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Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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•(0845)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Today we are reviewing, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the state of Canadian museums. Today we have two hours with museums, but we need some time to do some in camera work.

Our first hour will be with the Fashion Museum and the Commonwealth Association of Museums. For the Fashion Museum, we have Jean-Claude Poitras and Joanne Watkins, and for the Commonwealth Association of Museums, we have Catherine Cole, secretary-general.

I want to thank our witnesses for coming.

I want you to know that each group has 10 minutes to make their presentations. I will give you a two-minute warning when you're at eight minutes so you know you have two minutes to wrap up. Then we will go to questions and answers.

Ms. Watkins, you may begin.

[Translation]

Ms. Joanne Watkins (General Director, Fashion Museum): Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, everyone.

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to appear, as representatives of a museum, before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

My name is Joanne Watkins, and I have been working in the museum environment for more than 30 years. I have been director of an interpretive centre and of an ecomuseum, and I am now the general director of the Fashion Museum. I was also coordinator of a regional network made up of 17 museums. I am currently a member of the Montréal Museums Society's board of directors.

I would like to introduce Jean-Claude Poitras, fashion designer, multidisciplinary designer and the recipient of many awards and honours in Quebec and in Canada. Mr. Poitras received the Order of Canada in 1995, the Ordre national du Québec in 1996, and was elevated to the rank of Officier de l'Ordre national du Québec in 2012.

Together, we will talk about the realities of our museum, as one example among other small institutions, in an environment where financial resources from all sources are limited.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras (President, Fashion Museum): Taking on the role of chairman of the Fashion Museum's board of directors

is a wonderful challenge that I accepted because I believe fashion to be vital to Canada as a whole. I have been part of this environment for years. I have really taken my collections around the world. I have had many exhibits in the United States and across Canada, but that goes without saying. I have seen that a number of countries have fashion museums. That is how a people's pride in that exceptional industry is built. That is why I agreed to chair the board of directors of this museum, which remains an overly well-hidden treasure.

The Fashion Museum, which was called the Musée du costume et du textile du Québec—Quebec museum of costumes and textile—until recently, is 37 years old. Created in 1979 in Saint-Lambert, the museum relocated in 2013 to Bonsecours Market, in Old Montreal, in order to enjoy operating conditions more conducive to achieving its mission. Its collections, built up over the years through donations from Canadians, are kept in a museum reserve. They contain over 7,200 items originating from Quebec, Canada and abroad.

The museum's documentation centre contains nearly 900 specialized works on fashion, its artisans, its designers, textile, of course, textile art as a whole and fashion history. The Régor collection, which is currently being worked on, consists of about 5,000 fashion magazines, journals and drawings. It was loaned to the museum by Library and Archives Canada in the 1990s.

Since 2011, the museum has redefined its mission to make textile and clothing heritage, ethnology and fashion the museum's key research, conservation and education themes.

Guided by a duty to remember, develop and share clothing and textile heritage, the museum's activities and products also reflect the creativity and vitality of the present. Between tradition and innovation, the Fashion Museum takes pride in displaying Quebecker and Canadian creations, but also international artifacts, in order to shine a spotlight on artists and artisans who have been part of or are still part of fashion's success across the country.

The Fashion Museum has carried out various outreach initiatives through *in situ* and extramural virtual and temporary exhibits, educational and mediation activities, publications, workshops and conferences. The activities proposed by the museum are intended both for a broad and general public, and for clientele with specialized interests. Its boutique contains products related to those themes—fashion, costumes, textile and fibres.

Montreal has some 40 museums, nine of which are located in Old Montreal, including the Fashion Museum. Although this network does include some major institutions and important national historic sites, it is mainly composed of smaller institutions that are well spread out over the territory. Their uniqueness should be preserved. The engagement of the communities that have given rise to those institutions and of the citizens, individuals, collectors and patrons who contribute to them and support them should be given sustained recognition.

• (0850)

Ms. Joanne Watkins: The Fashion Museum has had to tackle significant challenges for several years, with issues that are common to many institutions in Canada and in Quebec, according to our museologist colleagues.

The first challenge is the diversification of financial resources. Museums—without taking into account all the non-profit organizations involved in the health, education, environment and culture sectors—are looking for financial partners to support activities related to their reciprocal mission. As a result, it is difficult to obtain funding from corporate organizations and even public organizations, since the number of applicants is growing. Despite a successful redeployment plan, including significant museum facilities, financial results trending up and increased attendance, the Fashion Museum must now deal with financial adaptation that requires greater diversification of its resources, since the budgets needed to fulfill those mandates are lacking.

Like many other small museums in Quebec and Canada, the Fashion Museum is facing a difficult financial situation. Governments' gradual disengagement from providing funding for cultural institutions and events, and competition from national and provincial museums for philanthropic donations largely contribute to this situation. Regional and national associations have been able to attest to this for several years now. Museum management teams are intensifying their efforts to find the funding needed to carry out fundamental museum functions, and that has now become almost full-time work. When museums have small teams, the management is looking for money almost on a full-time basis. It is quite a challenge to do more with less in a constantly evolving competitive world without losing sight of the conservation of heritage we have been entrusted with, for everyone's benefit, and for the benefit of future generations in particular.

Let's talk about the actions undertaken by the Fashion Museum. Since 1987, the museum's operations have been supported by Quebec's department of culture and communications, whose funding accounts for about a third of the budget the museum needs to operate. The museum's independent revenues are generated through admissions, memberships, rentals and various activities, such as guided tours, workshops, courses, conferences and benefits. We also hold an annual fundraiser. Over the last two years, the museum has been benefiting from the generosity of a patron who is contributing vintage items and accessories to its boutique inventory. The boutique sales are now an important portion of the museum's revenues. I will come back to the necessary support if I have enough time.

