency of the photo opportunity. This is not stewardship of our heritage buildings. In this one example, we have telling evidence that all has not been well in the way that the parliamentary precinct has been administered under a system of ducal principalities. Perhaps there's a lesson here.

I want to touch briefly on the Senate's involvement and I'll try to conclude as quickly as I can, Mr. Chairman.

Unlike the House of Commons' Board of Internal Economy, there is a transcript of the Senate discussions of the Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. Senators have expressed at those meetings concerns that they are being left out of these deliberations. Now, they have been briefed and so on, but much of the planning that's going on is happening on the House of Commons side.

The Senators have been burned by incidents of criticism for carpet costs and so on, which they know, or say they know, nothing about.

The current state of Canada's parliamentary precinct in 1995 is a long way from what Abbott had in mind. One agency of the Crown has started a massive program of renovations. The management bodies of both Houses have been briefed. The two Houses are not acting in concert and there are, at present, no avenues open for joint consultation. Similarly, at the level of officials, there is limited ability to move in a coordinated fashion.

We are in an age when it is popular to campaign against politicians and political institutions. Yet we need them both and they need to be housed in adequate and symbolically important public buildings.

Parliament is still relying on other departments to fund its capital expenditures and to a great extent, it is asking other public projects to compete for funding against its legitimate needs. Yet historically, when the heat is on, governments have turned against necessary parliamentary expenditures in an attempt to win public support.

All senior Members of the House of Commons, through committee reports and the reports of the Auditor General, have pinpointed the simple fact that no person or agency is responsible or has sufficient cross-jurisdictional authority to manage the parliamentary city. McGrath has recommended the Intendant to serve both houses.

The opportunity is there for a joint committee of both Houses and I think the membership of the two Internal Economy agencies of both Houses might be an appropriate core group for that committee.

I want to highlight something that the Assistant Auditor General Richard Fadden told the Commons Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in December of last year. "During the course of our audit, Mr. Chairman, one of the ideas we looked at was to recommend the appointment of what was called the Intendant of Parliament who would be a senior official responsible for the administration of both the House and the Senate side. It was suggested at the time that there were a number of constitutional difficulties for doing this so we didn't pursue it with a great deal of vigour."

Obviously, I don't agree with that view. If there are constitutional difficulties with the Intendant then there must be similar constitutional difficulties with the Library of Parliament. According to the Auditor General, the library is ticking along quite well, thank you.

Instead, one detects from this sort of resistance the politics of the rice bowl overtaking the needs of Canadians to have their Parliament properly cared for. While the Minister and the Department of Public Works and the Treasury Board are to be congratulated for the progress they have made, we should note that, since 1979, we have had ten Ministers of Public Works. The turnover rate is high and the chances of a similar commitment is not guaranteed in any future administration.

I think the Auditor General is astute in pointing out that most people see the House of Commons as providing the lead and there's an opportunity for the Senate to provide the lead. Not many of the present Members of the House of Commons will see this project to completion but a number of Senators present and to be appointed will. The Prime Minister might even want to appoint a person to the Senate who's knowledgeable in this sort of massive historical renovation project.

I think there needs to be a planning resource for this project which can devote more time to the consideration of options than can the respective internal economy bodies. There is probably an opportunity to appoint a commission similar to Abbott to oversee the project. One might even want to consider statutory funding so that both Houses would have a say in any alteration of the funding arrangements that any future government might want to cut.

A sunset provision for the commission would also ensure that the projects are completed in a timely way.

I think I'll close by suggesting that the parliament buildings need the attention of those who know them best, love them and understand the reality of the place. Those people are called politicians and parliamentarians and it is time that the Crown vested the precinct in the care of Parliament and appointed the Intendant as its steward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I apologize for trespassing on your time constraints.

Hugh Finsten: Thank you, John. I know the audience will point the finger at the moderator for not cutting John off more quickly and sticking to the schedule but obviously his very well researched and important information was quite basic to this discussion today.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're now ready to continue the session with Ed.

