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## **Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, April 21, 2016**



**Chair**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry**



## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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• (0850)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone.

I would like to let everyone know who is presenting and those who are asking questions of our interviewees today. The situation is that we're going to take one person at a time, there are four people, and the first person will have five minutes to present. There will be a 25-minute round of questions. That makes it 30 minutes. There are four people. Thirty times four gives us two hours, because we don't want to bring anyone back. We want to get this done today.

Thank you very much.

We will begin with Mr. Mark O'Neill, president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Museum of History.

Good morning, Mr. O'Neill. Please begin, and I will give you a two-minute indication when you have two more minutes left, so you can wrap up.

I'm sorry you thought you had a longer time to present, but it wouldn't have worked time-wise.

**Mr. Mark O'Neill (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Museum of History):** I understand, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, and I'll try to be brief this morning.

Thank you very much for inviting me here today.

I wanted to begin my comments by mentioned that this December I will proudly mark my thirtieth anniversary as a federal public servant. I've always been deeply honoured to serve in a career that continues to be so richly rewarding.

I've had the privilege to work in the departments of the Secretary of State of Canada, Multiculturalism and Citizenship, and Canadian Heritage, and for the past 15 years, the Canadian Museum of History. In 2011, I was appointed president and CEO of the museum following a competition. I am immensely proud to have had the opportunity to lead these two national museums during a very exciting time, especially because of the approaching sesquicentennial celebrations.

Our museum's community members continue to grow and identify new ways to engage the public and disseminate research into Canada's history. Our most important project right now is the development of the new Canadian history hall. When it opens on July 1, 2017, the Canadian history hall will present Canada's story to Canadians and the world, beginning with the dawn of human

habitation on this land and extending to the present day. Spanning three galleries on two levels of the museum under the careful architectural supervision of Douglas Cardinal, the original architect, the hall will share Canada's proud history like never before. For example, it will highlight the history of indigenous people from time immemorial, the struggle by individuals and communities for social justice and equality, and Canada's role in the world.

Based on the latest research, the hall will bring together archaeology, history, and ethology to present a more dynamic exhibition about Canada's past. Moreover, the hall will be authentic and rich in artifacts, allowing visitors to connect with real objects from our past instead of reproductions.

Commitment to authenticity was a frequent comment we received during a pan-Canadian public engagement project the museum conducted in 2012. More than 24,000 Canadians shared their thoughts about what they wanted to see in the new museum. I should tell you that feedback has greatly influenced the exhibition content, which is being developed by the museum's team of museologists, historians, and archaeologists. Canadians told us also they wanted to see the complete story of Canada's history, so the hall will challenge visitors and not shy away from difficult subjects.

[Translation]

The museum's team is also working with external independent advisory committees composed of researchers, scholars, and cultural leaders from across the country.

I am proud to say that the level of engagement that has been undertaken for this new hall is unprecedented for our museum. When it opens on July 1, 2017, it will be the centrepiece of the museum's contribution to the commemorations for the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

The museum also presents special exhibitions on Canadian history, such as Terry Fox, which is now touring across Canada. It presents special exhibitions on world history, like The Greeks, Agamemnon to Alexander the Great, which was organized by an international consortium of museums led by our museum. Later this year, we will be opening Napoleon and Paris, developed in collaboration with the Musée Carnavalet, in Paris. A respected centre of research excellence, the museum also conducts research projects, as guided by our first-ever research strategy.

It is an exciting time at the Canadian War Museum as well. Last May, the War Museum celebrated its 10th anniversary on LeBreton Flats. It is recognized as a critical and popular success, welcoming nearly 500,000 visitors each year.

[English]

We presented some very outstanding exhibitions related to the centenary of the First World War, including the special exhibition “Fighting in Flanders”, which highlights the famous poem *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae and reflects on the significant challenges Canadians faced while fighting in Belgium.

Our recent special exhibition on world war women has been a major critical and popular success. Very recently, the museum announced the creation of “Women and Conflict”, a multi-research initiative dedicated to the roles and impact of women during conflict, both at home and on the world stage.

We also work with international organizations to enhance the knowledge of Canada's contributions to conflict situations around the world. As a brief example for committee members, the War Museum is in fact currently working with the City of Arras, France, to present the museum's special exhibition on Canadian art of the First World War at the Musée des beaux-arts d'Arras. The museum is also collaborating with French partners for the upcoming commemoration of the 100th anniversaries of the Battle of the Somme in 2016 and the Battle of Vimy Ridge in 2017.

• (0855)

[Translation]

Madam Chair, thank you once again for this opportunity to update you. I look forward to answering committee members' questions.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now begin the round of questions, starting with Mr. Samson for the Liberals.

You have five minutes, Mr. Samson.

[Translation]

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** Your museum is a hallmark attraction for visitors to the national capital region. Its unique architecture and collections certainly set it apart.

Could you talk to us about what you do to keep attracting visitors from here and all over the world? What is your strategy to attract more visitors over the next three years?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** Thank you for your question.

If you don't mind, I am going to answer in English for the other members of the committee.

[English]

The member of the committee is correct, in that it's extremely important that we continue to be able to attract visitors to both of our museums in the national capital. We have a very active marketing division and a communications and planning branch that is working with all of the tourism organizations on both sides of the river. We also do an enormous amount of outreach across the country so that we can develop audiences to bring to the national capital region.

There are of course enormous competitive issues in a city such as Ottawa, where there are so many other great national museums and other pastimes for visitors to the national capital to indulge in while they're here. Our marketing campaigns, communications campaigns, and working with the National Capital Commission and the cities of Gatineau and Ottawa are where we strive to make sure that our buildings are accessible and top of mind for visitors who come to the national capital.

[Translation]

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** We are all familiar with the rich history and contribution of indigenous peoples in Canada.

How do you intend to promote the history and culture of the Inuit, Métis, and first nations?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** Thank you for your question.

The museum is currently working with a few advisory committees that include aboriginals and experts. They are enhancing our understanding of the history of Canada's aboriginal and first peoples. That is crucial.

We also have ties with aboriginal communities all over the country to ensure their history is showcased in an easy-to-understand format in the new hall. The history of first peoples will be a focal point in the new hall, which will open on July 1, 2017.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Will it entail a physical representation on site, day in and day out? Do you have a way to promote that history and culture right there, on site?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** Absolutely.

For instance, we are working right now with members of Quebec's Algonquin community to figure out a way to promote the fact that the museum is located on their land, in other words, on Algonquin land.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Very good.

A few days ago, I went to the Canada Aviation and Space Museum. There were aviation and space aficionados on site, and people could ask them questions. I got to meet many people from Ottawa who do this as a hobby. They could speak at greater length about the experiences and contributions of some key figures, their families, and others.

So you can see, having aboriginal people on site is invaluable. Visitors could talk to them and ask them questions. I think it would really enrich the visitor experience.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** I will go to Mr. Van Loan from the Conservatives.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Thank you for coming this morning.

You are in part the Canadian Museum of History as well as the Canadian War Museum, and you referenced the sesquicentennial. I prefer the minister's terminology, which I also use, the 150th anniversary of Confederation. As we approach that I have this funny hang-up that we should actually be celebrating Confederation. What are your museums' plans to do that?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** The museum, in a buildup to underlining the 150th anniversary of Confederation—I agree with the member that it's important to know that it is the anniversary of Confederation—we had an exhibition last year on the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, the rebellions of 1837, in which we put together, for the first time in the museum's history, a truly political history exhibition on how those rebellions really contributed to what eventually became the Confederation of the country.

That for us was an extremely successful and very important history exhibition. We have worked with Library and Archives Canada on an exhibition on Sir John A. Macdonald that is at the museum now and will travel. I should mention also that the exhibition on the rebellions is also travelling across the country in different formats. We're also creating material online that will raise awareness amongst Canadians of the importance of underlining Confederation in 2017. Those are some examples, Madam Chair.

● (0900)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** You talk about the opening of the Canadian history hall that you're looking forward to as part of those celebrations. How will we see Confederation reflected there?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** Confederation is in, I believe, the second gallery. There are three galleries in the hall. Confederation will figure very prominently. It would be incomprehensible, as you know, to create a comprehensive exhibition of Canada and Canadians without reference to Confederation and the events that led up to it, so the issues, stories, and artifacts that will help to interpret those stories will be in the hall.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** I'll suggest to you respectfully that, as people are coming to Ottawa to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, perhaps in your marketing that would be one of the things that you could use to attract them, since that will be on the mind and should be front of mind for all.

Another thing that is becoming of interest to me as we look more and more at museums as we prepare to do a study of museums—not the national museums but others—is a statistic I found that museums in Canada use to reflect their own sustainability. That's a figure that is the amount of taxpayer dollar subsidy per visitor. You take all the taxpayers' dollars you get, divide that by the number of visitors, and you come up with a figure. What would that be for your two museums?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** I'm looking to my chief operating officer with us here today. I don't have that number handy. We'll get back to you with the number. We don't have it offhand, I'm afraid.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** That's surprising to me because it appears to be one of the major criteria or figures that museums use as they work towards sustainability.

Is sustainability one of your objectives as a museum?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** It is indeed.