The second challenge is the creation of a permanent team. A museum's management consists of many challenges for each of the duties to be performed. We believe that the main challenge has to do

with creating a permanent team. That is a crucial challenge for the Fashion Museum. Every year, the museum submits the maximum number of requests for public funding for the hiring of active or graduate students and contract workers, but without really achieving its financial objectives. In fact, the responses do not always meet the expectations or the needs.

Moreover, job insecurity, less than competitive wages—the programs often cover only minimum wage—the versatility needed in terms of skills and experience, the short project time frames, without taking into account the lack of social benefits, make the hiring and retention of employees a major challenge and an ongoing juggling exercise. Despite sustained efforts by both the management and the board of directors, as well as strong expenditure management, the minimum operating budget needed to ensure the Fashion Museum's day-to-day operations, by qualified staff, has still not been reached.

Let's talk about the steps taken. Annually, the museum submits a huge number of requests for funding under public organizations' existing programs, both for....

[*English*]

The Chair: You have two minutes left.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: ... specific projects and the hiring of temporary staff. This year, in order to be as specific as possible about its needs in terms of human resources, the museum has defined the major sectors covering all of its members for which it is important to consolidate and establish permanent positions in addition to the three current positions.

The third challenge is the recognition of collections. The Fashion Museum's presence in Montreal is garnering a lot of interest from clothing and textile collectors. They see it as an ideal place for the study, preservation and promotion of their collections. The current exposition called "Parcours d'une élégante", which is made up of donations from a single collector and museum donor, has that kind of an influence on visitors. We are getting more and more donation offers of clothing, accessories and objects. However, the management of collections and the reserve—especially since the Fashion Museum's facility is located a few kilometres away from our site—requires means, and human, material and technical resources for which a specific budget must be set aside. Since that important function for a museum is not visible, and especially since it does not generate any revenue, it is often dealt with intermittently among many other priorities.

I will close with the fourth challenge, the promotion of the Canadian museum network.

The Fashion Museum is facing significant competition, since Montreal has a strong offering of culture and entertainment. Other museums are also putting a lot of energy into the promotion and smooth operation of their activities, and that unfortunately leaves little room for collaboration among institutions. Through their imposing visibility and notoriety, major institutions are strongly overshadowing the small ones instead of playing a unifying role. So museums are competing, and mutual assistance is difficult due to a lack of staff available for the needs of others. In addition, small institutions suffer from the crushing media dominance of the major ones.

The Fashion Museum had a lot of visibility when it moved to Montreal in 2013 and when it changed its name in 2016. However, a number of advertising tools have become obsolete and should be updated. All the signage inside Bonsecours Market, which is home to the museum, must be reconsidered.

• (0855)

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Watkins, I will let you have a few seconds to round out your sentences, but I'm going to have to cut you off. I'm sorry.

[Translation]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The support of Canadian Heritage is necessary for all of the challenges. Of course, the department has put forward programs, including the endowment incentive program, the museums assistance program, and so on. However, collaboration in terms of institutions' operations should be considered. When there is no firm operating budget and we constantly have to submit requests for specific projects, the management of requests and specific projects prevents us from doing the work we should do regularly, since—

[English]

The Chair: Ms. Watkins, you may have an opportunity to make some points when you're being asked the questions, but you are now at 11 minutes plus.

[Translation]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Okay.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I will ask Ms. Cole of the Commonwealth Association of Museums to go ahead for 10 minutes, please.

Ms. Catherine Cole (Secretary-General, Commonwealth Association of Museums): Madam Chair, vice-chairs and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak about the current state of museums in Canada.

I began working in museums when I was 15 years old as a volunteer in a volunteer-run county museum in Ontario. I've worked in heritage interpretation and curatorial positions in large and small museums, and as a consultant on cultural planning and policy development, strategic research, and innovative community-based arts and heritage initiatives throughout Canada, particularly in the north, for more than 30 years. I've also worked internationally, and

as secretary-general of the Commonwealth Association of Museums, I have a global perspective on this issue.

CAM is a Canadian not-for-profit corporation with a focus on human rights, social justice, and the advancement of the museum profession throughout the Commonwealth.

I'm going to talk about the state of museums in Canada in terms of the five essential functions of museums, how museums can and do benefit society, and how CAM is positioned to influence international heritage policy and practice and contribute to Canada's positive global reputation in the museum sector.

The international definition of a museum is:

A non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

The way each of these five essential functions is carried out has changed considerably in recent years, in Canada and elsewhere. There's a tendency for the public to focus on exhibitions and programs, but the unseen work in the back of the house—acquisition, preservation, and research—is equally important and directly impacts the quality of what the public sees.

Public funding has not kept pace with museum functions. Museums globally are constantly reassessing what it means to operate in the service of society and its development and are acting upon the UN sustainable development goals, addressing issues as diverse as safety, equality, and sustainability. Within Canada, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls for action impact all heritage institutions.

• (0900)

Museums operate in the public trust. Their assets are publicly owned.

Many Canadian museums were established as centennial projects in 1967, housed in heritage buildings that require restoration or in purpose-built facilities that require maintenance and/or expansion.

There are new museums to be established. Nunavut became a separate territory in 1999 but still does not have a territorial museum. The country is increasingly urban, yet Vancouver is the only large city in Canada that has a city museum.