Parliamentary Precinct: Tomorrow

Ed Riedel
Advisor to the Speaker in charge
of Accommodation Planning

Ed Riedel: Thank you very much. Perhaps I should comment briefly on how the unit which I am heading up, known as "accommodation planning", came into being.

In the spring of 1994 Speaker Gilbert Parent of the House of Commons decided that a project team reporting directly to him would be created to develop a long-term accommodation plan for the House of Commons, one which would ultimately mesh with the plans of the Senate and the Library of Parliament. My portion of the project is scheduled to finish this fall.

A subcommittee of the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons was also established at the same time, and I and a small project team have been working closely with the Speaker and the subcommittee since then.

John Reid and John Holtby have given you an overview of some of the historical initiatives taken in the area of accommodation planning. I'd like to briefly touch on some of these again, perhaps from a slightly different perspective, to cast some light on why there has been a renewed interest in carrying out the critically needed repairs to the parliamentary buildings and why I think the momentum which has been built to date will continue into the future.

Let me express a heretical view, that there is not a need for an organization to have clear responsibility for the parliamentary buildings. What I think is necessary is that the respective jurisdictions clearly understand what their roles are, that they respect each other's roles, and that they get on with the job.

The Abbott Commission report in 1976 had recommended that the Centre Block be used exclusively for legislative purposes and that since neither the Centre Block nor the West Block (nor for that matter the Confederation Building) were suitable for the construction of modern offices for Members and Senators, that a new building be constructed on the north side of Wellington Street to house all parliamentarians and their staff.

The recommendations of that Commission were by and large not accepted.

By the early 1980s, it became quite evident that there was a deep-seated reluctance on the part of

Members of the House to move to any permanent quarters south of Wellington Street. Presumably in times of restraint and as public criticism of Members' perks and privileges was growing, the prospect of spending major capital funds on a newly constructed building for Members was not one that Members were anxious to entertain very seriously.

As early as 1981, the Speaker of the day and the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House were making representations to the government that the Justice Building be assigned to the House. The Justice Building, as you know, is strategically located just north of Wellington Street.

On several occasions between 1983 and 1985 the House Standing Committee on Management and Members' Services unanimously supported the acquisition of the Justice Building and urged the government to make it available to Members.

In 1985, the Special Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons, the McGrath Committee, also strongly recommended that the House be given custody of the Justice Building. Not surprisingly, the Justice Department was not very anxious to give up a prime location so close to the Hill. Moreover, moving to another location would have required the expenditure of substantial funds on behalf of the Justice Department.

In any event, the government's austerity program in the mid-1980s effectively shelved the proposal indefinitely.

By this time, Public Works and the NCC were becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of a master plan for the parliamentary precinct or any planning guidelines for renovations and space allocation. This led to the commissioning of a study conducted by the architectural firm of du Toit and Associates, for the purpose of preparing a long-term development plan for the parliamentary precinct area.

This report, which was completed in 1987, covered a number of subjects and described a number of options for new accommodation for Members, including a new building on the south side of Wellington Street, and an infill between the Justice and Confederation Buildings.

Interestingly enough, this report considered the Justice Building to be part of the "judicial" precinct and not the "parliamentary" precinct. The plan was ultimately tabled in Parliament but it was not acted upon.

With the advent of energy-hungry new office technology on the Hill came the realization that existing electrical facilities in the West and Centre Blocks were woefully inadequate to meet the new demands of computers, printers, telecopiers and television sets. Make-shift arrangements and quick-

fix solutions only solved the problem temporarily. Related systems such as air circulation and even the exterior building envelope — windows, roof, masonry — all now needed urgent attention.

The situation was further exacerbated when the Hill employees, represented by their unions, complained publicly about the asbestos on the Hill, particularly in the West Block.

By the late 1980s, the focus had shifted from the question of inadequate accommodation for parliamentarians to the need for quick action to correct deficiencies which had been neglected in order to protect the health and safety of building occupants and preserve a national heritage.

