



ISSN 1180-436X

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 18 May 2011

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 18 mai 2011

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

McMichael Canadian Art
Collection Amendment Act, 2011

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi
sur la Collection McMichael
d'art canadien

Chair: Bas Balkissoon
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Bas Balkissoon
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Wednesday 18 May 2011

Mercredi 18 mai 2011

The committee met at 1233 in committee room 1, following a closed session.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I call to order the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

We're here to discuss Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Our first order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business. Mr. Naqvi.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Your subcommittee met on Thursday, May 12, 2011, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act, and recommends the following:

(1) That the clerk of the committee, with the authorization of the Chair, post information regarding public hearings on Bill 188 on the Ontario parliamentary channel and the committee's website.

(2) That the clerk of the committee send information regarding public hearings to Canada NewsWire.

(3) That interested parties who wish to be considered to make an oral presentation contact the clerk of the committee by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2011.

(4) That the clerk of the committee contact the chair of the McMichael board of trustees and the family members of Robert and Signe McMichael to invite them to appear before the committee, if they so wish.

(5) That the length of time for all witness presentations be 20 minutes.

(6) That the committee meet on Wednesday, May 18, 2011, in closed session from 12 p.m. to 12:30 p.m., and for public hearings from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., subject to witness demand.

(7) That the deadline for written submissions be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

(8) That the deadline for filing amendments be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

(9) That the committee request permission from the House leaders to sit from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18, 2011, for the purpose of conducting clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

(10) That the committee meet for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on Wednesday, May 18, 2011, subject to approval from the House leaders.

(11) That the research officer provide the committee with a historical summary of the evolution of the McMichael art gallery by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17, 2011.

(12) That the clerk of the committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized prior to the adoption of the report of the subcommittee, to commence making any preliminary arrangements necessary to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Shall the report be adopted? Carried.

**McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART
COLLECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011**

**LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA COLLECTION McMICHAEL
D'ART CANADIEN**

Consideration of Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien.

**McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART
COLLECTION BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Okay. The next order of business is our first deputant from the McMichael Canadian Art Collection board of trustees, Mr. Upkar Arora, the chair. You have 20 minutes. If there is any time left at the end of your presentation, we will have questions from all parties equally distributed.

Please state your name for the record, then you can start.

Mr. Upkar Arora: Upkar Arora.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Upkar Arora: Dear members of the standing committee, thank you for the invitation to speak to you today regarding Bill 188. My name is Upkar Arora, and I'm here on behalf of the board of trustees of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, in my capacity as chair.

I have some prepared remarks I would like to make for about 10 minutes and then I would welcome any questions or comments you may have after that.

My objective in speaking to you today is to outline some of the key reasons why we, as a board, believe that

the proposed legislative amendments are important and essential.

Before I begin to outline some of these reasons, let me provide you with some context and background. The world in which the McMichael exists today is dramatically different than the world of 10 or 15 years ago and would have seemed unimaginable 50 years ago when the McMichael collection was first founded. Three of the main differences that have affected all arts and cultural institutions to varying degrees are as follows:

(1) Audiences are declining. There are many more alternatives for people to spend their discretionary dollars as it relates to entertainment generally, and thus the marketplace is more competitive for arts organizations.

(2) Audiences are changing in terms of their cultural makeup, diversity, gender and age of the people in the GTA, and in the province generally.

(3) Audiences are engaging differently. The transformative impact of technology and the Internet and the means by which we access and absorb information has changed the way we experience and relate to arts and culture.

Those are the general dynamics that have affected nearly all arts and cultural organizations. As it relates to the McMichael specifically, there are three factors that have resulted in our institution being negatively impacted over the past several years.

(1) Huge transformational projects that have been completed, such as the ROM and the AGO, have made it more challenging for the McMichael to compete with big institutions, big marketing budgets, big exhibitions, extensive resources and a great deal of profile and visibility.

(2) The location of the McMichael, being outside of the downtown core, is at once a blessing and the biggest challenge that we face, since it is not a beneficiary of the spontaneous or impulsive traffic that is generated by other downtown institutions.

(3) The significant gift by Ken Thomson of the Group of Seven collection to the AGO has made the McMichael's value proposition less unique and thereby less of a draw to pull visitors to the Kleinburg location.

In the face of such enormous changes, our challenge is how we continue to be relevant today, tomorrow and to future generations.

