***Ottawa Public Law Tour – Track 4 The Quebec Side***

**Transcription of podcast**

Track 4: The Quebec Side. When you reach the end of the Alexandra Bridge, turn off onto the pedestrian walkway that winds its way along the side of the Canadian Museum of History and ultimately to the recreational pathway running down this side of the Ottawa River. Pause this podcast until you have descended the steps onto this pedestrian pathway.

Continue walking south along this recreational pathway, passing by the museum. If you want, this is a good moment to visit this museum with its spectacular architecture. As I record this, the museum’s permanent exhibits are being updated, but there are still many excellent things still to see; these include an exhibit on Confederation open at the time of this recording. Take advantage of this spectacular museum, free on Thursdays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

This is also an excellent moment to look south across the Ottawa River at the former Barracks Hill upon which the Parliament buildings now stand. This is a fabulous vantage point, one that is popular for all sorts of postcards, and in fact, law book covers.

We will now be walking for a bit to reach the Portage Bridge, and using that bridge to recross back into Ottawa. But as you walk, let me alert you to the things you should be sure to do on this side of the river during your law school studies, and specifically the absolute and elemental need to visit the 360 square kilometre Gatineau Park. Some of you may wish to drive, but the Gatineau is best known for its fantastic, peaceful, and challenging cycling; its vast network of hiking trails; and in the winter, its world-class cross-country ski trails. And in fact, if you want to find me, it is sometimes easiest just to head to the Gatineau Park, where I trail run, ski, and cycle with wild abandon.

Nestled in this sliver of Laurentian Mountains, part of the Canadian Shield, are the Gatineau’s fantastic views of the Ottawa River Valley. And all of this is literally minutes from the city. Indeed, I can journey from my home in that southern part of Ottawa to the nearest ski trails in about twenty-five minutes by car, and from my peanut-sized home, much less impressive than the ones in New Edinburgh, to the southern entrance to the park in about thirty to forty minutes by bike along bike trails almost all the way. It is certainly even more easily accessed for those who live near the centre of Ottawa.

The closest entrance to the park is not much further down this trail that you are walking on – maybe three or four kilometres, and access is through the Promenades de la Gatineau Parkway, starting at Boulevard Alexandre-Taché. And then the park starts to become interesting as you progress up the Gatineau Parkway. And the ski trails start and the best cycling starts at what is known as the P3 parking lot at Gamelin. During the summer months, this is the part of the Gatineau Parkway Road that is closed off to traffic on Sunday mornings and is filled with cyclists with sporting ambitions heading up into the hills. And in the winter, usually these same people climb these same hills on waxed, skinny sticks, skiing on some of the best professionally maintained trails in the country, and indeed, the world – over 200 kilometres of such trails, including 100 kilometres of trails set for skate-skiing, trails that in the summer are for hiking and trail running and some mountain biking.

But since this is supposed to be a public law tour, I should note that nestled also in the park is the official residence of the Speaker of the House of Commons and also the estate of former Prime Minister Mackenzie King, now a public park with some idiosyncratic features, including the faux ruins that that eccentric prime minister created on the grounds.

As you mull the prospects of recreational adventures to come and enjoy the scenery along the Ottawa River, pause this podcast until you reach the pathway’s intersection with the Portage Bridge. We start this podcast at Track 5 when you do.

<end of Track 4>