In terms of the five functions, our collections may be valuable monetarily and are priceless in terms of Canadian heritage, but they do not necessarily reflect broad themes in Canadian history or more recent events.

Museums have limited ability to collect, due to the lack of storage space and human and financial resources. When significant artifacts that would improve collections become available, museums may not have the resources to collect them. Some have removed objects from their collections, whether to free up space or to raise necessary funds.

As for preservation, museums have limited ability to preserve artifacts in their collection, due to the lack of space and particularly the lack of trained conservation staff as a result of stagnant or reduced operating budgets. Mid-sized museums have reduced the number of curatorial and conservation positions to introduce new positions in programming, marketing, fundraising, communications, and new technology, for example.

In terms of research, most museums do not have the resources to conduct any research or only conduct research for specific exhibition projects. As curators retire, their knowledge is often lost rather than transferred to new staff.

With regard to exhibitions, the concept of permanent exhibitions is passé. Visitors expect to see regularly changing exhibitions, although museums do not have the resources to change exhibitions as often as either museologists or visitors would like. It is difficult for small to mid-sized Canadian museums to develop exhibitions that travel within the country and for any but the largest Canadian museums to participate in international travelling exhibitions that would feature Canadian heritage.

With respect to communication, as educational institutions, museums offer resources for teachers, curriculum-based education programs for students, and informal continuing educational opportunities for adults. As community centres, they serve as the community safety deposit box by housing important collective memories. They can provide programs to address specific social problems, integrate marginalized people, serve a preventive justice role, enhance health and well-being, and often act as a drop-in centre for seniors.

As cultural tourism attractions, they can draw people to a community and keep them there longer. As economic regeneration drivers, they can revitalize downtown areas. As catalysts for creativity, they offer a respite for the pressures of today's world and inspire visitors to think about an incredibly diverse range of topics.

Changing demographics have had a huge impact on institutional mandates. It is increasingly important to understand world cultures. Traditional audience members and volunteers are aging, and museums are reaching out to younger people as audience, volunteers, staff, and board members.

Within Canada, the proportion of immigrants and, in parts of the country, aboriginal people is increasing. Museums are becoming more responsive to their communities, engaging aboriginal people and new Canadians in board, staff, and volunteer roles, partnering with aboriginal people and ethnocultural communities for the development of exhibitions related to their cultures, and developing exhibitions and programs that are more meaningful to diverse people.

Museums are subject to pressures similar to those of other cultural and educational institutions. The increased emphasis on teamwork and partnerships has made the planning and execution of projects more challenging and time-consuming, as well as often richer and more rewarding. Potentially this extends to international collaboration.

Museum work has become more complex due to issues of identity and demographics, but also because of technological innovations, which have made new ways of working possible but have also created another layer of work within museums.

● (0905)

Exhibits, whether new media contemporary artworks or interactive exhibits in other types of museums, can be challenging technologically. Visitors expect sophisticated interactive elements in physical and virtual exhibitions that are often beyond museum budgets. Museum salaries are low relative to one's education and experience. Many museums have cut back on the number of staff or the number of hours worked, or both, in order to balance the budget, yet the output of museums has not been significantly reduced.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Ms. Catherine Cole: In fact, it has increased due to the pressures mentioned above.

The proportion of public funding has decreased, while the proportion of earned revenue, corporate sponsorships, and foundation and private donations has increased. Museum workers spend an increasing proportion of their time identifying potential sources of funding and applying for project funds.

As for the Commonwealth Association of Museums, it is positioned to influence international heritage policy and practice and to contribute to Canada's positive global reputation in the museum sector. It is committed to help facilitate initiatives and changes within a global context that may result from this review of the state of museums. As an affiliated organization of the International Council of Museums, CAM participates in the advisory committee and votes at meetings of the general assembly. As an accredited commonwealth organization, CAM can send two official delegates to the commonwealth heads of government meetings and the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers.

CAM is collaborating with ICOM CAMOC, Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities, on a new project about migration that will explore how to encourage the participation and inclusion of migrant populations in what Doug Saunders has called "arrival cities" and foster dialogue between diverse people and urban environments.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Ms. Catherine Cole: CAM has also initiated a project in Africa on how to develop policy and legislation on human remains management, an issue of concern to Canadian museums as well.

Our international internships, supported by the Young Canada Works program, are invaluable for the interns and host museums, but they're underfunded. We also have an introduction to museum studies that we offer through distance learning, which benefits people in remote communities who are unable to participate in professional training.

In closing, I would like to draw to your attention how CAM plans to commemorate Canada 2017 as it addresses particular issues and challenges facing museums and the broader heritage sector.

Next year in Calgary we'll hold a two-day study tour of Blackfoot heritage sites in southern Alberta, a one-day indigenous heritage round table to create an action plan in response to the UNDRIP and the TRC, and a two-day international symposium on heritage and nationhood. These events will showcase Canadian heritage to the world, contribute to the debate about indigenous heritage, and provide opportunities for Canadian museum professionals to learn from the experience of others internationally.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we will go to the question section.

The first round will be seven minutes, which means seven minutes for questions and answers. I would ask you to all be as concise as you possibly can.

We will begin with Mr. Vandal from the Liberals.

[*Translation*]

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

I want to first put my questions to the Fashion Museum representatives. I will initially talk about the financial aspect and the budget.

What is your annual budget?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: It has varied from year to year for 37 years. The museum receives a set subsidy, but we have to find money through projects, programs or other activities.

I would say that the budget varies from \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually. To meet the needs, the budget would have to be about \$500,000. So, in the years when the budget is \$300,000, there are fewer visitors or fewer exhibit projects. Collection management is set aside somewhat.