The proposed legislative changes in Bill 188 are thus not a reaction to any crisis or issue at the McMichael; merely that the McMichael, with the support of its principal stakeholder, the government of Ontario, is attempting to ensure that its proposed mandate is reflective of the new reality that is impacting all institutions generally and the McMichael specifically.

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Let me put the proposed changes into context and try to provide you with the perspective of the board of trustees. As a board, we are entrusted to protect and safeguard the valuable assets of the people of Ontario. We believe it is also our duty and obligation to continue to build on the foundation that will enhance the probability

of success for the institution that we are so proud of, that we believe in and that we devote so much time and attention to. Our objective is to look ahead and sow the seeds today to ensure the survival of the institution tomorrow.

The legislative changes that are proposed in Bill 188 are about stimulating progress while preserving the core, and are but one critical element of the renaissance that we hope to achieve of the McMichael, a renaissance that I hope will be carried on in the years and decades to come—and long after my tenure as chairman—by staff, volunteers, management, and current and future board trustees.

Let me highlight some of the other changes, the more progressive steps that we have made and embarked on successfully to date, so that you can put into context how the legislative changes are but one element of the overall framework and plan.

(1) We have brought on board a new CEO, who you will hear from in a few minutes, and she brings tremendous experience, passion and leadership in the arts and culture sector. Her mandate is to raise the profile of the McMichael within the community, the GTA, Ontario, Canada and internationally, to attract both residents and tourists to this very important destination.

(2) We are putting the finishing touches on a \$4.2-million rehabilitation project, funded through the infrastructure stimulus fund, that will significantly improve the exterior grounds of the McMichael, which will be complemented by an outstanding sculpture garden featuring works of the Canadian artist Ivan Eyre.

(3) With the support of our major stakeholder, we have been active in recruiting some outstanding individuals to our board of trustees who will provide the board with tremendous diversity of experience and diversity of talents, skills and, most importantly, perspectives for years to come. Last month we received official confirmation of seven new trustees joining our board.

(4) We have started a dialogue with the city of Vaughan to work more collaboratively with the municipal government in reaching and building relationships with the residents of our local community and creating a draw to attract people to the area.

Finally, we have made significant strides to reinvigorate our gallery, both physically and through exhibitions, to re-engage previous audiences and engage new ones, both within our walls and outside of them, to much critical acclaim and popular success.

If we are to continue in this positive direction, then the proposed legislative changes are essential, both in a practical sense and as a clear message to all of our stakeholders: our audiences, our staff, our management, our volunteers, our donors and patrons, our foundation and board directors and trustees and, of course, the artists themselves. We have to reinforce that we are committed to doing everything within our power to ensure the McMichael continues to have a place in the hearts and minds of the people of Ontario.

However, our ability to move forward is constrained by legacy issues relating both to the current legislation

and the ongoing perception that the mandate of the McMichael and its ability to both collect and exhibit artists is not clear. Bill 188, from our perspective, attempts to change the reality as well as encourage a change in perception in the general community.

Just to be clear, the proposed changes in Bill 188 are not about a different vision than the one that was enunciated by Bob and Signe McMichael more than 40 years ago. Their vision joined a love of land with a love of art, and their passion was to share that vision with the people of Ontario and all of Canada. I genuinely believe that if Bob McMichael were here today, faced with the choice of, on one side, having the McMichael march down the path of possible extinction due to a narrowly defined mandate or, on the other side, reinterpreting the vision in a way that is faithful to the McMichael legacy, he would clearly choose the latter.

But it is not my belief about the McMichael or about Bob McMichael that is important. It is really the fact that those parties who have been the closest to Bob and Signe McMichael are supportive of the proposed amendments: Dr. Jack and Penny Fenwick, who are the executors of the McMichael estate, as well as Lynn Bevan, who has been their sage counsel and Bob McMichael's adviser through the decades. We at the McMichael have engaged them in a constructive dialogue over the past year to ensure that we are honouring the legacy and respecting the vision of Bob McMichael.

Bill 188 embodies proposed changes that the board, the family of the McMichaels and the government of Ontario all believe are essential, necessary and responsible.

Bill 188 removes one of the impediments. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition for long-term sustainability. In and of itself, it merely creates the right foundation: an environment for success to take place. The rest is up to all of us.

In summary, then, the McMichael needs additional resources, new audiences, new donors and compelling and interesting exhibitions and strategies to continue to be fiscally responsible while still engaging the diverse cultural and ethnic mosaic that is Toronto and Ontario.

