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## Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

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**Chair**

Mr. David Sweet

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Monday, April 27, 2009

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC)):** Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to get our meeting under way.

We have some esteemed guests with us today: Audrey O'Brien, the Clerk of the House; Mr. Kevin Vickers, the Sergeant-at-Arms; and Mr. David Monaghan, the curator.

Of course I have fond memories of the first time I was sworn in, and Audrey O'Brien was the one responsible for that, so I will have eternal precious memories regarding that issue.

I should mention that the Clerk of the House, Madam O'Brien, has said she will have an opening statement and leave the rest of the discussion with Mr. Monaghan and Mr. Vickers. I think that would be adequate, and I assume that would be okay with the rest of the committee.

If that's the case, and you need to get on to other responsibilities, we'll let you open, Madam O'Brien.

**Ms. Audrey O'Brien (Clerk of the House of Commons, House of Commons):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Honourable members, I'm very pleased to be here this afternoon to follow up on a conversation we basically started with the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs almost a year ago, on June 10, 2008, when Mr. Speaker Milliken and I appeared before you to talk about the business of possibly decorating Room 112 North, such that it would be a welcoming place for veterans to come and testify and that they would recognize themselves in this room.

As I said, I appeared with Mr. Speaker Milliken at that time and suggested that the curator of the House of Commons, David Monaghan, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers, would be in charge of actually pushing this project forward. I understand from David and Kevin there have been discussions, and they will be able to tell you more about their proposal in a moment.

I just want to flag two things for you. First of all, as most of you know, there is a major renovation of the Parliament buildings that is under way. It is, I have to say, primary on my list of things to be anxious about. This is the long-term vision and plan for Parliament Hill. You see scaffolding on various buildings and so forth.

[Translation]

Progress is being made on the renovation of the Parliament buildings, but our planning takes into consideration the fact that Centre Block will eventually be closed—this certainly won't happen

tomorrow or next year—and operations will move to another location during the renovations.

[English]

So by virtue of the fact that the long-term vision and plan eventually will mean that the Centre Block will be closed and parliamentary functions and operations will be moved to another building, then obviously anything we do with Room 112 North at the moment would take into consideration the fact that these things are on the horizon.

In another way as well, this picks up on a theme we had raised with the committee in June 2008. It's really important with all these rooms that we be very flexible in terms of the way they are set up, so that when demands arise they can serve more than one purpose. I can say that with some degree of confidence by virtue of the fact that, for example, the Board of Internal Economy met this morning from 11:30 until 1:00 in the room. So because it's so centrally located and because it's very close to the chamber, this is a room used by many other people and other committees, as I'm sure you will appreciate.

So I was very pleased that the curator, with his very long experience—and I think it's safe to say he has a real passion for the buildings and notably for the history they represent and he is very knowledgeable about that—had come up with what we believe is an elegant and a meaningful solution to the issues you raised with Speaker Milliken. I am sure he'll be able to discuss them with you and give you a feel for what he is proposing in the next little while.

• (1535)

[Translation]

It is with great pleasure that I leave you in the hands of the Curator of the House of Commons, Mr. David Monaghan.

[English]

If there are any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions for Madam O'Brien before she goes, or can we leave our questions for afterwards when all the presentations have been made?

Okay.

**Ms. Audrey O'Brien:** You have rocketed into being my favourite committee.

Thanks so much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation, Madam O'Brien.

Now, Mr. Monaghan and Mr. Vickers, do you both have opening words you'd like to share with the committee?

**Mr. David Monaghan (Curator, House of Commons):** No. I believe Mr. Vickers, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and I discussed it beforehand. He is here in the event that there are some questions that require an authoritative response.

Thank you very much for the opportunity of speaking with you this afternoon.

[*Translation*]

This is truly a great pleasure. It is the first time that I am appearing before a parliamentary committee. I'm not as nervous as I thought I would be.

[*English*]

Following the receipt of the letter the Speaker sent to Mr. Anders last year, a fair amount of consideration was given as to how we could go about providing appropriate decoration for this particular room and for this particular committee. I think the key word in all of that is "appropriate", in the sense that, as the committee members made very clear last year—I was present during that presentation—they had a sincere desire to make a variety of witnesses, covering a whole range of the field, comfortable when they came into this room, that somehow there'd be

[*Translation*]

something that most people could immediately identify with, either because it related to their past or at least their life.