Mr. Dan Vandal: What is the budget for this year?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: It's \$300,000.

Mr. Dan Vandal: A budget of \$300,000 means that....

Ms. Joanne Watkins: It's a difficult year.

Mr. Dan Vandal: It's a difficult year.

What percentage of the budget comes from governments, the private sector or foundations?

● (0910)

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Between 35% and 40% of the funding comes from the Government of Quebec. Employment programs, which are also government programs, probably provide an additional 10%. There is Emploi-Québec, Canadian Heritage—through the young Canada works program—and Canada summer jobs. So that's more money from governments. Independent revenues account for 20%. To cover the rest, we try to find funding through specific projects or collaborations with patrons.

However, it is very difficult.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Funding is always a challenge for you, right?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Yes.

Mr. Dan Vandal: In Ottawa—

Ms. Joanne Watkins: As my colleague said, this activity consumes a tremendous amount of time museum management team members have. I have been in this environment for 30 years, and I feel that all I currently do is look for ways to obtain money. I do management work, of course, but I no longer do what I have to do. I seek out funding.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Canadian Heritage manages a number of programs, such as the museums assistance program, the movable cultural property program and young Canada works.

Does your museum use Canadian Heritage programs and services? You mentioned the young Canada works program. What is your experience with Canadian Heritage when it comes to that?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Every year, we submit requests to young Canada works and Canada summer jobs, and they are accepted. This year, Canada summer jobs provided us with funding to hire two individuals for seven weeks. They are just getting in and out. That short period of time does not allow them to do a lot of work. It's not sufficiently long, both in the case of young Canada works programs and the Canada summer jobs programs.

This year, we received funding from the museums assistance program for a collections management project, which will help us reorganize the reserve. When we moved to Montreal, we received funding from Canadian Heritage for the installation and set-up of our room, which was extremely helpful. We have a very nice room that meets the standards and is well organized for presenting expositions.

Yes, we are familiar with the programs and yes, we request funding every year. However, the response is not always the one we expect, even if it is positive.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Do you have any suggestions for the committee today to improve the existing programs for museums?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: A program could be created for the new generation—young graduates—to enable them to join an institution to apply their knowledge. However, that program should last longer than seven weeks. For example, it could be a two-year program.

We get a huge number of people with a master's degree who hold temporary positions through student employment programs. Unfortunately, as those programs provide for very short employment periods, graduates look for another job and go elsewhere to build their career.

A program of that kind would be extremely welcome.

Mr. Dan Vandal: You talked about jobs lasting seven weeks, which is not a very long time. Has that period been longer in the past? Has its length changed over the past few years?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Yes, it was a bit longer before. Undergraduate students can start working in May instead of June. From May to August, there are four months of work, which would be better.

The fact remains that these jobs are a form of temporary support and should not replace permanent jobs. Permanent teams must first be created. The temporary jobs support these teams.

We make agreements with vocational schools, including the Collège Montmorency, because museum technicians often use museums as study topics. A project on the reserve collection was launched by a group of students. They came to study the reserve collection and gave us suggestions.

We make agreements with vocational schools, but that involves a great deal of human resources management.

• (0915)

[*English*]

The Chair: You have one minute.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dan Vandal: Since we only have one minute left, I will let you speak so you can share your most important message with the committee.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: The most important thing is to recognize the value of museums by establishing programs that help them fulfill their mandates. I am referring to mandates regarding conservation, dissemination, and research.

As long as we are struggling to find funding to fulfill our mandates, certain work won't get done, and often, it's the collections that suffer.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watkins.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dan Vandal: Thank you for your presentation, Ms. Watkins.

[*English*]

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

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Watkins, you identified four challenges, but you had a limited amount of time. Can you identify any other challenges?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: I have about a hundred.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: But you're only going to speak about four.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Exactly.

The challenges are abundant. Managing a museum is a major challenge because important duties need to be carried out that involve more than focusing on specific things. Much else needs to be done.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: I would also add that a sense of long-term commitment needs to be apparent. I am here to make sure the entire Canadian industry is informed.

We have a great history, and people don't even know it. I think it's very important for the history to be known for the retailers I approach to take interest in the museum. It's also important for our Canadian manufacturers, in both the fur and fashion industries. However, they don't feel a sense of long-term or short-term commitment. This instability prevents them from becoming fully involved in supporting the museum.

We need to approach the major Canadian manufacturers and generate interest among the country's major fashion retailers. It's a vibrant and large industry, but its significance is disregarded. French, Italian, American, and British people are very proud of their fashion sector because a museum exists to tell its story. We continue our work because we're passionate about it. However, we sometimes feel a bit vulnerable because of the lack of short-term, medium-term, and long-term commitment. We need it to show that we'll mobilize and integrate all the strengths of Canada's fashion industry.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Related to that, or building on that, the experts these days say that our economy is shifting to one that's focused more on cities than on countries, that the success of cities to be quality economic places depends on their success in the creative sectors of the economy. Those creative sectors depend on a couple of things that museums might contribute to. One is a high quality of life that attracts those creative people, but also institutions like yours that are focused on design, design being one of those creative industries that's supposed to be a driving force in higher-value economies these days.

Could you speak to the role that your museum has developed, or should develop, in terms of that integration with those elements of the local economy in Montreal?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: We want our museum to fulfill the duty to remember. To be proud of our history, we must first learn our history. It's important, because we're the keepers.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Of course, in fashion everything that goes around comes around 15 years later.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: Of course. However, it's very important to know that we don't want our museum to focus only on the past. We want to integrate all the emerging young designers and new and dynamic companies. We want the museum to be a home for all those who believe in and support Canadian fashion.