But first we need your support in passing Bill 188 to accomplish two objectives: first, to ensure that the core of the collection, being the gift of the McMichaels, is preserved so that all Canadians can experience for themselves what an important part of our identity, our heritage, and the way we relate to the land, is embodied in the works of the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and the aboriginal peoples of Canada; and, second, to provide adequate flexibility within the collection's exhibition and governance mandate to ensure the long-term sustainability of this cultural and artistic icon for all Canadians to experience, today, tomorrow and for decades to come.

Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We've got about three minutes each, and we'll start with the Conservative Party. Mr. Arnott?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you, Mr. Arora, first of all, for coming in today to make this presentation on behalf of the board, but more importantly for your public service on the board—and the other board members, if you could convey our appreciation.

I do have a couple of questions. You mentioned the Art Gallery of Ontario. I do recall, in the 1990s, when it became apparent that the Thomson collection of Canadian art might be moved from its location downtown to another one, there was an effort to bring that collection to the McMichael. In the end, it was decided that it would go to the Art Gallery of Ontario.

What relationship does the McMichael have with the Art Gallery of Ontario in terms of sharing works of art and sharing exhibits back and forth? Do you have a formal partnership, or is it more informal? How could that be explored to improve the attendance at both galleries?

Mr. Upkar Arora: My understanding is that we do not have a formal partnership with the AGO. We have a partnership with the ROM, for example, to explore ways that we can work collaboratively. But having just experienced three days of the arts summit that has brought together 42 of the top leaders of arts organizations in Canada, I will tell you my view is that we can work much more effectively, working in collaboration, to promote tourism, to promote understanding and appreciation of the arts, and to promote how important that is to who we are as a people.

It would be our endeavour—and Victoria is going to touch on this a little bit—to start with our local community and then to broaden those relationships to much more of the stakeholders, to figure out how we can work on a win-win basis.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Because it would be in the interests, I think, of both galleries to encourage visitors to visit both, I would anticipate and expect. Would you agree?

Mr. Upkar Arora: I certainly would. I know that there's an informal dialogue. For example, all of the people from the AGO and the ROM were at the summit, so there's an informal dialogue that happens that hasn't been formalized into a structure or an arrangement with the AGO.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Who initiated this bill? Was it the board, was it the staff of the McMichael or was it the government? Who started this ball rolling?

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Mr. Upkar Arora: The process started in mid-2009, and it was really the board, which felt that the current legislative mandate was hampering its ability to move forward from a strategic standpoint. It was hampering the desire of donors to donate collections, it was hampering efforts from a fundraising standpoint and it was hampering efforts with respect to the exhibitions and collections mandate.

Mr. Ted Arnott: This bill abolishes the advisory committee, and I'm wondering why you don't want to have an advisory committee to the board.

Mr. Upkar Arora: Let me just be clear: The art advisory committee which is legislated currently would be eliminated under this bill. We have already put in place the process and the terms of reference for an acquisitions and collections committee, but that will not be statutorily determined, but governed by the bylaws of the organization. So what that really means is that the current committee requires that we have five members and that the chair sit as one of those members. In fact, it's a little bit difficult because we have some tremendous capability on our board. I'll just give you one example: Linda Rodeck, who's a trustee and chairman of Sotheby's Canada, can't sit on the advisory committee because we have no space, based on the statutory definition. We would expand that committee to more members and ensure that the criteria for inclusion on that committee reflected arts expertise.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All right, we'll move on. We'll come back.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Okay, thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Arora, thank you for the presentation and thank you for being here today.

The bill seems fairly straightforward to me. Your presentation sets out why this bill could be useful. Can you tell us if there are any groups that have difficulty with this bill that you're aware of or that have approached you or the leadership of the collection?

Mr. Upkar Arora: To my knowledge, there are no groups that have expressed any concern or opposition. Rather, on the other side, I think the fact that we've been able to work collectively and collaboratively with the Fenwicks has really enhanced our ability to move forward on a consensual bill that makes sense. I would just put it into this perspective: There is no other party that would have a closer interest and attachment to any changes that are proposed, and if they are on board, then I would tell you that they represent most closely and sincerely the vision and the genesis of the McMichael collection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Okay, thank you. I have no further questions, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government side. Ms. Albanese?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you very much for being here today and for your presentation.

I just had one general question: As you stated just a few moments ago, the bill really came forward through recommendations of the board. I would like to ask if the proposed amendments do address the critical issues that were raised by the board.