Some major repairs and modifications have been made on the Hill or were in the planning stages. The interior of the Peace Tower had been renovated in the early 1980s. A sprinkler system was upgraded in the Library of Parliament in the late 1980s. Plans were developed and subsequently implemented to improve fire exits in the Centre Block. But still there was no overall master plan to deal with needed improvements.

But things were starting to move. In 1988, Public Works began the process of developing a long-term plan for rehabilitating the precinct. The plan, which became known as the 12-year long-term construction program for the parliamentary precinct was presented to the House and Senate and agreed to in principle by both bodies in 1992.

The Treasury Board subsequently approved the plan with tentative funding in excess of \$200 million. The emphasis was on preservation of the historic buildings, upgrade of the mechanical and electrical systems and again the health and safety of the building occupants.

The plan recognized the need for some swing space, probably off the Hill, for parliamentarians and staff who would eventually be forced to vacate the West and Centre Blocks. This was the plan, in fact, that set the stage for things still to come.

Another development occurred in the late 1980s, when Public Works established a special unit dedicated solely to serving the needs of Parliament. I think this further emphasized the commitment of government to get on with the job of implementing the long-term plan and to ensure that there was proper consultation with the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament.

The Auditor General's Report on Joint Services in 1992, as John Holtby has mentioned, painted a rather dismal picture of the state of affairs on the Hill. The report toyed a bit with the idea of

transferring responsibility for accommodation entirely to Parliament. It finally concluded, as an interim measure, that an independent, outside body was needed to advise the various jurisdictions about what needed to be done and presumably to coordinate their efforts.

My reading of the situation is that the Auditor General's report underestimated the determination of the key players in the accommodation process, namely Public Works, the House and the Senate, and the Library of Parliament. They were in fact firmly committed to implementing the 12-year plan, and I think symbolically the renovation of the Peace Tower, which is so visible today, signals that the administrative and political will was and is there to preserve and improve our heritage buildings.

What the Auditor General's report did do, however, was give added impetus to what had already been started. Indeed, there were structural and systemic changes that took place in the latter part of the 1980s which gave even more assurance that further slippage would not be tolerated.

In 1985, perhaps directly as a result of the McGrath Committee report, the structure and responsibility of the Board of Internal Economy of the House of Commons were changed quite dramatically. Board representation was broadened to include nine Members of the House of Commons representing the three major political parties with the Speaker as Chair.

Previously the Board had consisted of four Ministers and the Speaker. The Board is now, I would submit, much more sensitive to the needs of individual Members and their staff for a safe, secure and efficient work environment in all buildings on the Hill.

Also, shortly after this change was made, the Board was given statutory responsibility for all administrative staff on the Hill through the passage of the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, a responsibility which the Board has to be mindful of when assessing the accommodation needs of its employees. This legislation also created unions for House staff, another factor, I think, that militates against any further deterioration of the workplace.

There then followed a series of fortuitous events which culminated with the acquisition by the House, at long last, of the Justice Building.

As luck would have it, the new Minister of Public Works after the 1993 election was keenly aware of the problems on the Hill, as John Holtby mentioned, having been a member of the House's Board of Internal Economy in the previous Parliament.

The new Speaker of the House made accommodation planning one of his priorities.

The Senate had already, through its Standing Committee on Internal Economy, taken some initiatives of its own for the longer-term resolution of its space needs. All groups in the Senate, the House and the Library of Parliament continued to support Public Works' long-term plan.

An important event, interestingly enough, was the recent construction of a new building for CSIS, since that meant that the East Memorial Building, which CSIS still occupies, across from the Justice Building would soon be vacated. This would permit the Justice Department to move to the East Memorial and free up the Justice Building for Members for occupancy sometime by 1998. The timing couldn't have been better, since it matched almost precisely the time frame for vacating the West Block as specified in the long-term construction program.