What I can tell you is that the Canadian Museum of History and the War Museum operate on essentially 80% appropriation and 20% commercial operations. It will be slightly higher this year for us because we've had a very good year. That tends to be the breakdown.

I'd be very happy to get back to you with the per visitor cost. Frankly, we haven't used that number in our own corporate planning

and reporting, I don't believe. What we're trying to do is more sophisticated fundraising because we believe that the third tranche of revenue generation is more critically important than ever.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Over to the War Museum in particular, right now there are, as you referenced, a number of 100th anniversary exhibitions under way and about to be under way. Again, that's a huge opportunity for you, I think, at a time when Canadians have increasingly embraced pride in our military history and the sacrifices we have made.

You referenced it a bit but could you expand on how you're doing that and particularly how you want to link that to the marketing side of things, especially for next year?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** We have had, since 2012, a campaign dedicated to Canada from 2014 to 2018. We've had, I believe, three exhibitions already. We have another exhibition that we're developing on the air war for the First World War, and it will be opening soon.

We are working with partners across the country. We have, for example, The Rooms in Saint John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, which will highlight the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel. We also have a variety of other initiatives with our partners in Canada and abroad. The marketing for the war museum focuses on the importance of these anniversaries in Canadian history.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now I go to Mr. Nantel.

● (0905)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to begin by thanking all of you, even those who aren't here in person.

Mr. O'Neill, thank you for your presentation.

I know you have a tremendous amount of experience on Parliament Hill. I'm struck by how curious my Conservative colleagues seem to be when it comes to the specific nature of your exhibits. That's why I have some important questions for you this morning regarding the appropriateness of your being the museum head, of your remaining in that position, and of your being appointed to it.

Mr. O'Neill, you will appreciate that your leadership of the Canadian Museum of History may have been called into question by certain individuals in the past most certainly because you were perceived to have been very close to the former Conservative government.

In January, the website BuzzFeed posted a tape recording of a staff meeting that took place in 2012. And at that meeting, Jean-Marc Blais, your director general and vice-president at the time, described your relationship with the government of the day as follows: “What he's good at is to work the machine...[t]he arm's length is way shorter, if it still exists.” Speaking about you, he went on to tell staff to read between the lines, adding that the president and CEO “doesn't work alone...[w]e have our minister. Our minister is here often. Very often. Very, very often. And so that's a big change.”

Mr. O'Neill, what do you make of those comments by your former director general?

[English]

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** I am very much aware of the online article that the member references. I'm aware of the tape recording that was, I understand, made in 2012. I wasn't at the meeting in question. I am not aware of the context in which the comments were made. I can, however, assure the members of the committee that in the 15 years that I have been in the museum corporation, in my experience or to my knowledge, I am unaware of any minister of the crown interfering in the content of the museum. I've worked with a wide variety of ministers, from Sheila Copps, to Shelly Glover, to James Moore, and to the current minister, Mélanie Joly, and I can assure the members of the committee that on no occasion has there been any intervention by any minister in the content of the museum.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you for your answer.

I fully appreciate that the party isn't your focus, but what does worry me is that the government is.

On June 18, 2015, the day before the last Parliament ended, you were appointed for a new term that would not begin until a year later, on June 23, 2016. In December, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Dominic LeBlanc, asked you in writing to step down in order to eventually participate in a non-partisan merit-based appointment process, through which, you could have been appointed on the basis of skill and merit.

Why did you refuse to participate in such a process, especially since it would have put the emphasis on your skills and dispelled any lingering doubts as to the political nature of your appointment?

[English]

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** I must say it's rather difficult for me to comment on the exact circumstances under which the board of trustees of our corporation, or the government, saw fit to reappoint me. I would like to think that it was based on the fact that I had performed well during what was essentially the first four years of my term.

In 2009, I believe it was, the Auditor General of Canada made a recommendation to the government that, with respect to the CEOs in the federal system, a minimum of six months' notice should be provided to chief executive officers. Notice was extremely sporadic. Some people, as I understand it, were given under a month's notice.

I can say only that my performance evaluations by the board of trustees for those four years were quite positive, and I assume that

the government saw fit to offer me an additional Governor in Council appointment, which I was extremely honoured to accept.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** In that case, if the Liberals follow through on their promise to establish a non-partisan appointment commission before your new term begins, would you agree to submit to such a process?

[English]

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** I believe that my appointment is based upon merit. I don't believe that my appointment is in any way a partisan appointment.

I laid out to you, at the beginning of my remarks, that I began my career in the federal public service, where I have served continuously since 1986. I was hired to come to the museum corporation in 2001, and during that time I've served in at least three executive positions. I competed in an open, internationally gazetted competition in 2011 and I was the successful candidate.

I believe there are many instances in the Westminster system of competent senior public servants being eligible for or being reappointed to positions they have served in honourably and well.

● (0910)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Then we go to Mr. DeCoursey, from the Liberals, for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Thank you, Mr. O'Neill, for your presentation this morning.

I come from New Brunswick, a place that is rich in Canadian heritage, with strong anglophone, Acadian heritage, first nations communities, and with the support of this government a lot of newcomers coming to our area, which adds to our cultural diversity and celebration of what it truly is to be Canadian.

I wonder how your museums, your institutions, reach out to regions of the country that aren't so close at hand and the museums aren't quite as accessible, and how you represent some of these regions of the country through your exhibits as well.

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** This is a very welcome question, Madam Chair, and I'm delighted to answer it.

First of all I would say to the member that one of the most important museums we work with is the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John. Jane Fullerton is a very good colleague of mine. The New Brunswick museum is the oldest continuously operating museum in Canada, by the way.

Several years ago, we created a national history museums network. The New Brunswick Museum was one of the first museums to join the network. We now have many other museums from Atlantic Canada. We work with those museums to share artifacts, develop exhibition projects, even public programming, and we hope down the road—the network is just a year and a half old—research projects as well.

Madam Chair, a second issue I'd like to mention to the member is that in addition to the Canadian history hall that we will be opening, we have reserved a very large hall, a separate hall, 7,000 square feet, with the working title of the Canadian pavilion, but at any one time there will be an exhibition from a museum in another part of Canada in that hall.

I'll give you an example. Perhaps the disaster in Halifax during the First World War doesn't make it completely into the national narrative of the history hall, but we would work with the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic to do an exhibition on the Halifax explosion. So at any one time, there will be an exhibition there.

The history museums network just met last week in Halifax, at the Canadian Museums Association conference. I presided over it.

Another example of a great project is that the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, and our museum in Ottawa, have worked on an exhibition on the gold rush, which is now being presented here. It opened in Victoria, and it will travel to China, because of the important history for Chinese Canadians and Canadians about the whole El Dorado experience.

This is a major part of the work that we're doing, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** I am thinking ahead to the 150th celebration, and again about the accessibility of Canadian history and the situation in the world right now, and what Canada will look like over the next number of decades.

I'll admit I had tremendous opportunities as a young person to come to Ottawa and to places where these exhibits were accessible, but not all Canadians, and particularly some Canadians of different vulnerability or new Canadians, can do that. How do your institutions reach out to those persons and provide access to Canadian museums?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** Madam Chair, both of our museums have very robust websites. We're very active on many social media platforms. We have many virtual exhibitions, and we are also now responsible for the Virtual Museum of Canada. That was a project that was started by the Department of Canadian Heritage and transferred some two years ago to the Canadian Museum of History. We're working with a wide variety of institutional partners to ensure that we have projects that are online and accessible to Canadians across the country.

With respect to new Canadians, we're also very active. We are working with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship on museum passes for new Canadians when they come to Canada and when they are sworn in as new citizens. We will be beginning with that institute, as well, a new project, in fact I believe next month, with respect to the Syrian refugees who are coming. We find ways to work with educators across our country to disseminate our products and exhibitions to new Canadian groups.

I would like to provide one example if I may, Madam Chair. It's a quick one.

I recently brought down Brock's tunic—his actual tunic—from the Canadian War Museum to Roberta Bondar school in Ajax, Ontario. This is one of the most diverse communities in the GTA. Those kids were born online, essentially, and are saturated with the virtual

experience. I can tell you that at the heritage fair in that school, they could not believe that they could see the actual tunic that Brock died in at Queenston Heights in 1812.

We're doing things that we can to provide access, not only to the virtual, but to the material culture in our museums across the country, which I believe remains critically important as part of the visitor experience.

● (0915)

**The Chair:** As chair, I want to ask you a quick question. In a special examination the Auditor General conducted in 2013 of the overall workings of the Canadian Museum of History, they identified some key weaknesses in the governance of the corporation. Have those weaknesses been corrected, Mr. O'Neill?

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** To my knowledge, I believe all but two of the issues have been addressed. We take the special examination very seriously. In my time, the museum's is the third special exam that I have personally worked on. When I say two, there were something like....

How many recommendations were there, roughly?

**A voice:** Twenty-five is a rough number.

**Mr. Mark O'Neill:** There were 25 recommendations. The overwhelming majority have been addressed, Madam Chair.

The two outstanding ones essentially have to do with work that we're doing internally on some of our strategic planning, but the ones that affect the board in particular and corporate governance have all been addressed by the board of trustees and by museum management.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. O'Neill.