[*English*]

A number of things were mentioned by members of the committee during the meeting regarding what you had experienced in other locations. I remember one member referred to armour, and another person referred to paintings and the like. I took those to note and started examining some of the possibilities about how this particular room could be enhanced and decorated in a manner that would be suitable for the committee's work, and also for the witnesses.

One option was to pursue

[*Translation*]

the same idea that was used in room 362 in the East Block, the War Room. We could purchase three or four reproductions of artwork contained in the Beaverbrook military art collection in the Canadian War Museum and have them installed in the room.

However, I had to ask myself if that option would add something to the room and would be appropriate. I concluded that it was not the best idea, considering the space under consideration. Because we can only use two walls, only two reproductions can be installed. Normally the curtains can be drawn. The space behind is not an ideal one to exhibit reproductions of artwork. Because our collection does not include any pieces related to veterans, we can't really use them.

[*English*]

So what's the problem, and how is this room used? As Madam O'Brien mentioned, the room is used for a variety of different purposes. The furniture is changed frequently, which creates problems for displaying objects in cases. If we were to borrow

anything from a museum, we would have to place it in a case; it's that simple.

• (1540)

A second option arose, in consideration of the building itself and the fact that this is one of the 48 special rooms in the building. There are 48 very special rooms that receive a much higher quality of decoration than others. So if we looked at the idea of a Gothic building, what are some of the elements one has in a Gothic building? The first thing that came to mind was carving and sculpture, and that we could install a series of sculptures and sculptural elements in the wooden panelling around the room.

I spoke with the federal sculptor, the individual who is responsible for maintaining and creating the sculpture both within and outside of the building, and we discussed what we could install. The recommended option I encourage the committee to consider is that we undertake to remove four of the oak panels that are currently in this room in prominent locations that are in clear view of witnesses. Those panels would be placed in storage—which is important for us, so they could be reused one day—and four new panels, similar in quality and colour, would be installed. They would feature the four service insignia of the Canadian armed forces: the Department of National Defence, the navy, the air force, and the army. Large, high-relief sculptures would be carved directly into the wood you see in the room.

My father and many of my uncles, like many people of this country, were in the armed forces during the Second World War. I have many friends who were in the armed forces, and one of the things that struck me when I spoke to a couple of them was that they identify with the service insignia. Those service insignia change over time, but people continue to identify with them. At the same time, they cut across issues of gender and location. People immediately identify with them—even family members.

The idea is that we would proceed with this project and have the four insignia carved into panels. It would be done by the federal sculptor, and would be a permanent fixture in this room.

If the committee agrees with the proposal,

[*Translation*]

the work would be completed before September 2009, according to Mr. White, the sculptor I spoke with. Furthermore, because this would be a part of the sculpture program for the Centre Block, there would be no extra costs incurred by the project.

[*English*]

That is my recommendation. I believe you all have examples of what the insignia would look like. These would be verified by the Department of National Defence before they were carved.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Monaghan.

I will go to the usual round of questions and see how the issue transpires, based on your questions.

Madam Sgro.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Vickers and Mr. Monaghan, for coming today to talk with us about this issue.

It's quite an interesting idea. Can you go over the size again? Are you suggesting you would do the carvings on the squares we're looking at?

• (1545)

**Mr. David Monaghan:** They are rectangular pieces and would fill the entire width of the piece. Each of the centre panels would be that size. They would be carved, and the full width would be taken up.

The existing panels are flat, but the new panels would be three-quarters of an inch thick. So when we say "high relief", they would stand out, very much like the relief sculptures you see inside the building in other locations.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** How many of them would there be?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** There would be four. Let me put it this way: I am proposing four. If the committee felt there were a need for others, fine, we could discuss that. But initially the three services plus the joint service medallions would be sufficient to start off.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** So where would you have them?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** There would be one there, one over there, perhaps one there, and then one behind the chair's head.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** That would look really good over there, especially with the way David sits there. It would probably look great.