The Board of Internal Economy of the House agreed last year that the West Block should be fully vacated for renovations, as opposed to partial floor-by-floor evacuation and that this should take place immediately after the next election. The Justice Building would become available at that time. The committee rooms which would close in the West Block would be replaced by temporary new ones in the Justice Building. At this stage, the Confederation and Justice Buildings would accommodate in total 220 Members or 75% of all Members on the Hill.

By the year 2002, the House-occupied portion of the Centre Block would close and its Members would move to the newly renovated West Block. The House Chamber would move to the courtyard of the West Block into space currently used for the cafeteria. Under current plans there will be sufficient space in this area to accommodate the government and opposition lobbies plus galleries for the visiting public. Unfortunately, John Reid, there is no plan to reinstate the cafeteria in that space. I just might mention that eventually that space would be used for six new committee rooms, but that's a long way into the future.

Although the three committee rooms in the Centre Block — the Reading Room, the Railway Committee Room, and Room 112-North — would close, Room 200 in the West Block and four other rooms would reopen and be available for use. These rooms and others in the Centre Block when it reopens will, of course, be wired appropriately for broadcasting of proceedings.

By the year 2006, the House Chamber and Members will be able to return to the renovated

portion of the Centre Block. The building will accommodate the Speaker, the Prime Minister, Opposition Leaders, Deputy Speaker, Assistant Chairs, House Leaders, Party Whips, a number of Ministers and some 15 to 20 Members.

The Members' space could be used to house the House Officers of any other political parties if, for example, there were to be more than the three which are officially recognized today.

Once the House side of the Centre Block reopens in 2006, the Senate side would close. Its Chamber could move to the temporary chamber space in the West Block, together with a number of Senators and procedural support staff.

I hasten to add at this stage, particularly since I see some representatives from the Senate here, that to my knowledge this matter — that is, the question of moving the Senate Chamber to the West Block — has not yet been reviewed or decided on by the Senate and appropriate consultations between the House and Senate will, of course, need to take place.

If all goes well, the Senate would be in a position to move back into the Centre Block by the year 2010 and, for all intents and purposes, the long-term construction program for the parliamentary precinct will have come to an end.

I just want to make a few related points. You may have heard of a recent announcement by the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada that his department intends to discuss, with the private sector and local governments, the possibility of mounting a "private/public" partnering initiative to redevelop Sparks Street and to develop a Visitor Orientation Centre in the space between the West Block and the Confederation Building. The Parliament Hill portion of this initiative would be known as the "West Terrace Development" and would include visitor reception and orientation facilities above and below ground, underground parking and possibly space for cafeteria facilities.

This facility could have an important impact on space planning for the House, the Senate and the Library particularly if, say, extra storage or committee or meeting room space could be accommodated in the facility.

Second, there are plans being considered to develop an underground services facility at the northwest corner of the Centre Block to contain electrical systems, docking and storage facilities for the Senate, House and Library. Again, this would help to alleviate some of the space shortage on the Hill.

When projecting space needs, we have made a number of assumptions about what will happen in the future to enable us to develop a planning model which can be modified relatively easily if some of the assumptions should change.

For example, for planning purposes, the Board of Internal Economy has recently approved the use of an office space standard of 1,000 square feet per member. The average size of a Member's office today is about 830 to 850 square feet. The 1,000-square-foot standard is the same standard that was recommended by Abbott in 1976.

We are also assuming that the renovation program envisaged in the 12-year construction program will take place roughly in the planned time frame. For planning purposes, we are projecting space requirements for the House 25 years into the future, broken down into five Parliaments.

We are assuming that the number of Members of the House will be 301, starting in 1998 and continue at that level throughout the 25-year planning period.

We are also assuming that there will be no major change in the way that the Chamber, the committees and the Members themselves carry out their parliamentary business.

We also assume that from an administrative point of view there will be some space economies and that this, together with the opportunities arising from the construction program itself, will enable a closer grouping or bringing together of like functions, for example, procedural services, party research functions and, hopefully, the Library of Parliament.