I'd like to call on Telefilm Canada and Ms. Carolle Brabant.

Ms. Brabant, please, for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Carolle Brabant (Executive Director, Telefilm Canada):** Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

Thank you very much for the invitation to appear before the committee today to talk about Telefilm Canada. I'd like to focus my comments on the following three areas: first, a brief overview on Telefilm Canada's role and support to the Canadian audiovisual industry; second, our successes and our challenges; and third, our priorities for the next three years.

In 2014-15, we supported the production and marketing of 87 feature films and the development of more than 300 projects, while also helping to promote our Canadian talent in Canada and international festivals.

Building on our near 50 years of investment, Telefilm Canada, together with its partners, has helped shape a landscape conducive to creativity. We have now reached a maturity that enables us to produce and export works of excellent quality. Canadian and foreign film and television production volume in 2014-15 reached \$7 billion and accounted for over 148,000 full-time jobs. Film production, for its part, amounted to \$349 million and accounted for 7,300 full-time jobs.

[English]

What a year this has been for Canada, starting with 21 Canadians behind various Oscar nominations and two Canadian co-productions—in fact, Canada–Ireland co-productions—*Room* and *Brooklyn*, receiving best picture nominations—a first. Hosted by Minister Joly, the next movie night on the Hill, on May 3, features the movie *Room*, and of course you are all invited.

It continues with Cannes. Xavier Dolan's *Juste la fin du monde* is in the running for the top prize, the Palme d'Or. Just to remind everyone, Cannes receives close to 2,000 films, so having one Canadian in the lineup is amazing. It's the fifth time that Xavier Dolan has been selected for Cannes. In the directors' fortnight section, there are Kim Nguyen's *Two Lovers and a Bear*, and Nathan Morlando's *Mean Dreams*. Finally, François Jaro's short film, *Oh What a Wonderful Feeling*, is part of the critics' week.

*The New York Times* noted our industry's success in an article, saying that “Canada is on a hot streak, its movies regularly winning prizes...”

Despite these successes, we all face challenges, but our challenges are also opportunities.

First, we need to promote the excellence of Canadian content by conducting effective promotion of the industry and its successes directly to consumers. Second, we need to foster more groundbreaking marketing practices by connecting with a large number of viewers. Third, we need to make decisions supported by meaningful metrics; it's vital that we make informed decisions based on value-added research. Fourth, we need to help the industry diversify its sources of funding by attracting new funding partners, which is the main objective of our talent fund, developed to empower corporations and individuals to support Canadian films through charitable donations and partnerships.

As the committee is aware, Canada virtually invented official treaty co-production, and we're happy to report that Canada has been invited to join Eurimages, the 25-million-euro cultural support fund of the Council of Europe. Canada would be the first non-European member. This opportunity will provide the industry with another excellent instrument to access international funding and to better export our cinema.

Finally, we continually strive to achieve organizational excellence, and Telefilm will continue to maintain its low administrative expenses, not exceeding 6%.

● (0920)

[Translation]

Telefilm's vision for the future is clear: we want Canadian creative content to be accessible and to be viewed everywhere. For nearly 26 years at Telefilm Canada, I have believed in Telefilm's mission more and more each day. I am sentimental and I totally acknowledge that. I am moved by the talent behind the productions we support and truly amazed at the creativity, imagination and performance of our nation's directors, writers, actors and film crews. Each time the magic is created on screen, I experience the same emotion I had as a child when watching *The Count of Monte Cristo* with my grandmother. I am proud of the work we have accomplished.

In 2017, Telefilm will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the same time as Canada turns 150. The industry we have been asked to develop and promote not only makes a contribution to Canada's economic well-being, but also shines the spotlight on our country throughout the world. Thank you to Michael Spencer—the first executive director of what used to be called the Canadian Film Development Corporation—Gratien Gélinas, and to all the employees who have worked at Telefilm Canada over the past 50 years.

As a final word, I have a dream to share because I am not just sentimental but a perpetual dreamer, as well. I dream of the day when all Canadians will be just as proud of the success of David Gross and Emma Donoghue—respective producer and writer of *Room*—as they are of the accomplishments of P.K. Subban and the Dufour-Lapointe sisters.

I thank you and I welcome your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Brabant. I think we all dream of that day too.

I want to begin the questions, for five minutes each, with Mr. Breton.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for joining us today, Ms. Brabant. Congratulations on your reappointment.

We have had a new government since last October. The Department of Canadian Heritage is taking a new direction.

I would like to know whether you have had discussions with the minister or with department representatives since the election and, if so, what kind of talks you have had on Telefilm Canada's vision and mission.

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** Yes, we have had discussions with the minister, and we are very proud to be able to count on her department's and the government's support. We are happy about being provided with new funding. That funding will be used to promote and export our content internationally. That will really be our priority. We have talked to the minister and were told about her own priorities.

I know that, when it comes to digital technologies, Telefilm is already in a good position. When it comes to exporting, we have already undertaken several actions on the international stage. One of the things we are very proud of is having helped respond to the invitation Canada received from Eurimages, the European cinema support fund. That is an amazing tool that will give our producers access to additional funding, but also help them gain visibility. We see it as a promotional tool.

So yes, we have had a few very positive meetings.

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** That's excellent. Unless I'm mistaken, you have been at Telefilm Canada for 16 years?

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** I have been there for 26 years.

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** You have been there for 26 years. I missed it by a decade. I'm sorry.



**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** You missed it by a few years.

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** You have been there for a long time and you are familiar with the organization. Can you tell us about the discussions you have held with the minister and the Canadian Heritage officials regarding the challenges of the coming years?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Over the next few years, competitiveness will be a real challenge in the audiovisual industry. As you know, competition in that sector is global. Canada is a country that produces independent content in all areas—be it for television, cinema or digital platforms. Canada is part of a niche market focused more on independent content. Competition is extremely strong. One of the challenges is to ensure that Canadian production companies continue to have the resources they need to move forward and remain competitive. We know that consumers do not choose content based on where it comes from. They now have access to content from all over the world. So we have to ensure that Canadian companies are remaining competitive. I think that is our biggest challenge.

• (0925)

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** I believe you were appointed to this position last June. Can you tell us about the process that led to your appointment? Do you have any suggestions for improving that process?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** I am going to talk about the initial process launched six years ago. It was conducted in a very capable way by our board of directors, in cooperation with the various bodies of the department and various services like the Privy Council Office. There was a call for tenders, the services of a headhunter were used, and several interviews. There were several candidates. We had two interview sessions with a committee made up of at least 10 people. At that time, I was given a first mandate of three years.

After those three years, my board of directors asked to me if I was interested in continuing my work during a second mandate. The normal process was followed to renew the mandate. Normally, my mandate would have ended in March 2016 and I had been convinced that it would end then. In the fall of 2014, the chair of the board asked me if I was interested in extending my mandate for another term. Upper management mandates at Telefilm Canada generally last five years.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Brabant, I ask you to wrap up your answer, please, because we're over five minutes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Fine.

So, I was asked whether I was interested in having my mandate renewed for another term. This time, I accepted a two-year mandate only. I expect that the board undertook the whole process which the governance committee...

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Brabant.

Now we go to Mr. Waugh, for the Conservatives.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's been a great year for Telefilm, a sensational year when you look at *Room*, *Brooklyn*, and all our Oscar nominations. I think it's an all-time high, if you don't mind my saying it.

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** You're absolutely right. We're very proud of what our industry has been able to accomplish, particularly with *Room* and *Brooklyn*. These are very good examples of co-productions that worked amazingly well. *Room* was written by a Canadian author. It's a good example of what co-production can be at its best.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** We continue to work with Ireland pretty closely, I take it. Is that right?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Absolutely. We do work with Ireland in television—*Vikings* is one example. We also have a new film coming up, *Maudie*. It was shot in Newfoundland, and it looks to be very good, so I hope you're going to be able to see it.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Nobody likes Newfoundland.

That's a dig.

Talk about Eurimages, because it's new. You're the first country outside of Europe to get into this. What is the cost? Give us just a general view of that, if you don't mind.

[Translation]

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** This is a fund which was created, if I remember correctly, at the end of the 1980s by the member countries of the European Community. Participating countries contribute to it. Canada's contribution has been estimated at about \$1.5 million and this gives us access to the Eurimages Fund. Currently, it is 25 million euros. The maximum contribution per film is approximately 500,000 euros. According to our projections, Canada should be able to access more than \$1.5 million in two or three years. So we would receive more than we have invested in the fund.

• (0930)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Okay.

Let's say you got a \$22-million boost in your budget, because that's what it amounted to. Are you still going to achieve that 6% administration?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Absolutely. I can maybe give you a scoop: I think this year we're going to be below 5.5%.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Good for you.

You talked about promotion for export to the international level of some of this money. They've given you the money, but did you have the plan in place before you got the money, or do you have a vision for it?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Absolutely.

We want to leverage this participation with Eurimages. We think being a member of Eurimages would benefit the Canadian producers as well as our Canadian productions. We think it would be beneficial to get more promotion of our Canadian films here in Canada but also abroad.