Mr. Upkar Arora: The proposed amendments certainly do address the issues that were raised by the board. The proposed amendments are not exactly 100% what was originally proposed, but at the time of the proposal we understood that we needed a process which would bring the Fenwicks, the family, on board with any proposed changes, and we have worked to get that commitment and buy-in. So the changes are perfectly satisfactory from the board's standpoint.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, and we are certainly supportive of the bill and supportive of culture. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Arnott, you had another question?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes. You went to great length to inform the committee about the work that's been done to reach out to the surviving members of the McMichaels' family and to have their agreement and support. I knew Bob and Signe McMichael, too, from the 1990s. My question to you is, do you believe that if they were here, that they would support the amendments we're debating here?

Mr. Upkar Arora: I personally do. I didn't know the McMichaels personally, so I'm basing that on, really, the juxtaposition of the two choices we have in front of us. I think that to continue on a narrowly defined mandate we are going down a path of ultimate extinction for the McMichael as a stand-alone, surviving entity. Given that choice versus modifying, perhaps, the initial vision—which frankly, could not have contemplated where we are today with technology, the Internet, other major institutions and the competitive nature of the world we live in—I think they would choose a path that would say that ultimately the goal was to make the collection accessible to as many people as possible and they would err on the side of choosing that overarching goal over the specific terms of the mandate.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you for coming today.

Mr. Upkar Arora: You're welcome.

McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The next deputant is Victoria Dickenson. Welcome. You have 20 minutes. If there's any time left at the end of your presentation, we will divide it amongst all parties for questions. If you could state your name for the record, then your presentation can start.

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: Victoria Dickenson.

Thank you very much for the invitation. I'm delighted to be here. I am the very new executive director and chief executive officer of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and it's a real privilege for me to have accepted that position.

It is also my good fortune to arrive at such a moment of renewal for this important institution. The McMichael is one of Canada's great cultural institutions and an important player in Ontario's rich cultural network. I'm speaking to you today from my personal experience and professional standpoint. Our chair has spoken eloquently on the situation of the collection and something of the process that has resulted in this important legislative change we are looking at today.

I want to share with you my own assessment of the significance of the McMichael going forward. First, let me acknowledge the contributions of Robert and Signe

McMichael, without whom the McMichael would not exist as a public institution. We'll be acknowledging their legacy and foresight in 2015, when we celebrate our 50th anniversary, and I think that's going to be an exciting year for us.

For a number of years, however, the McMichael has been burdened by legislation that, despite the intentions of its creators, did not reflect best-industry practices in contemporary public galleries and museums. This legislation has limited the collecting practices and priorities for the McMichael and has not provided an appropriate foundation for the collection to reflect the growing and diverse public interest in Canadian art. I am most appreciative of the work over the last few years of the current board and our chair, who have had the foresight and diligence to review and work to revise the legislation and to bring it in line with accepted professional practice.

As a public institution, the collections of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection are held in trust for the people of Ontario and Canada. The new legislation recognizes the importance of that trust and the role of the institution serving all the people of the province. The proposed legislation will allow the McMichael to expand its collection practices beyond the 18 artists designated in the original legislation to reflect a much broader representation from different segments of contemporary society. The bill will allow the McMichael to continue to celebrate that foundation collection of the Group of Seven and their contemporaries, as well as the important and growing collections of First Nation, Métis and Inuit artists that have always been part of that legacy.

The acceptance of Bill 188 will also ensure that the McMichael Canadian Art Collection may now begin to acquire artists of special note who have made significant contributions through their work to Canadian art, and the collections can grow to reflect our diversity as a country and the diversity of our artistic expression today.

Although I was not in Ontario during the period in which the McMichael laboured under its peculiar legislation as a public museum, I was aware of the difficulties that the more restrictive legislation had for my professional colleagues. I want to salute the staff of the McMichael who, while honouring the legislative mandate, were able to imaginatively move the gallery forward in presenting important exhibitions and programs to our public. I am very much looking forward now to working with our excellent staff to build on past success and to spread our wings a bit, to re-imagine our future and achieve greater heights in service to all our communities: local, regional, national and global.

A word on communities: Community support is integral to the growth and sustainability of healthy museums. The McMichael must strive to reflect the important evolving cultural face of Ontario and Canada, one of the most diverse countries in the world. The legislative changes will help to ensure that the McMichael serves as an important cultural destination, not only for tourists, but for our local communities. We are already an important cultural resource for the York and Vaughan

regional communities, and the changes proposed in this legislation will allow us to enhance collections and exhibitions, creating a broader range of offerings to attract these visitors, to have them return and come over and over again.