But I think it would be important to have one here.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** There's just one space in the middle panel. In fact, the idea would be much like the carving you see in the front-row desks in the chamber. When they're done well—and Mr. White is a superb sculptor—people will be able to identify them from this distance.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** And how thick would it be?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** It would be approximately three-quarters of an inch thick, but probably a little more than half an inch deep. So it would stand out a fair amount.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** And would it stay within the tone of the wood in this room currently?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Yes, the idea is that the panels would be of the same type of wood; it's white oak that would be used. Our woodworking shop has the wood on hand. They would fabricate the panels, and the panels would be finished by our refinishing shop to match the panels so they blend in as well we could make them.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** I think it's a great idea. It certainly is an opportunity to recognize the service men and women, which is what we're trying to do in this room. So it would be an exciting idea to do that.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Thank you.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Madam Coady, there are four more minutes if you have any questions.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** No, I would just concur again. This is a marvellous idea, and I think it's befitting the building we are in, as well.

I do have one question. Would these four renditions be readily recognized by all members of the forces in Canada? Would you be able to identify them?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** I would think so. If you're in the army, that's your insignia; it's not a regimental insignia, but the service insignia. The same thing is true for the air force and the navy, and of course there is the joint command. So I would think it would not be an issue.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** The joint command will be one of these as well.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Yes, it's the fourth.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** The fourth is the joint command.

I just think that if we got into the regimental insignia, the number would be substantially larger. I am thinking here, of course, that Newfoundland had its own regiment prior to Confederation.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Yes, in fact in the Memorial Chamber every service insignia and every unit insignia for forces that have served Canada since the *ancien régime* up to the end of World War II are carved into the actual stone. The entire room is filled with those insignia.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** It wouldn't be a revision to eventually have that in here?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** No, the idea is to keep it fairly simple. The important thing is that you don't want to exclude anyone. So the idea is that the general insignia are there for the highest level you can go. You might want to go down to a service, say something like the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps, but doing that would easily add another 12, and it would overwhelm the room. I think that by keeping it very simple at key locations, people will be able to identify them fairly easily.

• (1550)

**Ms. Siobhan Coady:** Thank you.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Could I just ask one very quick question? Have you considered perhaps having this reviewed by some of our veterans to get their comments back?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Actually, I wasn't thinking of going to the veterans, but to the history directorate at the Department of National Defence, which has specialists on insignia, unit insignia and others. I was going to run it by them. Basically it would be verified by the Department of National Defence and its specialists.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** You're welcome.

**The Chair:** Mr. Monaghan, just for my benefit and the benefit of others, when you say three-quarters of an inch relief, how does that compare with the rosettes in the library, which I was thinking all of us have probably seen?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** It's approximately the same.

**The Chair:** It's similar?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Great.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** The "green man" relief is approximately three-quarters of an inch. It's quite high; it's quite, quite deep.

**The Chair:** When you said it would be easily recognizable from that distance, my thought was how do we get a comparison? And that certainly would be one.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gaudet.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet (Montcalm, BQ):** I only have one question, Mr. Chairman.

Why couldn't room 112 North be called the Veterans Room, just as we did, for example, for the Commonwealth Room. We have several rooms, why couldn't we name it the Veterans Room?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** I believe the Speaker answered the question last year. I am not in the same position as he is for the purposes of answering that question, but I can say that there are only two—

[*English*]

If I may, do you mind my telling it?

[*Translation*]

Allow me to correct myself: there is only one committee room that was named in the Centre Block, and that is the Railway Room. The Reading Room was named based on its use. None of the other rooms are actually committee rooms, but rather meeting rooms.

I believe the Speaker said in his comments that it was not very practical for committees to have one room reserved for themselves because many different rooms are used.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Fine. I understand that. However, based on the ceremonies that take place on Remembrance Day, on November 11 every year, I'm sure that the veterans would like to have a room named after them. What that does is recall what they have done for our country.

That is my opinion. You could rethink it and install a nice plaque bearing the word "Veterans".

**Mr. David Monaghan:** There are two other factors to take into consideration. First, we mustn't forget that Centre Block is truly dedicated to the veterans. In Centre Block where the Commonwealth Room is found, or rather the Confederation Hall or rotunda, there is an inscription that the building is dedicated to veterans from the First World War.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** I was not aware of that.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** It is written in both languages. That's what I think is most interesting. As a Quebecker, I always thought it was interesting that they thought to inscribe it in both languages at the time. In other words, this building is their building.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Yes. However it is called the Centre Block. It should be called the Veterans Block.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Perhaps. There are six other locations within the building where the veterans' actions are recognized: not only in the Memorial Chamber. The veterans' actions are truly acknowledged within Centre Block. Unfortunately, people are not always aware of this. That is one of my responsibilities at the House.