Lastly, we assume that the number of officially-recognized parties will remain at three, although, as I mentioned, we have provided some flexibility in the plan for additional official parties, whether it be Members or research units.

In closing, let me summarize some of the conclusions we have reached in developing this long-term accommodation model for the House.

First, the model shows that by using the 1,000-square-foot average for each Member's office, there will in fact be enough space on the Hill for Members in each of the five Parliaments, even when the West and Centre Blocks are closed for renovations. This is possible, of course, mainly because of the availability of the Justice Building to the House.

Our initial indications are that Members' offices can be enlarged to this standard without major modifications or expenses. We have also concluded that by the end of the 25-year planning period, all Members can be accommodated north of Wellington Street in a series of inter-connected buildings stretching from the Centre Block to the Justice Building.

We conclude that there will be sufficient committee room space for committees to operate at at least current levels of activity and ultimately even more throughout the planning period.

Finally, we have concluded that there will be sufficient space for procedural and administrative support functions to provide the needed support to Members and to committees.

That, Mr. Chairman, concludes my official remarks. If I may make just one comment about John Holtby's comment that what has happened so far with regard to the 12-year construction program — the scaffolding you see on the Hill and the various repairs that are taking place — is an amazing achievement. I agree with John that it is an amazing achievement and perhaps what is even more amazing is that it has been achieved by all the parties working closely together. This has been done without having one body responsible for the entire precinct. Thank you very much.

Hugh Finsten: Thank you very much, Ed. We have a few minutes left for comments and questions.

Questions and Answers

Question no. 1

I guess we couldn't say there is a consensus on this panel. The first two speakers were very interesting and with some interesting research sketched a long history of competing jurisdictions and no single centre of responsibility. This led them each to quite similar recommendations. Mr. Riedel has rejected that recommendation and would leave us think that there actually has been more planning going on, long-term planning perhaps, at least as far as the next couple of decades.

We are left wondering what is the real story with all of this. I have two questions. One question is for the first two, which is, in light of what Mr. Riedel has said, do we need a single centre of responsibility, a single person? To Mr. Riedel, even if there has been more planning going on than you suspect, is there not some merit in greater coordination? It's a good thing to say that everybody should work together. I'm a former public servant and I know that it doesn't always occur.

Answer

John Reid: Mr. Chairman, two comments. First of all, there has never been a shortage of plans to do things on Parliament Hill. There has been a multitude of plans. What has seldom happened has been agreement on a plan, which is why things do not normally get done.

Mr. Riedel is correct to say that today there is a consensus that something be done, but, as Mr. Holtby has pointed out, the Senate doesn't appear to be quite part of that consensus.

I feel that we have at this present moment a happy conjunction of actors on the playing field, but remember, Ministers of Public Works and Ministers of the Crown turn over very rapidly. Government in our system now turn over very rapidly. Members of Parliament turn over very rapidly. Speakers turn over very rapidly. Civil servants stay. Bodies such as the NCC stay. Bodies such as the officials in Public Works stay. It's not always to their advantage to cooperate.

My second point is, simply, who owns the buildings? The buildings belong to the citizens of Canada. The parliamentary precincts belong to the citizens of Canada.

What we have seen for the period of time of these buildings has been that nobody has wanted to take responsibility for them. That is the impact of the history.

I think the officials concerned have tried to do a great deal and I think they have done quite well but the fact of the matter is that if you are going to deal in the current political environment with the realities of these buildings, our national monuments, you have to have the citizens directly involved because government no longer feels secure in itself to be able to take the resources and to spend the money on these facilities.

Where does the money come from now? It doesn't come out of the House of Commons or the Senate. It comes out of the funds that are allocated to the Department of Public Works or to the National Capital Commission or to any other bodies. What we want to do is to get away from that kind of thing so that the money flows into an advisory body or a controlling body that is going to run these buildings. To depend for the long-term survival of these national monuments on a happy conjunction of events in the short term I don't think makes any sense at all in the long term. While we all may live in our political careers in the short term, these buildings are national monuments that have to live in the long term and we have to set up a structure to ensure that happens.