Community also includes not only those who visit us and experience our grounds, buildings, programs and exhibitions, but also those who support us through their contributions of time and their financial and collections donations. I have already heard—and this is only my fourth week there—from long-time volunteers and donors to the McMichael that they are so looking forward to, as one put it, “the clouds moving away,” and to a new and reinvigorated institution, free from the unfortunate atmosphere of controversy that has in the past tended to chill the warm relationship between public stakeholders and the institution.

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We're very much looking forward to working with all of our partners, collaborators and stakeholders in government and the private sector, and our community supporters, to develop and enhance the role of the McMichael as a contemporary professional institution of the highest calibre, providing wonderful experiences on-site to those who visit us and use our facilities, and communicating about our collections and the role of our artists in reflecting our experience and expressions of our increasing diversity through our online presence to a global audience.

I want to thank again the diligent members of the McMichael board; the Fenwicks and their representative, Lynn Bevan; and the government officials who have worked alongside the board for so long to create a foundation on which the McMichael can grow to serve, with increasing brilliance, all our communities and to make a difference in the lives of those whose heritage we hold in trust. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Okay, we have about four minutes. We'll start with the NDP this time. Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd like to thank you for the presentation, but to be quite honest, things are pretty straightforward, so I don't have any questions.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government side? Mrs. Albanese?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yes, I would like to thank you for the presentation as well, and offer my congratulations, and those of my colleagues, on your new position as executive director and CEO of the McMichael.

I guess I have perhaps one question. Your mandate is that of increasing the visibility of the McMichael, even on an international level. Could you elaborate a little bit on what the long-term plan is on that?

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: I think, as Upkar explained, one of the great changes in our world that was not envisioned in the original legislation was the growth of the Internet and the online Web presence of so many institutions. The McMichael has a good foothold in that, but we can now expand to be a much more important presence online. It's an area that I have a particular inter-

est in—I know my staff is excited to be working in this area as well—and we’re looking to increase both our capital infrastructure, for increased usability on-site, and applications to mobile devices. If any of you have younger people in your household, you’ll know that they live their lives on their mobiles, and we want to make sure that we’re talking to people where they find their information, both here and outside the grounds of the McMichael.

We aim to have a more vigorous Web presence, a more interactive Web presence, so that we’re delivering information out there to a larger community, putting our collections online and putting information about our collections, but also allowing—and I’m looking forward to this—a global audience to interact with the works we have online and to reassemble, if you will, the work of our artists to create an ongoing dialogue on an international basis.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for that explanation. I have no further questions.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Arnott?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you very much for your presentation, Ms. Dickenson. Congratulations on your new assignment.

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: Thank you.

Mr. Ted Arnott: We look forward to working with you in a spirit of partnership, and we want you to succeed, obviously.

I have a question with respect to your plans to honour the McMichael’s 50th anniversary in 2015, as you said. How do you plan to do that, and what sort of expectations would we have?

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: I’m a little fresh on the job to give you details, but we have already discussed the fact that 2015 is our 50th anniversary. That’s a time to look back and to celebrate, but also to analyze and assess. I can imagine right now that we would like to look back at that original donation and see how that looks in the context of the contemporary world, because there are about 194 paintings, I think, in the original donation. So how do they look? What is the shape of that original donation?

I also think it’s a wonderful moment to look back as well at the world of that period and the way in which we thought about Canada, about Canadiana, which was very important for the McMichaels, and how we see that in the world today. So right off the top, I see two things that will be really exciting for us—that juxtaposition of our history with the future.

Mr. Ted Arnott: We share your concern about the diminished number of visitors. Legislative research gave us information here that shows that in 2006-07 the attendance was 118,235, and in 2010-11, which is the most recent information, it was down to 83,308. I gather that you would point to this as one of the reasons why this bill is needed. What plans do you have to turn this around so that we can ensure that the numbers start going up again and hopefully exceed the number of visitors in 2006-07?

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: Well, we have evidence of one of the ways in which we can increase our visitation. There was the success of our recent exhibition on Marilyn Monroe. We did two exhibitions: Marilyn in Canada, curated by the McMichael staff, to complement an exhibition with an international touring exhibition agency on, really, artists’ view of this iconic figure in the 20th century.

I think we’ve understood that high-visibility exhibitions can bring in new clientele, and what we saw was a new clientele. My favourite was seeing the group of very charming elderly ladies looking at Marilyn, who had been part of their youth, with the young girls with the two tattoos running up their legs right beside them, looking at the same images.