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** Thank you.

Mr. André.

**Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Good afternoon. Congratulations on a fine presentation. It was a good description of the issue.

I have two questions to ask you, one about the cost of the decorations and the other about other parliaments in other countries and whether or not they have named a room in honour of their veterans.

• (1555)

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Could I start with your second question and then move to the first?

**Mr. Guy André:** Yes, fine.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** To my knowledge they have not. However, I only have limited knowledge of what other parliaments have done. For example, the Memorial Chamber is truly unique to the Canadian Parliament. The architect, John A. Pearson, truly had a unique vision. One of the reasons, often not very well known, why the Peace Tower was given its name was because of Mr. Pearson's actions. At first there was a huge debate, people wanted to call it the Victory Tower, but it was Mr. Pearson who really pushed for the Peace Tower, along with the help of the Prime Minister at the time, Mr. King.

With respect to the cost, the cost of the panels will be covered by a current Public Works program, that is the architectural sculpture program for Centre Block. Mr. White is willing to take on the project and have it completed by September. He calculated that it would take eight weeks of work. The cost would be minimal. In fact, the cost is only that of making and replacing the panels.

**Mr. Guy André:** What about the cost of purchasing the reproductions?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** The cost of the sculptures?

**Mr. Guy André:** Yes.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** He will make the sculptures. Therefore, there will be no cost for the sculptures; Mr. White will do them himself.

**Mr. Guy André:** So we're talking about eight weeks of work.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** We are indeed talking about eight weeks of work.

**Mr. Guy André:** How much will that cost per week? Do you have an estimate?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** If we were going to sign a contract with someone externally to do the work, it could cost at least \$35,000 for the same style of wood sculpture. However, because this is part of an on-going project, the cost will be covered by the current budget.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. André and Mr. Gaudet.

[*English*]

By the way, Mr. Monaghan, just so you're aware, you've been answering with great dignity, but I want to let you know you also have full discretion to answer any way you like. Frankly, some people on the Hill do that with a fine artistic flare. Please feel comfortable to answer in any way that would make you comfortable.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Thank you very much.

It's just that I'm very conscious of the fact that as an employee of the House, I have a very limited area of responsibility. I'm responsible for the heritage collections and research within the buildings or on the building's contents. When it comes to issues about why rooms aren't named, I can talk about why they haven't been named in the past, but I can't really address questions of that nature now.

**The Chair:** Understood. As I said, your answers held great dignity, so that was great.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Stoffer, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Monaghan and Kevin, thank you very much for coming today. Siobhan knows that the lobby of the House of Assembly in Newfoundland and Labrador is dedicated to veterans, especially those at Beaumont-Hamel. It's beautiful. It's absolutely gorgeous. My colleague Mr. Kerr would know the Veterans Room at the Province House in Nova Scotia, which I'm sure you must have spent a fair bit of time in when you were the minister there. In the provincial legislature there have been issues of that nature, about naming or indicating that this particular room we're now in is dedicated to veterans in that regard.

I really think this is a great idea. It's super. I would go for it. There's just one little thing missing. As you know, RCMP fall under veterans now in terms of benefits and everything else, even though they are not part of the military per se. Had you considered or were you even given an opportunity to look at a symbol for the RCMP? When we deal with veterans issues, RCMP members now fall under DVA if they require benefits or anything of that nature. The odd time, we will get RCMP members in here discussing various issues about whatever is proceeding that day.

If the committee agreed, how difficult would it be to get an RCMP insignia here as well? I'm saying "if they do", because I haven't brought it to their attention yet.

• (1600)

**Mr. David Monaghan:** I don't think it would be difficult at all. In fact, I have thought of the RCMP, but unfortunately I'm not entirely familiar with who falls under the authority. If in fact the intent with this project was to make witnesses comfortable using familiar objects with which they can identify, then I wouldn't see any problem with the idea of installing additional insignia in the room.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** At first I thought of the merchant mariners, but then I thought we would be getting too far back in that regard.