Fashion has an extraordinary element that represents Canada's very essence, that is, it brings all communities together. I was born in Quebec and I'm francophone, but anglophone manufacturers gave me my start, and I have worked with the best designers, including Portuguese and Italian designers. Canadian fashion has an extraordinary international flavour that brings people together.

Not only are we telling a great story, but we also play an exceptional role in the story, one people don't suspect. For example, in the beginning, the fur industry was very important across Canada. The industry continues to innovate with recycled fur and with all the young people who are making fur relevant. The museum tells this story, and they're all encouraged to share their experiences with us. For each of our exhibits, we make sure to invite four or five current designers to create a piece based on the exhibit's theme.

We are rooted in a reality where innovation and tradition come together.

• (0920)

Ms. Joanne Watkins: That's one of the challenges. One of our hundred challenges is to promote and unite the emerging fashion industry.

[English]

The Chair: You have two minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: We submitted a proposal for a Canada-wide virtual exhibit project with the theme of 150 years of fashion in Canada. We submitted it twice, but, unfortunately, the project was not accepted. At the Fashion Museum, we are very interested in forging many links across Canada based on our theme. However, once again, we need the means to do so. If the process always consists of trying to create a project proposal, submitting it under a very specific framework, and waiting for a response—which generally comes six months later—we would have had time to do something else in the interim.

It's thus extremely difficult to carry out day-to-day activities, especially solicitation and development activities. It's not possible right now, but we would very much like to expand across the country.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: Yes. When I started as a fashion designer, I was part of the Fashion Designers Association of Canada. The great thing was that shows were always being held in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, followed by a tour of all the Canadian cities. The association no longer exists. I think the museum can represent the link, the creative hub that takes Canadian and pan-Canadian fashion across Canada.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: And promotes it abroad as well.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: Yes, abroad, of course.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: I don't have much time left, but I'm told we might get another five-minute round.

The Chair: You have 30 seconds left.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Think about this to answer in the next round.

Some museum experts in the United States, and this builds on the last question, say there is a transition occurring from museums as quasi-public institutions to becoming part of civil society, more divorced from public funding, and more committed to having separate identities, foundation funding, industry funding, and public-generated funds, and that has been happening in the United States.

I'd like both sets of witnesses to think about that question, because you're not going to have time to answer now.

The Chair: No, because you're over time.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Think about that question, and if that's something that's happening in Canada and elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Is that something that will happen, and what are the implications?

The Chair: Thank you.

Next is Mr. Nantel, for the NDP.

[Translation]

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

Thank you to the three witnesses for being here this morning. It's certainly very informative to learn about your situation, which is obviously very different from that at other museums.

Regardless, parallels can be made between the remarks we've heard from the various witnesses. For example, when she was here on Tuesday, Ms. Blanchette, from the Musée Pointe-à-Callière, said it would be good to have a program to generate support from the industry and private sector.

I think you made good points, Mr. Poitras, and I have the impression you're on a mission. Thank you. Honestly, it's rare to find someone with such a strong background in design and fashion on a board of directors.

Another observation was made when we heard from René Rivard, who identified...

I see you agree.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Of course, we know each other. It's a network.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Mr. Rivard spoke of the importance of creating a national storage system or a similar structure. If a material were difficult to store, I suppose it would be clothing as opposed to a marble sculpture.

The key question I want to ask—and the reason why I think it's very worthwhile to have you here—concerns your recent move. It's very important because, for the Saint-Lambert community, which is very close to my Longueuil community, the Musée du costume et du textile du Québec was long seen as a forgotten gem. It was located in a very visible spot, but on a very inaccessible street corner without parking. The students from the school next door would visit the museum, but other than that, I don't think it had many visitors. I want you to tell us about this little museum, which may have been too large for its location.

Today, you have a new location. The change corresponds perfectly to the new trend referred to by Mr. Van Loan of museums becoming places to bring people together in society.

You're now at the Bonsecours Market, where the Grande braderie de mode québécoise is located. The stars are aligned. All the elements are in place, but some magic needs to happen to move things forward.

• (0925)

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Indeed.

The museum is 37 years old. It was located in Saint-Lambert, in a very small historic building. Nevertheless, many large exhibits were held there. The collections were put together with the help of donations. In 2005, the management at the time agreed the collection was made up much more of things like textiles and fashion. That's why the Musée Marcil became the Musée du costume et du textile du Québec.

Five years ago, when I started working at the museum, which, back then, was in Saint-Lambert, as the executive director, my mandate was to look at what had been done to move the museum and to find a solution. Projects to move the museum to Longueuil, Saint-Lambert, or the post office had been ongoing for 20 years. However, it was clear that if the museum wanted to expand while keeping its fashion and textile art focus, it had to move to Montreal.

We looked at the possible locations, and the Bonsecours Market turned out to be the right spot, specifically because the museum's main theme is tied to what goes on at the market. However, I won't deny that going from paying a modest rent to a high rent has caused an additional problem with covering the museum's operating costs.

That said, we're very pleased. The location is suitable, and the number of visitors has doubled. We want it to quadruple or quintuple. Each year, 700,000 people visit the Bonsecours Market. While studying the business plan that enabled us to move the museum to Montreal, it became clear to me that if 10% of those people visited the museum, we would be doing well.