I share that image as where we want to be. We want to be attracting both traditional audiences but also reaching out to a new audience. I think we need to look very carefully at what exhibitions we’re producing, find the space in which we are collaborating with our colleagues; for example, Jack Chambers, the London artist. We’re doing a show of his work, his filmic work and some of his what are called silverpoint paintings, at the same time as the AGO is doing their Jack Chambers retrospective. We hope to do some collaboration there.

So, building on the success of exhibitions but also increasing programs—I think museums are successful when we look locally and globally—looking at our local programs to encourage repeat attendance. We have a large community. When McMichael was founded—I went there when it was a very new institution—it was in the country. We’re now on the edge of Canada’s largest metropolitan community, but there’s also a very vigorous community surrounding us, and we want to serve that local community at the same time as we want to think out, using new media, using the Web presence, into a global community. I think all of those things can help to increase our attendance going forward.

Mr. Ted Arnott: You mentioned the exhibit of Marilyn Monroe photographs, and I’m just wondering if that exhibit is within the mandate of the current legislation or if it’s outside.

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: The legislation referred to acquisition, not necessarily to exhibitions. I think it’s the acquisition of works into the collection and the focus of the collection. To be restricted to 18 artists is extremely unusual for a public museum. It’s a kind of mandate where I cannot think of another institution in this country that would have a restricted mandate like that. By expanding the mandate for collection, we also expand the interest of donors, collectors and the public as we work with younger artists and new artists to acquire material which we can then put on display.

The exhibition mandate at the McMichael, while in keeping with the spirit of the McMichael—and I think that’s very important—is broad, but the collection mandate was small and did not allow us to produce exhibitions out of our own collections that spoke to contemporary interests.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you for that, and we look forward to working with you in a spirit of partnership.

Dr. Victoria Dickenson: Absolutely.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you for your presentation.

McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART
FOUNDATION

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Our next presenter is Michael Burns, director and former chair. You have 20 minutes for your presentation. If there's any time left, we'll have questions from all parties. Please state your name for the record and then you can start your presentation.

Mr. Michael Burns: My name is Michael Burns. I think I should start by saying why I'm here. Let me start by saying that the last time I was in this room was for the same reason that I am here today. That was the legislation that returned the McMichael to its current status. I was there speaking as I am today, trying to ask government not to bring in a bill that would curtail what we were trying to do at the McMichael. Unfortunately, we lost that day.

Today, I'm here speaking as a long-time supporter of McMichael. I have over 25 years of volunteer service there: two years as vice-chairman, six years as chairman, the founding chairman of the foundation, a continuous fundraiser, a continuous believer in Canadian art, a continuous believer that this institution can and will succeed and will grow. It will grow because of the leadership that the institution has been able to have over the 25 years of my involvement, starting with Barbara Tyler and moving on to Victoria Dickenson today. I know Victoria has not been there long, but in my short meetings with her, I know that she has the feeling of the public, of the people, of the residents of the area, and that is so important to the institution.

We will not be looking at falsified numbers on attendance, which I faced, because that's what the McMichaels wanted. They wanted to show that they were a success. The McMichaels did everything in their power when I was there, until I resigned, and then I came back on after Bob died. But to go out and bring in a proper exhibition of art that will bring people to the gallery to the benefit of the area and the province, and to have the money sitting in the bank and have one person with the ability to reject the exhibition and send the money back—and we're not talking about \$5,000; it was six-figure number that had to go back. We have never, ever been able to get that donor to think about the McMichael because of instances like that.

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In my time there, as a chairman of the trustees, it was a constant fight. This new legislation is a breath of fresh air. It's going to allow this institution to become what we all want it to be, what the province wants it to be, what Canada wants it to be. This is an institution that is unique, no matter where you go in Canada or the world. I

think this bill will allow it to grow; it will allow it to become what so many of us have worked so long and hard for.

I don't need to go into incidents of the past; I only want to look at the future. The future with this new bill, with the ability to get the kind of trustees that the McMichael needs, to allow the people who are raising money to endow the McMichael and to sponsor exhibits, not fighting opposition from within—I think this institution will be so enhanced that everybody in this room, in this province, in the Legislature, will look back and say, "Thank you for Bill 188."

It's so important. I encourage you to get it to royal assent as soon as possible, because the sooner we get on with it, the sooner this institution can grow and become what we all want it to be.