We already have a Telefilm Canada branding around the promotion of our films, like Perspective Canada that we do in Berlin and Cannes. We would like to expand that brand. This brand is intended for buyers in those big markets. We would like to expand it in more specific markets like Annecy, which is dedicated to animation. We know that Canada right now is really in a boost with animation, and we would like to do it. Also, virtual reality is very big for Canada.

We would also like to expand Perspective Canada in another market, a very specific market. Last year we started a new initiative in the States, See the North, and it's in partnership with TIFF. We're showcasing 10 films across the U.S. We would like to expand that brand as well.

So, it's mostly promotion.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Are you keeping up, then, with the digital age even though the name “film” is obsolete?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Well, as you know, films have been shot in digital for probably 15 years. They have also had a label on digital platforms for 15 years. Most of the cinemas in Canada have been converted to digital.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now we go to Mr. Nantel from the NDP for five minutes, please.  
[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank the witnesses for being here with us today.

**Ms. Brabant,** I know that the first invitation that was sent to you was concurrent with festival season, and it was impossible for you to come and meet with us. So we are happy to have this opportunity to talk with you and hear what you have to tell us.

**Ms. Brabant,** as my colleague Mr. Breton said, you have been with Telefilm Canada for 26 years. What position did you occupy when you joined Telefilm Canada 26 years ago?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** By training, I am a chartered accountant. I was offered a position as an internal auditor at Telefilm Canada. It was not a position that made me very popular, neither with the industry nor with my colleagues at Telefilm Canada.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** So the ads where chartered accountants accomplish great things in helicopters and say “there” are true.

I want to congratulate you because you are a rare bird in that you have had 26 years of striking relevance. All of the people in this field agree that you are a good guide when it comes to market developments.

I wanted to ask you this question. Given all of the changes in the film and television milieu in Canada and in the rest of the world, how did you manage to maintain a balance between local production, which is designed for the domestic Quebec market, and collaborative works, such as the recent one with Ireland for the film *Room*?

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Our mandate is to develop and promote Canadian industry. I'm going to make another analogy with sport.

Canada developed a policy on sports, which is to be present on the international scene; but in order to do that, we have to develop local talents and discover those talents. That makes up a large part of our activities. Of the 80 films we finance, about 60% are first films that come from all of the regions of Canada. In this regard, we developed the Micro-Budget Production Program in cooperation with 36 schools. By now it probably involves 38 schools and co-ops throughout Canada. Each one submits a project. Among the projects we receive, we choose 15 and fund 75% of each project through the Talent Fund. That initiative has been in place for four years, and the films that are made in this way are then preselected at Cannes and at festivals like the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Films from the Aboriginal community such as *Fire Song* and *Le Dep*, by Sonia Bonspille Boileau, showcase Canada's cultural diversity. In this way we can discover these talents that come from all over.

• (0935)

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Somewhat like we saw recently with Xavier Dolan.

I made a comment on Facebook, where I said that it was because Xavier Dolan saw himself in these media and his cinema that he realized that he could participate—

[English]

**The Chair:** Two minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** He managed to carve out a place for himself, develop his talent through all of this and became a champion.

You made a very good sports analogy. You are correct. At the same time, regarding the digital challenges my colleague alluded to, I think you have been quite bold at Telefilm Canada, among other things with *Corner Gas*, which is very popular. Perhaps you could remind us about how the operation was condensed so that you could try another model. Perhaps no one here knows about that.

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** Personally, I am very fond of pilot projects. I like to try new ideas.

As for *Corner Gas*, thanks to the producer who was very dynamic, and with the cooperation of Bell and their producer, we were able to reach 7 million Canadians over a three-week period, which is incredible.

Everything depends on the content. There have to be stories. The talent has to be there. The directors have to be there. It is teamwork, just like at Telefilm.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** However, I think that your very collegial approach, which encourages cooperation, has led to collaborative work which might normally have upset a lot of stakeholders in the usual chain.

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** During these last 30 seconds, I would simply like to repeat that I sincerely hope you will accept the next mandates you are offered.

I also hope that everyone here will attend the next Film Night on May 3. It is a wonderful opportunity to get together and talk movies. I have even heard that shuttle buses may run between the SOCAN cocktail location and the Canadian Museum of History for the viewing.

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Nantel and Ms. Brabant.

We have one more question from Mr. DeCoursey, from the Liberals.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Would Mr. Vandal agree to share his time with me?

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, who is going to be the questioner, please?

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** I'll pass it to Mr. Vandal.

[Translation]

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. DeCoursey.

[English]

Welcome.

I read in your brief you've supported production and marketing of 87 feature films and 300 projects. My question to you is, what percentage of those would be in both official languages, broken down between French, English, and indigenous productions, if you could just share that with us?

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** For official languages, it's one-third and two-thirds. Last year 32% of our projects went to French projects and 68% went to English projects.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** One-third French?

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** One-third French and two-thirds English.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** For indigenous?

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** Indigenous last year I think was around 4%.

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Okay, 4%. Do you have any special marketing outreach to mine that and nurture it on the indigenous side?

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** One of the key challenges for the film industry is that it's very competitive, and often it's difficult to make the first film. The first film is often received as a calling card, and it's often difficult particularly for emerging talent. The micro-budget production program was designed for that. We have a special stream for aboriginal content, and that stream worked extremely well.

I'm proud to say there was a film we financed, not through the micro-budget production program, called *Avant les rues*, and it is the first film in the Atikamekw language. If you come to Quebec, it's

screening in Quebec right now and it has received very good reviews.

● (0940)

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** On page 3 you said you “need to make decisions supported by meaningful metrics. It's vital we make informed decisions based on value-added research”.

What does that mean? Can you say more about that?

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** One of the things we're proud about at Telefilm is that we designed a new index to measure the success of our films.

Basically, six or seven years ago, we were only measuring the success of our films based on the Canadian box office. Given the environment we're in, and given the type of films we're financing, which are independent content, their successes are often abroad or internationally.

I'll give you two examples.

**The Chair:** You have two minutes.

**Ms. Carole Brabant:** There was one Canadian film that was very successful in the late 2000s, *Blindness*. It was very successful internationally to the point that the investment was completely reimbursed. It did approximately \$700,000 in the box office in Canada, so when we were talking about successes, strictly based on box office, this film was under the radar.

The other one is *The Captive* from Atom Egoyan—and there are multiple other examples—that did extremely well also on the international scene. We found that our success needed to be told differently by taking into account and measuring the information about international sales.

Also, as I was saying, 60% of the films we're financing are emerging talent. The way they build their career—Denis Villeneuve is an example—is by being selected in festivals, winning prizes in festivals, and moving onto the index. The index is about telling the story of the successes of our filmmakers in festivals such as Cannes, Karlovy Vary, Locarno, and Berlin. We want to continue improving on that index to get a good matrix.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You have thirty seconds.

[Translation]

**Mr. Dan Vandal:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** I only have one question to ask you, Ms. Brabant.

In your strategy, how do you make sure that you have an impact in all of the regions of eastern, central and western Canada? I am asking you that because I was born in the Atlantic region, where we have developed a culture in this industry.

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** First of all, we have offices throughout Canada. We focus on partnerships at festivals, but we also partner with the provincial agencies. We try to create leverage. We devoted a lot of effort to working in co-operation with our provincial partners. Through the Talent Fund, we also identified people in the industry, outside of the cinema industry, who become our spokespeople to highlight that sector. I really believe in the value of working together to showcase our industry.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, we're well over time here.

I would like to ask members, when you wish to ask questions and you want to change and you want to split, to be mindful that when you only have five minutes, you go over time and that affects everyone else, and it affects the ability of our presenters to present. Please let us know if you are changing or if you're splitting well before you do. Thank you very much.

Before we move to the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ms. Brabant, we have one minute, and I want to ask you a question.

First, I want to thank you, Ms. Brabant, for mentioning producers and writers. I think we only focus on actors, and we don't see that we have some of the best and the greatest writers and producers in the world. I want to congratulate you on your focus on animation because, as you well know, not only on animation but on special effects, etc., Canada has become number one in the world. I hope that you recognize, as Mr. DeCoursey said, the ability to move across the country, because British Columbia is number one in the world in terms of special effects in animation.

Second, I just want to ask one thing and that is: how do you see CBC playing a role in helping with distribution? BBC has done that very well for British film, and I wonder if you see CBC with a role to be able to help you with distribution.

• (0945)

**Ms. Carolle Brabant:** I think it's a key role that CBC and broadcasters can play. The survey we did recently showed that Canadians are watching their content mostly on their television, and they watch a lot of content. I think that the example of *Corner Gas* shows that when we are working together, combining the broadcaster, the theatrical release, as well as the platform release, we can reach a high number of Canadians.

It's interesting that you mention it. I had meetings with a representative from the CBC, and we really want to be working together to showcase the great talent we have in Canada.

**The Chair:** We'll proceed to the Museum of Nature for five minutes, Margaret Beckel, the president and chief executive officer.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Museum of Nature):** Good morning, Madam Chair and honourable members.

I have the honour and privilege of serving as the president and CEO of the Canadian Museum of Nature.

[Translation]

I am very pleased to be here with you this morning to update you on the activities of the Canadian Museum of Nature.