I also spoke to you about a signage problem at the market. There's not enough signage, which is a drawback. I will soon be meeting with a Canadian Heritage official to study the matter and look for a solution, and not only for the museum. We are located in a heritage building, and the area is popular with everyone.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: Joanne, I would like to add something.

Mr. Nantel, what you said is very important. We are at the museum, and there is the Grande braderie de mode québécoise. The people at the market have seen that we've really changed things. They are now giving us space throughout the market, which is quite extraordinary.

Also, the Quebec Craft Council is already established at the Bonsecours Market. We think the area could very easily become a design and fashion centre for tourists to discover. When they leave the museum, all the tourists tell us that it taught them that Canadian fashion existed. That's quite significant. Almost everything is in place to establish this creative fashion and design hub.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: It's called political will.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: It's—

[*English*]

The Chair: You have just over one minute.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: If you have time before leaving, I suggest that you visit the Byward Market and look at the main building. There are strange and worrying similarities between the two locations. In that building, the signage is very confusing. It think it's an example of what not to do.

The location of your museum in Montreal is very popular with tourists. Everyone goes there.

Are there fashion lovers in Montreal who subscribe to magazines but know nothing about all this? Do you think a partnership would be possible? The costume dimension has become more prominent as a result of Montreal's Grand Costumier, which saved Radio-Canada's wardrobe collection.

Can your profile be raised by our stars?

• (0930)

Ms. Joanne Watkins: The Grand Costumier is a completely different ball game. Also, they have just hired a director and they're involved in their own moving project. In that vein, I was on the board of directors of the Centre national du costume, a large costume collection in Montreal created by François Barbeau, who passed away recently. It's a completely different market. The Grand Costumier's goal is to rent out costumes and recover its costs. However, I did tell them that, if they're interested, certain donations that we receive but don't keep could go to them. The fact remains that it's a completely different dynamic, process, and so on.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

If we want to have a five-minute second round, we're going to have to stick to the time.

Now we go to Mr. O'Regan for the Liberals.

Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Ms. Cole, I'll begin with you. I'm less interested in comparison to American best practices than I am in comparisons to those of our European, Australian, and New Zealand friends. In terms of where they're going and the models they're following, particularly when it comes to funding, are you witnessing any changes there, or are they in the same place as we are?

Ms. Catherine Cole: The situation in Britain is pretty dire right now in terms of public funding for museums. I would say they're in an even worse state than we are, not necessarily at the national perspective but in local fundraising. Local funding has been totally cut, so a lot of local museums' councils are just shutting their doors. As I said, it's a huge problem there. The funding crisis is an international one for sure.

The big difference between the United States and Canada in terms of funding is that they have a totally different culture in terms of funding things. Museums are seen as a public resource in Canada. They are seen as government institutions. They are—

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: They're European.

Ms. Catherine Cole: Yes. We follow the British model of establishing museums, so people think these are educational institutions and they should be provided for free. That's not the American situation.

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: Would you care to expand? Is there anything further when it comes to Europe, Australia, or New Zealand? Have you witnessed anything there that has helped them? Are they attempting to overcome the situation?

Ms. Catherine Cole: We are all making the same argument.

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: We are all making the same argument.

Ms. Catherine Cole: Yes, but I think what we are trying to do is diversify what we say our benefit to society is. We're really emphasizing that aspect to people so that people understand that what museums are today isn't what they were 20 or 50 years ago and that we are doing so many things in so many sectors across the country.

You mentioned the way our cities are changing in terms of their positioning in the world. Well, it's really important that we have city museums that look at what our cities are like, and yet in large cities in this country, we don't.

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: I think one of the challenges for this committee is attempting, in everything we study, to find best practices in other parts of the world in common-minded countries.

To either one of you, when you talk to your colleagues abroad, have you witnessed any programming, particularly when it comes to funding and the relationships with their respective governments, that you would deem to be progressive or forward-thinking that perhaps we could look at or follow?

There's a lot of shrugging of shoulders. I guess misery loves company.

Ms. Catherine Cole: I think it's up to you to set the bar here. There isn't a best practice out there.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: I have just been invited to cover the Seoul Museum of Design. I think there's a great political resolve over there to position Korea as a country with incredible design and fashion. Right now, there's an absolutely extraordinary buzz around Korea. This country is setting itself up on the world stage in this field. For instance, I've discovered Korean designers at a big trade fair in Paris called MAISON&OBJET, where they had a group display.

[English]

This is the new image of Korea. Yes, we are design.

[Translation]

There is also the idea of international positioning. They invite people like me to cover this new, totally revolutionary museum of design, which mixes the most beautiful architecture in the world with the world of design. Everyone who loves design just wants to go and see what is happening in Korea.

• (0935)

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Is it a state museum?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: Yes, it's a state museum. The industry of fashion and design came together around this museum. Everyone joined in and adopted this idea of positioning Korea as a forward-looking country.

I think it's the general will, but initially the Korean government decided to seek out the manufacturers, retailers and designers. It chose to change its image and position itself as a true leader. That was done within five years.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: When I talked about recognizing museums, we have been experiencing something special not only in Montreal, but in Quebec. In Montreal, there are about 40 museums. There are 400 in Quebec, and perhaps 2,000 in Canada. Montreal could position itself as a city for museum tourism. We could invite people to come to Montreal to visit the museums. We are constantly promoting big institutions, instead of uniqueness, variety and so on.

I think it is important that smaller and medium-sized institutions exist. Not all collections can be presented in the same places, because the purpose of big institutions is not always to show all sorts of collections.