I don't think you need any more than that. I'm an emotional person, and this has been an emotional day for me, to be able to know that varying parties in power in this province are supporting the bill, certainly, and there has been no opposition. Although I don't know the McMichael heirs, I know that they are in favour, and I think that is the most exciting thing for me—to know that finally we've got the support there that we have often not had.

Anyway, thank you very much for allowing me to be here. I don't think you need any more from me. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Well, let's see if we have any questions for you. The government side: Ms. Albanese.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to thank you for your presentation, for your comments, for the dedication and the commitment that you have shown towards the McMichael, for your service and for the passion, really, that comes out from the words you have said here this afternoon. We appreciate the work you have done and all the support that you will give to this institution in the future. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Burns: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Arnott?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you for your presentation and for providing the committee with your insights and your experience.

Mr. Michael Burns: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Tabuns?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Similarly, thank you very much for your commitment to the collection and for coming here today. Like others, I don't have questions. You were very clear in your presentation.

Mr. Michael Burns: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you, Mr. Burns. You've convinced them all.

Mr. Michael Burns: Thank you.

MS. JOYCE FRUSTAGLIO

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The next presenter is Joyce Frustaglio. Welcome.

Ms. Joyce Frustaglio: Thank you so much.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I haven't seen you in a long time.

Ms. Joyce Frustaglio: I know; I've been around.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. It is a real pleasure for me to be here.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Just state your name for the record.

Ms. Joyce Frustaglio: Yes. My name is Joyce Frustaglio. I am a former regional councillor and deputy mayor of the city of Vaughan and a member of regional council, as well as, I believe, the longest consecutively sitting member on the board of trustees of the McMichael.

I too speak with tremendous passion when it comes to the McMichael. I have been there through all: the good, the bad, the trials and the tribulations. I've been there when things were absolutely just awesome, and I was there when things were very difficult to deal with. Obviously, the government of the day also had its challenges dealing with the issues that affected the McMichael.

I can tell you that I've worked with the new chair, and I've worked with the previous chair. They're not there for self-aggrandizing purposes but to ensure the legacy of the McMichael.

I had the great pleasure of knowing both Robert and Signe. I can tell you that if they were able to be here today, their position would be, "We must ensure this legacy." We must ensure that the McMichael continues to thrive and to live out their legacy. I believe that Bill 188 will do that.

The previous bill did really and truly hamper the board's ability to elevate the position of the gallery on the world stage and on the national stage. The McMichael is a national treasure. We in the province of Ontario are so fortunate to have been gifted such a wonderful gift, and I think that we collectively and particularly you, the government of the day, have a moral obligation to ensure its longevity, but more importantly, to ensure its success.

I don't know about you, but when I travel, the first thing I do is to go to the galleries. I want to see the history. It talks to you. I've just returned from South America, and I went to Machu Picchu. And if you've never been, I say, please go. The thing that touched me the most was not the actual mountain, Machu Picchu, but when I went to see the art gallery and the tremendous works of these amazing people, because that's what told me the history.

When you go to Europe—I go to Florence. Life wouldn't be a trip to Florence without going to the Uffizi. Life wouldn't be a trip to Paris if you didn't go to the Louvre. I spent two and a half hours in the pouring rain last year waiting to get into that famous art gallery, which speaks to the history of the people who have contributed to its welfare.

I have raised—I'm not exactly sure—if not over \$1 million, certainly very close to \$1 million for the

McMichael gallery over the years as chair of fundraising. When we approach people to contribute and consider contributing, one of the obstacles that we encountered was always, "We love the Group of Seven"—everybody loves the Group of Seven. But why is it that we consider ourselves a national gallery of Canadian art and yet exclude the hundreds and hundreds of awesome, talented artists across this country? I believe that the amendment to this legislation will allow us to do some of the things that we were not able to do in the past.

The McMichael is presently participating in—actually, co-sponsoring, along with the National Gallery—a touring exhibition called Painting Canada. I don't know if you know about it, but if you don't, you might want to inquire. It includes Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven exhibition. The exhibition is being led by the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, England, and it's expected that once it's finished there, it will tour all of Europe. That will put the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Canada, Kleinburg, the city of Vaughan, the region of York, certainly the province of Ontario, on the world stage when it comes to art exhibits. We want to be able to show all of Canada that the McMichael is home to Canadian artists.

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I'm sure you're aware that we have presently been fortunate enough to receive, also with your assistance, \$4.2 million in infrastructure dollars. You should come and see the site. It is going to absolutely rejuvenate and breathe life into the over 100 acres of land that the McMichael sits on. People walk into those trails, the parks and the woodlots, and you can almost feel the presence of the Group of Seven. It is going to create a very special and spiritual place where the cemetery is now for the Group of Seven. Half of the people didn't even know we had a cemetery there before. Now we're looking at elevating its existence in many ways.