[English]

We're one of Canada's six national museums that together cover art, history, science, innovation, immigration, human rights, and nature. As national museums, we believe that we reflect what Canadians value and that we tell our country's story. Over 150 years ago, the Geological Survey of Canada sent researchers out to map and record Canada's natural wealth. This work became the foundation of the Canadian Museum of Nature. We opened Canada's first national purpose-built museum in 1912 at the Victoria Memorial Museum Building on McLeod Street. We are still there today, with galleries inspired by, and specimens from, the survey's early efforts. Who knew that eventually we would convert that building into a nightclub?

Our reach extends nationally. We maintain nine active full-size travelling exhibitions, nine suitcase exhibits, which have smaller interactive items in displays, and four digital exhibits. These temporary exhibits reach one million visitors each year. In addition to engaging Canadians, our museum has a strong scientific mission. Our team of 24 scientists, paleontologists, botanists, mineralogists, and zoologists go into the field every year to collect and catalogue our environment. Their discoveries form the national natural history collection, a scientific collection of more than 10.5 million specimens. The most important pieces are made accessible to Canadians through our public engagement programs and travelling exhibits.

Through our memberships in key international bodies, for example, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Canadian data collected by our museum can be used by researchers around the world to understand and benchmark the state of biodiversity, to look at our Arctic, and to enable an understanding of how climate change is affecting our world. In fact, in 2015-16 our digitized data was downloaded 100 million times from the global biodiversity database. From a scientific point of view, this work is more critical than ever, given the global imperative to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

To support our work in 2012, we launched a new approach to operations focused on business sustainability. At that time, almost 90% of our revenue came from the federal government. We needed to increase revenues from museum admissions, pursue innovative sponsorships and partnerships, sustain our scientific knowledge and leadership, and enable more cost-effective operations.

In 2014-15, our combined revenues stood at \$42.5 million. Earned revenue accounted for 21% and 79% came from government appropriations. Contributions, sponsorships, and annual giving stood at \$2.8 million, a significant increase over the previous years, and we welcomed over 400,000 visitors. This past year we had over 480,000 visitors on site, and we reached an additional million visitors through our travelling exhibits across Canada and around the world.

I want to give you a sneak peek of this past year. Over \$6.1 million in value was committed to the life and future of the museum through cash collections and in-kind contributions. I must point out that about \$3 million of that was media sponsorship from *The Globe and Mail*.

Some 230 volunteers give their time and talent to help support the mission and mandate of the institution. Our researchers spent 170 days in the field across Canada and around the globe, advancing our role as a creator of knowledge about the natural world and furthering our research. Our scientists place a high value on their days in the field. They share what they find through over 90 publications, ensuring that our knowledge of plants, animals, fossils, and minerals inspires understanding and respect for nature.

On the programming side, we brought many innovative exhibits and programs—from *Creatures of Light*, about the nature of bioluminescence, to *Animal Inside Out*. More recently, it was all about bugs, live and otherwise—the ones we wanted in the building, not the ones we didn't want.

I have to tell you about *Nature Nocturne*. Now in its third year, it continues to sell out almost every time. I say “almost” because for the last one we had 20 tickets available at the last minute. This is a novel concept to engage young professionals—we call them “adult visitors”. *Nature Nocturne* opens at the museum at night and it marries our science and exhibits in a very informal atmosphere—two dance floors, nine bars. The first two hours they're in the galleries, the last two hours they're engaged with one another.

• (0950)

Where has all of this innovation taken us? Today, we're a museum of international first rank, a trusted source of understanding, providing evidence-based insights, and inspiring experiences and real engagement with nature's past, present, and future.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We begin with Mr. O'Regan from the Liberals.

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Ms. Beckel, thank you very much for your presentation.

I want to take a moment, too, to acknowledge, in Ms. Brabant's testimony, the reference to *Corner Gas*, and I'd like to make mention of the fact that I appeared on *Corner Gas* for exactly one minute.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

After 10 years of appearing for three hours every morning on national news, I'm known on the street as “that guy on *Corner Gas*”, which I think is a testament to the power of excellent Canadian drama and as a *Corner Gas* friend, I say it is a drama; it is not a comedy. It has to be taken very seriously—very seriously.

Also, in reference to my colleague next to me who's from New Brunswick, I have to make mention of Mr. O'Neill's talking about *The Rooms*. As a former board member of *The Rooms* for 10 years and co-chair of the campaign that he referenced concerning *Beaumont-Hamel*, I can just say that the people at *The Rooms* are delighted with the work we're doing together on *Beaumont-Hamel*. I thank you for it.

Ms. Beckel, I want to come back to you. I want to ask you about your mission, which I know is to inspire respect and understanding for the natural world. In that mission, you reference the fact that your purpose has not changed, but the world around us has. Can you tell us how the world has changed and how that's reflected in your mandate?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Certainly.

When we refer to the world around us having changed, we are also saying that the way we connect with our visitors has changed dramatically. That's how we as an institution have had to change the way we operate, the way we create, design, and deliver visitor experiences that enable people to engage with the natural world. Whether through school visit programming or otherwise, we recognize that we need to find ways to reach more school visitors, because not everybody can afford to come to the nation's capital to have an experience. We've developed an “eye chat” program whereby we enable kids from other places to connect with our scientists and with our educators.

We're also recognizing that from a research point of view, we need not and cannot do it on our own. We need to collaborate with other natural history museums, with universities, and with natural history museums from around the world, because as most of you know, research is highly collaborative, and it usually engages scientists from all over the world. That is something we're embracing more and more, and we need to fund it.

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan:** I want to ask you about your concentration on the Arctic. Given that we know that the Arctic is changing more rapidly, perhaps, than we would like because of climate change, how do you incorporate that?

I ask this knowing full well, having served time in governance of a museum, that neither the shareholder—in this case the government—nor the board of governors should ever become involved in the actual presentation, but I am inquiring how you incorporate that in the context of a changing world.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** That's a great question, and thank you, because I didn't get to this in my remarks.

The Canadian Museum of Nature was basically founded for and was an early participant in the original Canadian Arctic Expedition, so we've been exploring the Arctic for over 100 years. We've been incorporating the collection and the knowledge derived from that collection into our public programming since that time.

More currently, over the last five years we've been engaged in a specific five-year program to tell the Arctic story to our visitors through public programming, through travelling exhibits, and through higher engagement in our research programs with other Arctic museums, the other national museums of the Arctic Council.

We're also working with partners, especially people from the north. We have established an Arctic gallery advisory panel to guide us in creating our Canada 150 celebratory gift to Canada, which will be an Arctic gallery dedicated to telling the story of the Arctic past, present, and future through diverse lenses: a lens on ecosystems, a lens on the geography of the Arctic, a lens on sustainability, but also a lens on climate change, helping visitors understand how the climate has changed and how that has affected the ecosystems that the natural world is so dependent on, but also that the human world is so dependent on in the north.

• (0955)

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan:** Could you tell me a little more about that challenge, about how you exhibit not only the change that occurs in the ecosystem but the way it is reflected in the lives of the people who live there?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** It's in two ways. It's in the gallery, which is still in preliminary design—we're still sorting out exactly the most compelling and clear way of doing that. We're talking about changes in the amount of biodiversity in the north.

Regarding the ecosystems, we will talk about the diversity of life in the north and how it has changed, and how it has also adapted to the changes to the climate. Think of the story of the polar bear; there are some areas where the polar bears are really struggling, and others where they're thriving. That's part of the story we will tell.

From a sustainability point of view, we're really learning from our partners from the north about how people are adapting to the changes in the environment so that they can sustain their livelihoods, whether that's from living off the land, from developing new art forms, taking advantage of what is available in the north, but also through—

**The Chair:** Ms. Beckel, I'm sorry, but we're over time on this one. I am sorry because I know that there are a lot of interesting questions and interesting answers.

The next person will be Mr. Van Loan, from the Conservatives.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I've been impressed in watching how you have improved your marketing to the public and reaching the public and so on. I think you've done a tremendous job there.

One of the issues is that question of sustainability, which I've asked others about, and I understand that more and more museums use that measure of subsidy per visitor. I imagine that number has gone in a good direction for you. Can you tell me where that is for your museum right now?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Well, I've had the advantage of time to do my math at the back here.

When I look at the amount that the federal government is investing per visitor, I include on-site visitors and our visitors across Canada, so if I look at the on-site visitors—

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Let's do just the on-site visitors.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Okay. It's \$52 per visitor. It goes down to \$20 per visitor if you include the off-site visitors through travelling exhibits.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** One of the challenges, I think, for museums like yours, like it is for universities, frankly, is this business of balancing. In the universities, it's how much you focus on teaching versus research. In your case, it's how much you focus on exhibiting to the public and educating the public versus research.

I think the research tradition made a lot of sense in the days when folks had to go out and establish collections. I'm a little bit less certain of that now. Would you comment on your efforts to maintain that and ensure that balance is right?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** One thing about financial statements is that they tell a very clear story. I've actually looked at the investment we make in inspiration and engagement, which is the visitor experience, our marketing, and our fundraising, relative to research and discovery, because although much of the biodiversity and geodiversity of Canada is represented in our collection, there's still much to be mapped. Much of Canada's north has not yet been mapped, so there's much still to do. The story is not complete. The other pillar is really the buildings and grounds that we're responsible for.