There's one other thing. In the war room—Room 362, as you know—there's a very appropriate small certificate done by Mr. Pratt, the former chair of the defence committee. Would you envision an appropriate certificate here, for example, from our chairperson, say? Not a great big one saying "Hey folks, you're here now, God love you", but—

**Mr. David Monaghan:** I think it would be important to provide some sort of identification of what these are about, why they are here, so that wouldn't be a major issue.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Kerr.

**Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC):** Thank you very much for coming here. I think it's very important.

I'm going to raise the same basic question that Peter raised. If this were the military or the defence committee, I think those would be totally satisfactory; it's the basis of where our veterans come from. But I'd hope we could work together a bit to put a bit more of a veterans face on the final product, maybe adding a couple of items. The RCMP certainly is an appropriate one, because they're under it, and there may be room for some further discussion to make sure it does really then belong to the veterans collectively. I think that is a distinction that would be worth our while pursuing with you. I like very much what you're suggesting.

How many panels would become ridiculous?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Well, I could count the panels in the room, and then.... But I would say—

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** Then it looks like a photo collection.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Yes, it does. You need space around something for somebody to identify with it. If it's one after another.... In fact, the comment I made earlier about the Memorial Chamber.... What's interesting about that, of course, is that every insignia is there, but they're lost, because they're just cheek by jowl, and it's only the larger ones that stand out.

And again, what's practical? If curtains are drawn, all of a sudden you're no longer represented. You need to be able to identify areas that would be regularly open and clearly identifiable. So I would say five, or maybe six, to be honest.

One of the questions that had arisen.... When I was speaking earlier with Mr. White, the federal sculptor, he asked if we would like the insignia for the Royal Canadian Legion. I said yes and no; I didn't know. So I left it out. The reason I left it out was that I was trying to think of insignia or symbols, if you will, that all veterans would identify with.

Working with the committee and getting some input from the Department of National Defence, we would probably be able to come up with a list that you feel comfortable with, because you know your business, and I'd be very happy to ensure that those groups are represented.

•(1605)

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** I'd appreciate that, because I think you're very much on the right track; I really do. I think that's the type of thing. It's just that if we had time to think about it and talk about it, there might be one that actually has wording in it. Since you mentioned the Legion, "Lest we forget" may not be the right one, but there may be something they see right off the bat that says "thank you to veterans"—that's a little corny, but something that makes it clear that it's veterans. There is a subtle distinction between the active military coming in and the veterans coming in. This has to be focused more on the veterans, which certainly encompasses these three, but there's a bit more to it that I think we want to nail down.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** That's the sort of thing we would have to verify with the history directorate at DND, because there are historical insignia that are not the same as the ones we have today, and an individual—my father or my uncles—while they would recognize the current one, would identify with an earlier version. That's the sort of thing we have to take into account.

In making this particular proposal, I'm trying to be as global as possible. I don't like to use the term "generic", but I'd like to try to involve as many people as possible. Mr. Stoffer's comment about the RCMP was on something I wasn't aware of. I think the point is a very good one. If the committee feels there could be something done, [Translation]

something that could add to the room with respect to veterans, I would be very open to that.

[English]

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** I appreciate that, because I think if you're this far along, you probably want a working group to sit down and talk in more detail. You don't want the whole committee. That would be the chair's call. I think before we sign it off, we make sure we haven't left something out. We go back through it, look at it, talk about it, and say we can only do so much, and ask how we can enhance it a bit to cover all the bases. I think we're probably on the same track.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** The idea of actually starting with four panels—I used the term earlier—was that if other panels have to be added or should be added, additional panels can be worked on as well.

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** I'll stop. I don't know if anybody else....

**The Chair:** Tilly?

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Monaghan and Mr. Vickers, for being here this afternoon.

My first comment, being a Miramichier, is that I was delighted to hear you say you had to bring Kevin as a symbol of authority. I thought that was a really good thing.

Secondly, I'm just wondering if we see any other changes in the room, above and beyond just the....

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Well, it is a heritage room. In terms of changes, if the committee wants more work on the room in terms of decoration or whatever, that would be the sort of thing that would

have to be worked out between the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office and design services within the House.

Did you have other things envisioned?

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** No, I didn't have anything. We're not going to look at pictures, we're just going mainly with *les pièces*.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Primarily, the idea was to install the sculptures in the panels. Because this room is used in so many different ways—at times it's used as a storage room, when the House isn't sitting, and it's used for a variety of purposes—from an operational perspective, but also in the sense of permanency, I think the sculpture adds much more to the room. I think that would probably be the most appropriate approach.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Yes. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Back to the Liberal Party, if you have any more questions. No?