The programs: Part of the money that I raised over the years went to a program that was intended to help terminally ill cancer patients. As a four-time cancer survivor, I can tell you that the benefits of that program exceeded the efforts of anyone who ever contributed to it. I think the previous speaker spoke to the amazing programs that we have there, the thousands and thousands of children who come through those doors on a daily basis.

I can only say that we really do need these amendments. We need Bill 188 if the McMichael gallery is truly to be a participant on the world stage.

I woke up this morning and this thought crossed my mind. I wanted to share it with you, because I really do believe that, aside from the fact that the gallery is a jewel, a national treasure—we always said at the region that it was a jewel in the crown of the region of York and the city of Vaughan. I hope that you consider it a jewel in the province of Ontario.

Arts and culture is an integral part of tourism and the economic vibrancy of a community. Without that, I don't know that cities could survive. Touring is not just about looking at buildings and going shopping. For the most

part, people enjoy going to different cities and different parts of the world to look at their art and their culture and to come back enriched. Arts and culture, I always say, is the international food for the mind and the soul.

I do hope that you will move forward positively with these amendments and allow the gallery to move forward. You, as a province, will reap the benefits, because I believe that there's tremendous opportunity with these new amendments.

Thank you so much for allowing me to speak to you today.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We have questions and comments. Ms. Jones.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Joyce, I don't have questions for you, but after that presentation, I can see why you have been such a successful fundraiser for the McMichael. I thought at the end, instead of saying "move forward on the amendments," you were going to say "move to donate now."

Ms. Joyce Frustaglio: Well, you can do that, too.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Yes, I'm sure.

Thank you very much for your passion and for your continued support of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Joyce, also, thank you very much for coming down today and making a presentation. You really do carry the place in your heart; it's very clear to us. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Albanese.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I, too, want to thank you, Joyce, for your passionate words and for all your support for the McMichael. Your words have certainly intrigued my colleague Khalil Ramal, who had to leave momentarily. He has never visited the McMichael, and as you were speaking, he said, "Is it really that beautiful? I will have to go." I have visited many times myself, for different exhibitions. I remember being there when my children were in school, on school trips, as a parent. It's a lovely place, and we certainly want to ensure that it continues to thrive in the future.

Ms. Joyce Frustaglio: Thank you very much. I know that you must be a lover of art, because you're married to a very passionate artist. I can tell you, there's nothing that we would love more than to have the ability to exhibit art of people who are Canadians. And I'm not saying this just to stroke you. It really is the truth. I think we have an opportunity in Canada, in this gallery, that we have not really looked at and expounded on. I think the opportunity is there, with this new bill.

I would also like to say that I think it's critical that when the government is appointing members to the

gallery—I always say the pocketbook speaks volumes. When I was appointed, I said, "Hey, I can't write the cheque, but I sure know people who can." I think that community contributions to institutions such as the McMichael and national galleries are essential for their survival. You, as government, have an obligation to ensure that the people who are appointed have not just maybe the ability to write that cheque, but have the ability to bring those cheques to the table. It's essential.

Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thanks for being here. It's nice to see you again.

Committee, just a reminder: The deadline for any amendments—and I didn't hear anybody suggesting anything around the table—is 4 o'clock.

We will recess and reconvene at 4.

The committee recessed from 1327 to 1600.

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll reconvene the meeting. We're here to deal with clause-by-clause. I understand there's no amendments, so we'll take it from the top.

Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act.

Shall section 1 carry? Carried.

Shall section 2 carry? Carried.

Shall section 3 carry? Carried.

Shall section 4 carry? Carried.

Shall section 5 carry? Carried.

Shall section 6 carry? Carried.

Shall section 7 carry? Carried.

Shall section 8 carry? Carried.

Shall section 9 carry? Carried.

Shall section 10 carry? Carried.

Shall section 11 carry? Carried.

Shall section 12 carry? Carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall Bill 188 carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Carried.

I guess that's all of it, so Bill 188 is recommended back to the House by the committee.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Mr. Chair, I just want to say I've been in this place for the last eight years and attended many committees. I think this is one of the best. The co-operation between—

The Chair (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): You're invited to sit on my committee at any time. This is the normal way we do business. It's always quick. It happens before you even blink.

Committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1602.

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