We invest in those three equally. Normally we wouldn't invest so much in building and grounds, yet we have a magnificent facility and we do have a rather significant property tax bill that we are responsible for, so that does elevate the cost there. The balance between the inspiration and engagement and the research and discovery is quite equal, and I think it should be.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** What proportion of your collection is actually on display? How do you manage the rest?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** One thing about a scientific collection that includes insects is that the percentage of your collection that's on display is actually very small. We have just over 10 million specimens in our collection. We actually manage them in lots, so a jar of worms would be one, not 2,000, so we have 2.7 lots. Of that, we probably have only 5,000 specimens on display. If we add those that are on the road, that probably goes up, but again, given that scientific specimens in many cases are very small and we have a huge collection, it is quite small.

However, we make a point to ensure that our galleries are specimen-rich so that people see the diversity in minerals, plants, animals, and fossils, because that's really what provides the awe and the wonder. Further to what my colleague Mark O'Neill said on the power of the real, it really is powerful to watch visitors come into the museum and see just how large a polar bear is or how large a fossil actually was. They're thankful that they're not live.

Sorry, I digress.

• (1000)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** I wasn't going to ask a 150th Anniversary of Confederation question, but you did invite me to, so how are you showcasing the role of the beaver in Canada and Confederation?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** We have one in our mammal gallery.

We're really going to focus on the story of the Arctic, and that's how we'll do it.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Try to think of few words there on the beaver.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** We have a wonderful display of a beaver in our mammal gallery. It has pride of place and we love our beaver.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now go to Mr. Nantel from the NDP for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank you for being here with us, Ms. Beckel. First of all, I have to thank you, because I think that...

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Just a moment, please.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** You want to use the interpretation services? I can speak English. It's no big deal.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** I apologize. I am learning French, but for today...

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** As long as you have French staff to accommodate the groups coming from Quebec and the Maritimes, it's fine.

[Translation]

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Absolutely. That is true.

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** I want to congratulate you on your thinking outside the box. I think you obviously do it.

How long has the dancing with dinosaurs or rocking with the rocks been going on?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Three years.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** In these three years, have you had a chance to meet with the ministers of Heritage from the previous government?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** At the Nocturne? I must admit I do not believe any of our ministers have participated in a Nocturne that I'm aware of, but there are people who told me afterwards they snuck in just to check it out.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** That's good. At least they came to see what's going on there.

You made a daring choice to change the way you would get your budget for the museum. Having been there many times, I've seen the importance of private sponsorship. I think this is a delicate....

We all remember when Imperial Oil asked the Technology Museum to change an exhibit. How do you deal with that?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** We simply make it clear sponsorship or philanthropy does not come with any involvement or say on content. The sponsors we have dealt with in my history and involvement with fundraising particularly, which goes back 25 years, are generally respectful of that.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** That's just great.

I wanted to ask you, with your attendance, can I assume students are an important part, primary school and high school?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Yes, they are.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** In my last visit, I was speaking with one of your employees who was telling me he had in mind some coordination between museums for a broad packaging offer for museums of the capital for Canada 150.

Do you think you feel free to speak to us about this potential coordination? I think it is a crucial point during Canada 150 this summer, and at the end of the season, for schools to have some sort of easy access pass or something that's coordinated.

Do you think there's something coming like this?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Are you're thinking for students specifically, or for the general public?

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** The general public.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** For the general public we are working on a passport, which would provide a significant discount for access to all of the museums participating. I think we call it our three-three-three?

**Mr. John Swettenham (Director, Marketing and Media Relations, Canadian Museum of Nature):** It's double three, double 30: three days, three museums, \$30 for an adult, and 30% off for an accompanied child.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** I think this is a very pragmatic marketing approach. I congratulate you on bringing in something that's so, "please come".

• (1005)

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Yes, and it's something we worked on with all the national museums and some of the smaller museums. It is an initiative that originally started in collaboration with the National Capital Commission, and it's something that has been evolving.

Now you can provide the facts.

**Mr. John Swettenham:** I was going to say it's in cooperation with the other national museums.

Yes, the museum's passport is geared to visitors to the national capital, including students. They stay on average for two days and see three attractions, so this is three leading attractions for \$30. We think it will go very well.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** That's a very good initiative. I'm sure everyone around here is happy to hear that.

Thank you very much. I have no more questions.

**The Chair:** We're catching up on some overtime.

We're going to go to Mr. Samson for the Liberals, for five minutes.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** I have lots of questions that came from other questions, and it's of interest to me very much.

The first one is about schools. I'm an educator by trade, in my first life, and you bring that with you as you move forward.

How are we connecting with schools? Yes, we are connecting. We're going to get kids showing up here. Most of them are going to be from the surrounding areas, but not the people from Edmonton, Alberta, or from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, etc.

We might be sending materials out. You talked about the iChat, which I really like, but if I were to do a survey—I was superintendent of all the French schools in Nova Scotia for the last 11 years—I'm not sure any of them would know anything about iChat.

Try to help me better understand, in one minute of course.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** We welcome 30,000 students per year. These come from the national capital region, but they also come from across Canada for those who can afford a field trip to the city, but that is a small number.

We also work with a network of natural history museums and do all we can to promote their school visit programs, because the provincial and territorial museums have their own school visit programs, and in many cases the subject matter is very similar.

It's not an experience with a national institution, but it is a connection with natural history and an understanding of our natural world.

That's really how we extend the reach rather than trying to do it ourselves.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Somehow we need to get into the classroom and we need to get kids to.... I think iChat is a great one, but getting more involved in that piece is essential.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** If I may add to that, in collaboration with the *Canadian Geographic* magazine, we created a giant floor map, and that is something that travels to schools across Canada.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** I want to talk about 150. Some of us talked about it, and this is not a criticism of any presentations earlier, but I'm just getting the sense that 150 is not as focused to the museum as I expected. We're going to celebrate 150 in every way, shape, or form across this great country, but for some reason—and this is not a criticism—maybe that reflection or that structure needs to be put in place. I'm not getting the sense that when we walk into our museums in Canada in 2017 we'll think that the world has changed because there's our great country after 150 years and it's not just about our contribution but about where we came from, where we're at, and where we're going.

I just feel that I'm not getting that. Help me understand.

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Part of it is that we have all been on the path to 150 for five years, so maybe it's not coming out, because we've been at this for five years now. We're all very focused, as a group of national museums at least, and I think the provinces and territories are similar in terms of what our rollout will be for all 12 months in 2017. Yesterday we had our discussion on the rollout, and every single month we're going to be doing something. For us, it's

focused on the Arctic to celebrate our 150 years of exploring and mapping the Arctic.

It will be very evident and very noisy, and hopefully we'll be instilling pride and a sense of belonging.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** What are your priorities for the next five years? We talked about climate change, but Canada is changing because of its climate. Environmentally our government is bringing in many initiatives and it's going to change how we do business and it's also going to change many jobs, green jobs that we've never had.

How is that going to be highlighted?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** Our strategic focus right now is to continue to transform Canadians' understanding of the Arctic and its importance to Canada as a country. I think we'll touch on not only the natural environment but also its effect on people.

We'll also be engaging in and continuing the conversation around species discovery and change and around how climate change particularly is affecting species diversity and species change. We'll do that with partners, and there are different lenses on doing that.

Over the next five years we're going to be reaching out and looking at different lenses on nature.

For example, an economic lens on nature and the notion of natural capital is something that we're now engaged in conversations on with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Ecofiscal Commission, and some of the major banks that are very seized with the reality that as the environment changes, the way they evaluate their own business is going to have to change.

We want to be part of that story, because we are the benchmark; we're the yardstick of nature over time. We have the evidence of how the world is changing.

•(1010)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** If I travel across this great country in the next five years, what type of species might I see that I didn't know about that's going to change our insects? Should I be aware of something?

**Ms. Margaret Beckel:** You're going to see a different kind of briefcase at a conversation about biodiversity. I think that's the species change you're really going to see.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That was very well done.

Ms. Beckel, I want to say how interesting it is to see you evolving so rapidly with our rapidly evolving environment. Thank you very much for your presentation.

We now go to Mr. Albert Lo, chairperson of the the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Welcome, Mr. Lo. Please begin.

[Translation]

**Mr. Albert Lo (Chairperson, Canadian Race Relations Foundation):** Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Albert Lo. I am the chairperson of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. I am accompanied by Rubin Friedman.



[English]

Mr. Friedman is a member of the foundation's board of directors and chair of our governance committee.

Incidentally, he once held senior positions in multiculturalism and acted as the director of the Japanese-Canadian Redress Secretariat with the Government of Canada.

Madam Chair, it is an honour for me to serve in this capacity as chair. It is my 30th year in the area of human rights, employment equity, and multiculturalism. I was first exposed to this arena when I was with the federal public service through Canada Mortgage and Housing, where for I worked for almost 20 years.

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation was created as a non-agent crown corporation as part of the Japanese-Canadian Redress Agreement of 1988, operating on income generated from a \$24-million endowment, half of which was contributed by the Japanese Canadian community. The foundation has a very large mandate to help eliminate racism and racial discrimination across Canada. We have also received limited amounts of funding from governments for specific projects. We are mindful of the past injustices and negative instances, while building on our precious heritage of accommodating differences. Our vision is to be the leading voice and agent of change in pursuit of our mandate and the promotion of inclusion, belonging, and a mutuality of citizenship rights and responsibilities.