Bloc Québécois? No.

We have a couple more questions over on the Conservative side.

•(1610)

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Thank you for coming.

Just relating to the scale and size of this, as I understand it, it's one of those panels. If these panels weren't here, what would your choice be, smaller or larger than that?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** In keeping with the building, I'd probably keep them at roughly the same size. Before the proposal, I was in the room. I've been in the room with a measuring tape. I had a cut-out of one of these symbols, which I blew up and tried to fit on the panel, just to see what it would look like if it stood over there. Granted, it's white on black and it doesn't look the same, but it was just to get a sense. I wanted to feel comfortable when I spoke to the committee and could say that it was visible. I think it's done in a tasteful manner that will blend in with the room very nicely. That's why I would say the same size.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** You may or may not know and you may not be able to answer this, but would there be significant changes to the room that you're aware of in the ultimate renovation of Centre Block?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** No, not that I know of. My understanding is that much of the renovation of Centre Block will be a reinstatement. So what you will be seeing is a major renovation, not a reconstruction of the building.



In designing the building, John Pearson, the architect, had a very particular vision based on a plan. As I mentioned earlier, I believe there are 48 special rooms, starting with the two chambers and working down. This was considered to be a special committee room. Consequently, it had a higher degree of decoration than some other committee rooms, such as the ones on the third floor, which never received any. When I first started working here, I kept asking why the committee rooms on the third floor were not completed, and the answer is no, the intent was not to. The decoration in these rooms is as it was intended to be. I'd be very surprised if they'd do it. But again, I'm not privy to all the plans. I suspect it will be more of a reinstatement in the future.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** So reinstatement means trying to take it back to the original intent the architect had for each room.

When I came into this room, I immediately reacted to the curtains. I'm not so certain that they were originally intended. I think they in a way detract from the room in terms of the beauty of perhaps the panelling. Obviously, the security screening on those windows is another feature that I think was a practical feature at a point in time when there was vandalism or whatever those things were.

If there are other solutions, I wonder whether they also would be contemplated and would give us more scope to do some of the things we've talked about today. I'm just wondering if you're party to any of that planning that goes on.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Mr. Vickers will answer that question.

**Mr. Kevin Vickers (Sergeant-at-Arms, House of Commons):** I do have my hand in a lot of what you just finished speaking about, especially with the long-term-vision plan. What everybody's discussed so far is exactly right, that the long-term-vision plan envisions everything for this building exactly the way it was meant to be.

With regard to the curtains, we certainly can take that up. I can certainly take this up with our staff who are dedicated to this, and we'll see if we can come up with something more pleasing to the eye. With regard to the metal screening on the outside, that's another area of my responsibilities with regard to security. We just went to the board today, and we're going to go back to the Board of Internal Economy next week for the conclusion of what is called the master security plan for the precinct, which is being accepted. Those types of issues are going to be addressed, that today in security there's more aesthetically pleasing stuff that is probably at least as secure or more secure than what you're facing, and it might be changed.

• (1615)

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** I appreciate those comments, and I didn't mean to take us beyond what our mandate is here as a committee.

If we're going to do this room properly to honour veterans, the whole scope of whatever is going to happen perhaps should be considered in the mix.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** I think that was what Ms. O'Brien was getting at earlier as well.

On a note you made that you would be interested in seeing how a room can at least in part be brought back to its original intent, I just want to note that there is the Commonwealth Room. There has been, at the Speaker's request, some work done in the Commonwealth

Room where there was a conscious attempt to reinstate a lot of elements that were originally intended for that room.

That project is virtually completed now, and that's a good example of how a reinstatement takes place.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** I have one quick question.

Thank you, Mr. Monaghan and Mr. Vickers, for coming in today.

I have just one question here about the cost. You mentioned that the quote was \$32,000 for four panels, and that was to be contracted out.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Yes. It was.... I'm sorry, I'll let you finish. I didn't mean to interject.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** I was just going to say that you were quoted a price of \$32,000 for four panels and you mentioned that it would be done internally. In the internal procurement, is there a quote given before work is initiated on a project like this?