In a nutshell, a Fashion Museum in Montreal is important. Other types of museums elsewhere are also important, regardless of their size. I am realizing that, the more things move forward and the more I work in the industry, the more inequity there is. Big institutions are pulling the strings more and more and are successful, both in the private and public sectors, in raising funds, although they can also say that they need money, proportionately speaking. When I talk about inequity, I mean amounts that, sometimes and suddenly, end up in a big institution and are not distributed among the smaller institutions. We are wondering what they are doing for that to happen. The way I see it, they are pulling the strings.

Actually, inequity is a problem. It is important to recognize all the types of museums and the uniqueness of museums everywhere. People who make donations, visitors, and especially those who contribute to collections freely are interested in specific institutions.

[English]

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: I'm fascinated by your response on Korea

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: In fact, what you're talking about is the rebranding of an industry, but also a rebranding of a country through a museum.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: That's the case.

[*English*]

Exactly.

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: I think that's fascinating.

Go ahead.

Ms. Catherine Cole: Could I just speak on Korea as well?

In Asia—

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: I would go just to see this place.

Ms. Catherine Cole: They are putting a lot of money into museums and culture in Asian countries generally. They're seen as being very significant.

The Seoul Museum of History invited me over there a few years ago. They have a special international conference every year, and they bring in the world's greatest experts from a different region. They bring them in. We don't bring anybody in.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: They are museums of mediation.

[*English*]

Mr. Seamus O'Regan: Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your time.

I think we can do only a three-minute round in this session, because we've gone well over time. The second round is a three-minute round, not a five-minute round.

Mr. Van Loan, you have three minutes, please.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: You heard my question. Seamus touched on it a little bit. Does anybody have anything more to add to that? This is the notion of this shift in the U.S. from museums as public institutions to part of civil society, separated off from the public.

Ms. Catherine Cole: Museums certainly are a part of civil society. We have a strange structure, in that some of them are public institutions that are lined up as part of government-run museums, and then some of them are part of the voluntary sector. However, all museums are part of the voluntary sector because we depend so heavily on volunteers for everything that we do.

Because museums are taking on much larger social themes and social issues, we are more and more involved in civil society, so we certainly do position ourselves in civil society, but as I was saying, the American funding model is so totally different that we can't play in that field. Canadians are not expecting to contribute to museums the way they do in the United States. We don't have the philanthropic model for that. You don't get the same type of tax benefits in Canada as they do. We don't have the foundations with the huge amounts of money that they do in the U.S. It's just a totally different place here from what it is there, and we can't follow their model in terms of culture.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: You guys are from Montreal. We've heard a lot about the museum directors' association in Montreal, and the benefits it has provided. That is a model I don't think I've seen in terms of the actual services to museums that are provided elsewhere in the country. Perhaps you could speak a bit about that, and the difference it's made to your museum. I assume you are members of it.

● (0940)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joanne Watkins: The Montreal Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization has been around for a very long time and has actually put in place a pooling system. Unfortunately, we are not part of it. However, it was a very collegial project that brought a great deal of people together.

In the past, I was the coordinator of a network of museums in Montérégie. The network was called the Cellule régionale d'expertise en muséologie and was funded for a three-year period through a specific project by the ministry of culture. If we set up pilot projects, we need at least three years to do the work and get them off the ground. The network led joint promotion projects specifically in 17 museums. The money was for everyone, which is a great idea. That's what the Société des musées de Montréal is doing as well, just like the Société des musées du Québec and the Canadian Museums Association. They provide services to all the institutions that are members. The services vary. We are talking about training, support and technical services.

That might be an avenue worth exploring. Allowing associations to provide services to their members could be one way to help.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Watkins.

Mr. Breton, from the Liberals, you have three minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

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

My thanks to the three witnesses for joining us today. Congratulations on your illustrious career, Mr. Poiras. It is a great source of pride for Quebec and Canada.

We have talked at length about the financial challenges. Among other things, you mentioned government commitments, particularly for Canada. I would like to know whether there have been commitments or some sort of participation in previous years, of which I am not aware. When you talk about disengagement, are you referring to the funding that you received from Canadian Heritage or other departments and to which you are no longer entitled today? I would like to make sure I understand your remarks.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: The amounts are not going up, which means that there is a decrease to some extent. More and more groups are submitting projects and are trying to obtain funding. That's the way things are playing out. The grant from the ministry of culture to museums has not gone up in a number of years.

Mr. Pierre Breton: It is stagnant.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: The costs are increasing and we are doing more with far less. We are very creative and you have to see it. All museums are.

Mr. Pierre Breton: Congratulations for your work and your resilience.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: I think the time has come to think and act differently. We really must think differently.

To illustrate, I helped with the groundwork of a development project that started slowly four years ago. It reached the pinnacle of its success in Toronto at the largest furniture show in Canada.

In a way, it was the initiative of the regional CEGEP of Lanaudière in Terrebonne, where they have an industrial design department. They came to see me to tell me that, first of all, it was time to reposition Quebec, but eventually and ideally, it was time to reposition all of Canada with respect to our approach to design and our activities.

Two colleagues, who are industrial designers and researchers, and I created what we called the reference guide to Quebec furniture to try to find a new way to approach this fuzzy picture of furniture manufacturers in Quebec. We did that because the furniture industry is very important in Canada. Those who have withstood the Asian wave of production are searching inside themselves a little, calling themselves into question and wondering how they will stand out and what they will do. They are constantly in survival mode. They must go in a different direction.

We thought that we really needed to believe in the power of design in order to stand out and we have gone back to our roots and our traditions over the years. First, we persuaded seven manufacturers.