We focus on advancing understanding and development of approaches to improving race relations and eliminating racial discrimination; strengthening Canadian identity as it refers to the democratic principles of inherent human dignity, equality, fairness, and justice; expanding our clearinghouse and initiatives to inform national policies and public conversations; and facilitating and stimulating the discussions and further research on race relations.

We target our work to creating and nurturing an inclusive society based on equality, mutual respect, and human dignity across religious, ethnic, linguistic, and racial lines.

A key antidote to racism and racial discrimination is the holistic approach to promoting these shared values based on our Constitution and democracy, along with an awareness of the negative consequences of prejudice and discrimination for the economic and social well-being of all Canadians.

Madam Chair, these elements inform and shape our overall strategy. The foundation's initiatives are all designed accordingly.

Now I would like to mention a number of initiatives that the foundation has undertaken.

The Capturing the Pulse of the Nation initiative is an annual survey, in co-operation with the Association for Canadian Studies. For instance, we commissioned a research on attitudes toward aboriginal peoples in Canada, which sounded a warning in 2013.

The *Directions* digital publication is an electronic journal.

Our clearinghouse function is a valuable and growing collection of well over 4,000 searchable digital records of resources relating to race relations.

We also have the eRACE virtual book club.

The digital initiative 150 Stories, which is part of the Our Canada project, publishes one personal story per week for 150 weeks, in celebration of Canada's upcoming sesquicentennial, paying tribute to Canada's diversity, democratic principles, and multiculturalism through the experiences of individuals, organizations, and historic events.

We also conducted The Urban Agenda round tables in partnership with many other organizations.

We have held nine Living Together symposia so far across Canada on research and best practices in shared values. The symposia were built upon community consultations between November 2014 and June 2015: first nations, Métis, and Inuit consultation in Sudbury; francophone consultation in Montreal; and faith leaders consultation in Ottawa.

We are conducting 24 workshops in 19 cities across Canada in the last fiscal year, 2015-16, and 23 have been completed so far.

We also host a biennial national conference and awards of excellence.

The Canada Lecture is an annual lecture that invites accomplished Canadians to raise awareness and understanding of critical issues. This year we have done it by linking up four universities across Canada.

We continue to involve ourselves in the Metropolis conference.

•(1015)

In terms of engaging youth, Voices into Action is one particular initiative. We also launched a youth video challenge. Youth Café Canada is being planned for youth and community leaders to explore ideas to foster positive race relations.

**The Chair:** I'm afraid we are well over five minutes, but again, I will invite the questioners to help you to be able to say some of your own introductory remarks in your answers.

Thank you very much.

We now begin five-minute questions. Mr. Samson, from the Liberals.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Thank you, Mr. Lo.

Some quick questions. I guess I'm not going to hit too hard on the 150 because you seemed to circle around it quite well, talking about 150 stories, 150 weeks. Well, I was in the 150 with you. I was moving with that one, so that was interesting. I appreciate that.

You talked about the consultation across Canada and that you had one left to do. I forget the numbers you quoted. What about African Nova Scotians? African Nova Scotians' contribution to Nova Scotia has been tremendous, and to Canada. You didn't mention these people, and I just want to know whether you have done any work with them.

**Mr. Albert Lo:** We did a recent session, and another one is actually coming up in May, in Halifax. We were asked to postpone it at the request of one of our partners locally, the RCMP, but we also had a number of events in the past in Halifax, including an award of excellence symposium a few years ago. Also, the deputy mayor of Truro came to our event in Ottawa.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rubin Friedman (Member of the Board of Directors, Canadian Race Relations Foundation):** I would like to add something.

[English]

In Halifax, when we held the award of excellence dinner, there was a special session dealing with aboriginal issues in the Maritimes and with black Nova Scotian issues in the Maritimes.

The challenge for us is to continue to maintain contacts with all these groups across the country.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** I appreciate that, Mr. Friedman, because in my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, which is on the outskirts of the two big cities, Halifax and Dartmouth, we need more visitors and we want more visitors. We have the largest black cultural centre in Canada. Have you been?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** No, not yet.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** It's time to go. Let's all go together. I think we should.

**Mr. Albert Lo:** I hope somehow our budget would be increased to allow me to travel again to Halifax.

● (1020)

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** That's right, but it would be a strong suggestion, because they have the largest black cultural centre, to do an event there, right in the cultural centre itself, which is only about 15 kilometres from downtown Halifax, but even closer from the airport. It would be a great opportunity because the African Nova Scotian community in North Preston—again in my riding—is the largest indigenous community in Canada. We need to highlight them, and we need to highlight them as often as we can, and we need to do it for the 150 that much more. I'm just saying words of encouragement on that piece.

Can you talk to us about the centre's positive impact? In the last two or three years, what has been the positive impact that you feel has made a difference, so we can touch and we can see it? What would they be in the last three years, if you were going to point to two things that you feel have had a major impact?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** I think one of the things I can point to right away is the mayor's summit for racial inclusion in Winnipeg that was hosted by the mayor of Winnipeg. We were invited as a partner to deal with the fallout when Winnipeg was described by the media as the racist capital of Canada. During the session there were all kinds of comments from some of the media folks who said that people were just repeating all the complaints, and so what are you going to do? Our panel was there, and we managed to present some ideas as to how to address the issues, and at the end of it, we received a lot of good reports. In fact, the mayor invited us to go back there again, and that is an indication.

Another one is we hosted a workshop up in Whitehorse, and there were some 30-odd indigenous leaders who attended, and at the end of it we were informed that they were so pleased. They said it had been a long time since they had that kind of meeting where they were able to try to formulate some solutions to the challenges that they face. They thanked us for doing what we did.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Samson.

Now we go to Mr. Waugh for the Conservatives.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Thank you, Mr. Lo and Mr. Friedman, for coming today.

I see here you operate on income generated by investing the endowment funds and donations. Can you talk a little bit about that? The interest rates are rather low, so when you talk about endowment funds there, I'm sure you struggle from year to year. Give me an update, if you can.

**Mr. Albert Lo:** I always describe the funding as a congenital funding challenge. At the time the endowment was created, people were thinking we would have a 10% interest rate in perpetuity, but we know what the story is. In 2008, because of a market hiccup, the endowment went down to something like \$18 million. We managed to invest the money wisely with the help of some investment advisers, so it's now back up to between \$27 million and \$28 million. Our annual income generated from the endowment is around \$650,000. There's a huge gap between that and our budget of now around \$1.65 million. The bulk of that is actually based on project funding or grants that we managed to obtain from Multiculturalism two years ago. This was the sequel to the previous three-year project that was also funded, but not to the same extent.

Building on that success, we are actually using this opportunity to leverage the resources by partnering with organizations right across the country. The hope is that we will be able to generate some additional interest as well as donations. That is an area that we are trying to focus on as well.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** For many organizations, when they have a foundation, it's kind of like a pyramid. In a hospital foundation or whatever, you have a lot of people working in the office trying to raise money. What's your situation? How do you reach out to your stakeholders, and how many do you have in the office?

● (1025)

**Mr. Albert Lo:** Right now we have 10 employees, including the executive director, who is a full-time GIC appointee. Seven of those employees are in permanent positions unrelated to the project grants.

In terms of raising funds, we don't have a particular person dedicated to doing that work, but we have a very committed board of directors. We have a working board, with working committees, who contribute a lot of time. They don't even claim the per diems they're entitled to. As we reach out across the country, we try to capitalize on the individual board members who have networks of people they know and reputations that we leverage a bit in order to drum up more interest.

Eliminating racial discrimination is not exactly a sexy subject with many donors, but we are focusing on the vision—to build an inclusive Canada—and that seems to resonate with more and more people.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Yes, I think it does.

You state in here that your focus is advancing an understanding and development of approaches to improving race relations and elimination of race discrimination. So how do you do this?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** For example, we partnered with the City of Richmond in B.C. For a long time there had been a lot of complaints in the public, in the media, talking about, for example, Chinese language signage. That caused a lot of angst in the local community.

The city partnered with us. We hosted a one-day symposium. We invited, in fact, the people who had launched the complaint to city hall and who had asked for a bylaw to be enacted to ban that kind of signage. I actively reached out to them and invited them to the symposium. At the end of that particular one-day symposium, they felt so good. They told me, “This is the first time we feel we’ve been heard. We’re not racist. So what’s the problem?” We also partnered with the media. Many journalists came and helped and participated in this discussion.

This is the direction we are going in, to bring people together and be part of the solution instead of part of the problem.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** I want to congratulate you.

That’s all I have. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That’s right on time.

Now, Mr. Nantel, for the NDP.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Lo and Mr. Friedman, thank you very much for being here with us.

I don’t know if everyone here knows this, but according to the documentation I am looking at and the documents the analysts provided us, the Japan-Canada Fund was created specifically to fight racism. The Japanese were victims of segregation at a certain time, weren’t they?