I think it would be incumbent upon this committee to know roughly, or accurately, what the costs are going to be before we bring in.... Maybe it wouldn't be \$32,000 because it's internal labour, but it is a large expense, at least in my estimation, and I think we should be fairly well apprised of the value before we initiate it, even though I do agree that it's a very important thing to recognize. Also, in these tough times, it's important to have a complete understanding of the cost, whether it is internal or external.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** The difficulty in some cases like this is that when a staff person is already employed, what are they doing? In fact, were the sculptor not doing this, he would be doing something else. It's just a matter of the immediate requirements for priority. I can ask Mr. White to come up with a budget, but it is a budget that basically would cover his expense.

I quoted a figure that was really based on if we were to go outside for this. Here we have an individual who is already an employee of the crown, with a specific responsibility to do carving for this building and other federal projects. Were he not to do this project, he would be working on another. I understand what you're saying, and I'd be happy to ask him if he can flesh out a budget for us, but it would be funds that would basically be used elsewhere if that were the case.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Yes, I can appreciate where you're coming from. As a former cost analyst, I understand that pretty clearly. Maybe a quote on time and we can extrapolate it from there.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** The estimate he provided me for the time it would take to complete the project from beginning to end was eight weeks. I can speak with him about that in terms of what that would actually entail. But again, yes, if you'd like me to do that, I would be happy to provide you with a breakdown.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** We, perhaps we can seek some guidance from the committee if that's the committee's goal on that one.

Thank you for your honest answer, sir.

**The Chair:** Are there any other questions from any of the other committee members?

I just wanted to say a couple of things to you, Mr. Monaghan. First off, I totally agree with you in keeping it simple and tasteful. It's an honourable goal, and I think it's very adequate for this room, considering this room is a modest size and the ceiling in this particular room is low because we're on a lower floor. I think if you had too much, it would be overwhelming, as you've said.

But I do agree with Mr. Kerr, as well, that trying to find one item—I don't know how you'd do it. But trying to find one thing that would speak to the broad generational expanse of veterans, the thing that came to my mind—and again, I would have to think more about it—is that one of the things I've heard at every veterans event is “At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them”. Trying to find something that unites them, from the First World War veterans to those of today, might be an impossible pursuit, but an honourable one.

I thank you for reminding the committee about the Centre Block being dedicated to veterans. The Peace Tower, of course, was constructed as a memorial to the 10% of the population of Canada who went to war in World War I, and of course 10% of them never returned.

The Senate, as well, is a place where there's much art work focused on the conflicts the Canadian military has been involved in. So it's my intention, if the committee will allow me, to send a letter to the guides in the precinct to make sure, if they're not mentioning that the Centre Block is dedicated to veterans, that they do so, either when they're in the Memorial Chamber pointing out that the inscription is downstairs or at the time they are downstairs they point out it's in both official languages and clear that the entire Centre Block is dedicated to veterans.

Unless there's any objection, it sounded to me—although there were some concerns—that the initial four panels were a good place to start. Do I have the notion correct that we have that consensus? So if September is the date, then I certainly look forward to seeing them, and then we may have some discussion in the future about some other elements. We'll leave it at that, the four panels, and then we'll have some discussion in the future regarding maybe a review of that.

• (1620)

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** I don't want to be difficult, but I'd really suggest this before we determine that. The committee has to make the decision as a group, obviously. I'm in basic agreement, but I'd really like to spend a little more time thinking about whether there is something we can add at the same time that is a more global look at the veterans that perhaps can be discussed at the same time. So I don't think we're going to say not to do that, but I think probably we could at least be thinking, before the next committee meeting, about whether there's something else or some other way to add to it. If not, then I'd say proceed. But there may be just that one magic panel we come back with and say yes, that's the one that should be front and centre, and the others can sort of support it.

**The Chair:** I'm certainly up for that. My call was for the committee just to be in consensus that the initial start was good, and the key word is “beginning” with the four panels.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** I've been thinking about this as you've been speaking. I'm sure you've considered many alternatives, Mr. Chair, before we got under work here with this. I don't know the answer to this question, but another thing I've noticed with veterans I meet with and come into contact with is that another very personal matter to them is their medals. I don't know if there can be some wall-mounted showcase of all the medals that are available to veterans. I'm sure there are historic medals that no longer exist, but I just couldn't help but think. So I'm just putting that on the table as an idea, Mr. Chair. I don't know whether that would resonate with anyone else, but it's just an idea.