John Holtby: Mr. Chairman, I think I agree with much of what John Reid has said and I'd like to emphasize the financial accounting aspects of this situation where there are these diffuse areas of responsibility where you have the Department of Public Works providing funds for some things and being held accountable for that, the House for things, the Senate for things, the NCC for things. We don't have, as the Auditor General pointed out, a real picture of the costs of Parliament that is available to the public, available to parliamentarians and the ability to hold people to account for the stewardship of those activities and the physical resources for which they are responsible.

An aspect as well which perhaps one might want to consider, the House of Commons now has the statutory authority, if my memory serves me correctly, to prepare in its estimates all of the funds necessary to run this place. They are prepared by the Board. The Speaker transmits them to the Minister of Finance who has no ability to alter them. He must lay them before the House of Commons and Parliament can take charge of its own funding arrangements now. It's more convenient or more

politically palatable to spread this out into a number of areas where the politicians aren't really having to take the heat for a lot of the expenditures that take place around this place.

Yes, I think there has to be a central authority. The lessons of the buildings falling down are the best demonstration of it.

Ed Riedel: Just before I answer the question if I may just comment on that, to me the prospect of transferring to Parliament a quarter of a billion dollars so that Parliament can manage its own capital funds, I just don't see that being done. I just don't see that happening in today's world when Members of Parliament's salaries have been frozen for this length of time. We've all seen how difficult it has been for Members to increase their salaries when there has been evidence that they're being underpaid. I think the prospect of doubling the parliamentary vote, I just don't see that happening from a practical and, I suppose, a political point of view.

To answer the question that was addressed to me, what we've been doing at the House is in some ways we've been trying to catch up. I think the Senate itself has done some work in long-term accommodation planning in the past few years. The Library of Parliament has done a bit as well. Our position has been that we had to get our own house in order, if you will, from an accommodation point of view.

There were some critical questions that had to be answered by the House, by the Board of Internal Economy. Shall we accept the Justice Building? How large will the offices be? When will we vacate the West Block? Will we vacate it totally or floor by floor?

Where will the Chamber go? Will it go to the Conference Centre? Will it go to the Bank of Montreal? Will it go to the cafeteria?

There have been some critical questions that we've had to ask of our Board and the Speaker and have answered. We are now, I think, clearly at the stage where there has to be greater cooperation. It's now time that we share our information and data and put it altogether so that we can come up with one long-term plan for the precincts for Parliament as a whole.

Question no. 2

I have a very quick question for John Reid. It seems to me that the kind of body that he has proposed is very similar to the National Capital Commission which does have representatives from across the country. I am just wondering if there isn't a danger of confrontation or lack of cooperation or overlap between these two bodies. I would like to ask John what he sees as the relationship between the two.

Answer

John Reid: There are three possibilities. You could have the NCC take over responsibility for the parliamentary precinct. I don't think that one would fly.

The second one is you could have a new body take over the NCC and I don't think it would fly for the same reasons. I considered both of those options. Really when you take a look at the advisory committees to the parliamentary residences, they have been really quite a significant success story.

I thought originally I would come out with an advisory body for the parliamentary precinct. Then I started looking into how in detail it was organized, I came to the recognition that there is no accountability for these funds because the accountability is spread over such an area.

I came to the conclusion that you needed to have somebody in charge. You needed to have the owner take care of his property. What is happening is that the property has fallen down. That is why we are going into this kind of very expensive renovation process. The property has fallen down. Therefore you need to put the responsibility on somebody and some group who is going to take the heat for the decisions that it makes.

My judgment is when you give people the responsibility and you tell them what they have to do, they go out and do it. If you give the responsibility to a multitude of organizations, you can be darn sure that everybody is going to have a wonderful time and create a cottage industry of negotiations and discussions while very little gets done.

Conclusion

Hugh Finster: I would like to thank our panelists for their really excellent presentations which have greatly enlightened us on the subject of the parliamentary precinct.

Thank you very much.

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