**Mr. Rubin Friedman:** The fund was created in 1988 following an agreement with Canadians of Japanese origin.

Discrimination against them reached a peak during the Second World War. Racism and discrimination against them and against those who did not look like the majority of citizens continued. However, the worst example of racism in our country was the treatment of Canadians of Japanese origin during the Second World War.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Of course.

**Mr. Rubin Friedman:** And yet, in 1988, Canadians of Japanese origin were among the best integrated citizens in our society. They were very successful, with a high standard of

[*English*]

income among the highest of any ethnic group in the country. It’s a success story.

However, the Japanese-Canadians wanted to ensure that what happened to them couldn’t happen again. That’s the purpose of the foundation, not to deal only with the discrimination against the Japanese.

• (1030)

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Absolutely, and this is why I asked this question. I think it is important.

I also remember that there was a boat at the museum that was offered by the Japanese community, and we all wonder where it is now.

To make it on a contemporary basis, I want to ask, if you had more money, if you were able to raise more money or have more support from the government, what would be your next big mission or task?

**Mr. Rubin Friedman:** In 2012, when we appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I was asked what major issues were facing Canada. At that time, I said there were two: one was the place of religion in the public sphere; the other was the relationship between the Canadian government and the aboriginal peoples. That hasn’t changed. We focus most of our money on those areas now.

If we had more money, we would be able to deal with more issues like the treatment of various peoples in various regions of the country. Not only are we regional in terms of our cultures, but we’re also regional in terms of the kinds of racism and discrimination that predominate in any particular area. The kind of racism and discrimination in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is different from what you find in B.C., for things that don’t have to do with aboriginal peoples or religion in the public sphere. If we had more money, we would be able to deal with more issues.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** By the way, Mr. Lo, would you know where the *Nishga Girl* is now—the famous boat that was at the museum?

**A Voice:** Madam Chair, I will answer that.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Okay, I will ask you.

The other thing I want to ask is, what is your day-to-day struggle with the lack of funding that you may suffer with now?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** The day-to-day struggle is really that many of our board members, who are part-time appointees, supposedly spend no more than two or three weeks a year for meetings, but I can tell you that I personally spend about two or three hours a day. Those are some of the challenges. We try to fill in the gaps. We don’t have the ability to have all of the regional presence, so all the board members in the different regions have to be the soldiers on the ground as well. Those are some of the challenges.

I’m very pleased to mention that in the 2012 committee hearing looking at the special examination report, the committee chair was very lavish with praise. He said at the time that no other organization, agency, or department ever had such a report from the Auditor General. There was not a single recommendation that was needed for any improvement.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Albert Lo:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Now we to Mr. Breton, for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I welcome our witnesses.

Mr. Lo, your organization has existed for close to 20 years, and you have a very noble mission and vision.

I am curious to know if you had some way of measuring the impact of your actions over the years on racism toward Japanese Canadians. Following the initiatives you have taken, has the situation improved in Canada or has it deteriorated? I know it is not easy to measure such things, but I would like to hear what you have to say.

[English]

**Mr. Albert Lo:** Several years ago, around 2009, a consultant was hired by the Department of Multiculturalism to look into what we did. Part of the report said that at the time of the report, the foundation was really part of the chorus of protest groups. However, when they looked further, they said that based on the strategic direction that we adopted and the indicators that they had looked at, including the media reports and the surveys that were done across the country with various stakeholders and interested parties, they were beginning to see some hopeful signs.

Of course, then it evolved to the time that we actually had to prove ourselves in order to qualify for some funding in the form of grants and contributions from the department. We were looked at by a host of auditors, not counting the annual audit by the Auditor General and all the surveys. In fact, Postmedia group were so pleased with the work that we did that they decided to partner with us along with the Laurier Institution in Vancouver, for example, and various universities. Our reach is definitely expanding and growing.

People were saying they were excited, particularly young people. A number of them have come knocking on our door wanting to volunteer, because they feel that they can have a place to work and can be part of a solution.

• (1035)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** Thank you. What you say is interesting.

You mentioned some of your partners, some universities among others. I would like you to explain how your partners see their role and what their relationship is with you. A lot of immigrants settle in this country, and this has been going on for a number of years. That is a good thing, and we need them. And there are even more who are going to come here over the next few years. Several cities are welcoming some now. We have only to think of the 30,000 Syrians who have arrived in Canada over the past six months.

Can you tell us about your partners, and your relationship with them. I am not interested in the reception of immigrants so much as in your mission to eliminate the racism that might still persist.

[English]

**Mr. Albert Lo:** Well, in relation to, for example, the refugees and immigrants, we actually met as a board and committees just in the last few weeks. One of the things that was decided upon was that going forward we'll continue to work with the universities and municipalities, and by the way, the foundation is a founding member of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination. We have discovered that a lot of work needs to be done in order to help the immigrants and refugees who arrive in this country. As they settle in, we have to work on communicating with

them and helping them with settlement and particularly with the youth. If we don't do anything in terms of helping them to understand the systems and practices in Canada and how they can contribute to the best of their ability, there are other forces at work. There's a danger of radicalization. This is an area that we have spent quite a bit of time focusing on as well.

We want to address those issues. Young people need to be engaged. Their creative juices need to be flowing somewhere, and so we are bringing them together and creating, for example, as I mentioned, the Youth Café Canada, which is an example of engaging particularly the young people among the immigrants and the refugee groups.

As far as the universities are concerned, they are very pleased. On March 21, we had Canada Lecture 2016. We hooked up with UBC, University of Ottawa, Université de Montréal, and the Edmunston campus of Moncton University, and it was well attended by students across the country. They were also able to access it and participate through the Internet.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lo. I'm very sorry, but we went a little over the five minutes there. I wanted you to answer the question.

Thank you very much. We've come to the end of our question session.

I wanted to take the opportunity to ask you a question. I have a deep sense of interest in the Race Relations Foundation, since I was the minister who launched the Race Relations Foundation longer ago than I would care to remember. This is what I wanted to know. You're called the Race Relations Foundation, but I've heard Mr. Friedman say there is more. There's now religion that is becoming an issue we need to look at. How do you see yourself evolving? I'm very interested in the progress and evolution of your group.

First, how do you see yourself evolving to include things such as religious discrimination? How do you see yourself broadening to look at LGBTQ discrimination? These are strong areas of discrimination, some of which include violence, so I'd like to know where you see your role in moving forward in that evolutionary process.

My second question is about public awareness. I think there used to be a high profile for the Race Relations Foundation at one time in terms of your public awareness. How are you using digital media and how are you working with television, etc., to make sure that more than just youth know what you're doing, so that schools know what you're doing and that the public by and large is informed by your work and is able to see your awareness programs going further?

• (1040)

**Mr. Albert Lo:** First of all, on racial discrimination, years ago it started out based on nationality, then it was skin colour, and then it just morphed, and eventually has become framed now in the context of religion. So really, religion is... We're looking at the fact that underneath it is racism, but it's framed in the religious narrative. That's part of the mandate, in fact. Racial discrimination and how to deal with it is the mandate.

**The Chair:** What do you do about that religious piece?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** We are creating a network of almost 500 leaders from the various faith communities across Canada, as well as the cultural communities, and that's a result of the 24 workshops I mentioned earlier. In each workshop, we specifically invited the leaders from the various communities locally.

In terms of public awareness, we're now ramping up on Facebook and Twitter and using the new media to reach the youth. For example, we have the youth video challenges. Those video challenges are specifically designed around certain themes that relate to racism and racial discrimination.

**The Chair:** Are you working with schools to do this?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** Yes. The National Film Board, for example, is also a partner. We also work with OMNI Television. We work with many of the ethnic media in order to accomplish that communication and awareness aspect.

I want to go back to LGBTQ and many of those other issues as well. Those are important issues. However, as you understand, the foundation is so stretched—

**The Chair:** I understand that.

**Mr. Albert Lo:** —with this limited budget that we can only focus on what we are able to do.

**The Chair:** Do you meet with the minister who is responsible to Parliament for reporting about you and dealing with you? Do you meet with the minister regularly? Do you intend to? Do you intend to see if you could launch projects on some of those issues?

**Mr. Albert Lo:** Indeed, in the past we regularly—at least once or twice a year—had a meeting with the minister. With regard to the new minister, I have yet to have the opportunity to meet with her. I have sent a letter and an email and I'm waiting for a response.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Lo. I want to thank you and Mr. Friedman for coming to visit with us today.

We have a couple of minutes. I just wanted to let the public and of course our members know that we were supposed to have met as well with the chair of the Canada Council for the Arts, Mr. Lassonde, but Mr. Lassonde has become ill. I want us to wish him well and a return to good health in the future, but we may need to decide as a committee how we meet with Mr. Lassonde when he gets better and returns to good health. The Canada Council for the Arts is going to be receiving a great deal of money, and we want to make sure that we know how they intend to spend it in terms of accountability issues.

Finally, I don't know how everyone feels, but I thought this was an extremely good exercise. I was wondering if as a committee we might believe that every year we should be able to bring forward in one meeting these particular groups, just to see what and how they're doing and assess their progress and evolution.

Does everyone think that's a good idea?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Good. I got a good sense of yesses around the room, and I heard no noes. Thank you very much.

Mr. Van Loan, may we have a motion to adjourn?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** I so move.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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