**The Chair:** Mr. Monaghan.

**Mr. David Monaghan:** I'd be very happy to look into the possibility of that kind of display, if you will, or exhibit.

There are two things you have to bear in mind. The first is

[*Translation*]

it is quite possible that people will say that it's possible to make reproductions of these pieces. We could have reproductions of the medals made but that could create problems. I don't think it's a good solution. You don't want to put something that is false in a place like that, because people will become aware of it. And if they are not aware of it, they may find out that the medals are not genuine.

• (1625)

[*English*]

If you then say we cannot use reproductions, what we'll do is find the real McCoy, the real items, in which case we'd have to ensure that they're insured. Normally, there are costs associated with loans from the War Museum, for example, in which case there are loan issues, there are conservation issues, because you have to ensure that they're cleaned regularly, the cases are cleaned, etc.

I'm not suggesting it's not a good idea. I am simply outlining that from an operational standpoint it creates some difficulties. If the committee feels it would like me to look into that opportunity or that option, I would, of course, follow your lead. But I do think there are some pitfalls, to be honest, and I only wish to point out that this is why we avoided objects to begin with.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Monaghan, there's one more question that might clarify it for the added concern. If we go ahead with the four panels, does that preclude us adding anything in the future?

**Mr. David Monaghan:** No, not at all.

**The Chair:** Does that clear up any concerns?

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** I'd still like to have one more crack at it and see if we can come up with one that encompasses them all, rather than go with four. I see five panels of some sort, that's all I'm saying. I'd hate to go with the four and say the one that we might agree with doesn't really fit in. I mean, for the sake of one more conversation, it may well be that there may be somebody appropriate within the Department of Veterans Affairs to sit down with and talk about it, to make sure.

I don't think we're far apart. I'd only hate us to come back in a few weeks and say we wish we'd thought of this, or taken an extra step there, or whatever. That's all I'm getting at. It's not to delay it, but only to add the other dynamic that might be there.

**The Chair:** Mr. Stoffer, then Mr. Gaudet.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Chair, I think we're all in agreement with the four. Obviously, the RCMP is one we could look at as well, but for the sixth one that Mr. Kerr is talking about, I think we can invite someone from the Department of Veterans Affairs, as he says, and talk it over at another time and see where it could be appropriate. But if they want to get started on the four, maybe we'll let that sculpture go ahead, if we all agree.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Gaudet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Gaudet:** If we are the ones who decide, what will the department come and tell us? We could decide that the four panels are fine, that we agree with that. I would prefer to have the sculpture of a soldier somewhere in a corner. That's one opinion, but I agree with the four panels. Otherwise we could end up calling everybody. I think that we're old enough and capable enough to make these decisions. I agree and that's all. Otherwise this could go on forever and in two years we'll still be talking about it.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Madam Sgro.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** To close the discussion, I think we should move on with four, so that when we come back in September that work would be completed.

However, I certainly think, if we have another idea over this next little while, following on what Mr. Kerr was suggesting, for another one or two.... But at least we would have gotten the project started.

There's no saying that we can't add to it. So I think we should move on the four and stay very open-minded about any other idea that any of us may come up with through consultation with any of our veterans, or with another good idea for another panel, and go forward and do it.

I think we should get started on the four. Otherwise, this may leave today and we may not see it again. Then in a year from now, someone will raise the issue about what happened to those four panels we were going to.... At least we'll know we have gotten something concrete done in this room by September.

**The Chair:** I've been avoiding trying to have a vote on this and trying to get consensus. Do we have consensus for the four? And then we can add. We are in another Parliament now, talking about this.

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** I want to emphasize that I was never in disagreement with the four. I just think we have to keep looking for the one that sort of embellishes something greater than just the four. That's all.

**The Chair:** I believe, Mr. Monaghan, that you have a clear direction from our committee that we'd like to go with the four, while remaining open to a modest number of additions in the future.

We thank you very much for your work, as well as your patience while we needled you with questions so that we can feel confident.

• (1630)

**Mr. David Monaghan:** Thank you very much.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** We'll suspend for about three minutes, if you want to shake hands with folks, and we'll be back in camera with some committee business.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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