• (0945)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Breton, I'm afraid I am going to have to ask Mr. Nantel to kindly allow you to finish that bit in his three minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Mr. Poitras, could you elaborate on your idea by focusing on the fact that designer Philippe Dagenais closed his shop. We have to have a clear picture.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poitras: I'm sorry, but I have to set the record straight. Mr. Dagenais is a great interior designer who sold his name to business people a number of years ago. So Mr. Dagenais has no longer been involved in this business for over 10 years.

There is a connection to fashion because we have matched seven industrial designers with seven manufacturers and we tried to find what might define us. So we showed the first results four years later in Toronto, which was an incredible success. We won two of the most prestigious prizes of the show. We were referred to as "the jewel of the show". It was a revelation for all the journalists. Right now, we are covered both in Milano and Paris in amazing publications. It was all done internally by getting everyone involved.

Export Québec is behind us. We have the government's support because we dared to do things differently. We have even convinced those at the base, the manufacturers, making sure that we had the government's support. I think that's what we need to take away today. We need stimulating projects that result from the commitment both of the government and the industry as a whole.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: You are absolutely right.

It is interesting and I am glad you mentioned the Korean model given that I gave the Minister and her office the book entitled *The Birth of Korean Cool*. This book talks precisely about what is happening in Korea. The best known phenomenon, the famous *Gangnam Style* song, is a government initiative and is completely supported by the state.

By the way, Ms. Watkins, are you aware that, in terms of the support for theatre, there has been this—

[English]

The Chair: You have about one minute.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: There was a sort of crisis during which the big theatre institutions bemoaned the fact that they were losing sources of funding because they were giving younger people a chance. Do you think museums are experiencing this trend?

Ms. Joanne Watkins: I wish that were the case. However, I can say that the networks and museums are not big risk takers. Museums do not come forward as strongly as that. I think this actually is a statement of who we are. You are right that museums are doing cultural mediation, and that's what development is. We must stop thinking of museums as closed places with collections.

In that sense, museums need to assert themselves a little more; it can become, as we said earlier, a new brand for Canada's museums. That's where we are.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being present. I know the time was very limited, but we're doing an overview, so I guess we're getting a sense from you of what is right or what is wrong or what needs to change.

I did not know, for instance, until I went to this place called Design Exchange in Toronto, that Canada, after the Second World War, was a leader in industrial design. All those kettles came out of the aluminium lights from the planes that we made. We became an icon in industrial design during that era. Nobody knows about it. I didn't know about it until I visited the museum. I thought, whoa, we need to celebrate this as part of our history. For our 150th, we need to say this is where we were, not only in those kettles, etc., but in a lot of resin furniture, a lot of plastic design, clocks, the console that housed the television and the hi-fi and everything all in one space. We designed that. That was a Canadian design that was really popular in the 1950s.

I think you make a very important point, and thank you very much for coming.

Ms. Joanne Watkins: Thank you.

The Chair: We will just have a minute for the witnesses to leave before we go into the second part of this meeting.

Thank you.

• (0945)

(Pause)

• (0950)

The Chair: Members, we'll begin the second round, and we will need time for an in camera session for business.

Mr. Nantel, may I ask you to take the chair for a couple of minutes?

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Pierre Nantel): We will resume the committee's work.

I would like to welcome our witnesses, Alexandra Badzak, director and chief executive officer of the Ottawa Art Gallery, and Robin Etherington, executive director of the Bytown Museum. If I'm not mistaken, that museum is just next to us, near the locks.

Ms. Etherington, go ahead.

[*English*]

Ms. Robin Etherington (Executive Director, Bytown Museum): *Merci*.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I consider this opportunity to speak before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage a personal privilege, but also it's an honour to represent the Bytown Museum and to speak on behalf of all community museums and community galleries across our remarkable country of Canada.

The Bytown Museum is a registered, not-for-profit charity, as are most community museums and galleries across Canada. The Bytown Museum is now in compliance with the federal Corporations Act, as of October 2014. We could talk about that, but we're going to move forward, because I only have five minutes.

What I want to emphasize at this time—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Pierre Nantel): You have 10 minutes.

Ms. Robin Etherington: Hey, cool, I can get through all of my notes. I'm a happy camper. I plan to entertain.

What I want to emphasize is that the federal government needs to take seriously the revitalizing and the revolutionizing of the national museum policy and the MAP grants. Please know that it is not just this set of wonderful consultation sessions. They're very important, but this is the groundwork. This is the first step in a long-term process to revitalize the funding model and the policies and strategies that will support community museums and community galleries across Canada as they do their community, national, provincial, and even international work.

What this entails is a comprehensive review and, as I said, a revolutionizing of a suite of policies and procedures and an overall funding model for community-level museums and galleries. That includes but is not limited to the national museum policy, the copyright policy, the Corporations Act, the MAP, the Canada summer jobs program, the Young Canada Works programs, the Canadian Heritage Information Network, the Canadian Conservation Institute, and national museums serving as resource centres for community museums.

Both of us have incredibly good working relationships with the national museums, but this is now a broader issue of becoming resource hubs for everyone and of the federal departments communicating with each other and with community museums and coordinating programs and resources to facilitate community museums and galleries and their work on behalf of the Canadian people.

I serve as a witness before this committee from the perspective of a small but vibrant community museum, Musée Bytown Museum. You are quite correct: if you go out your office, you can roll down the hill and land at our front door. You are most welcome—not to roll down the hill, but to come to the museum. We have first aid kits and will take care of you.

It is also, though, on a national heritage site and a UNESCO world heritage site and is managed on behalf of the Canadian people by Parks Canada.

Most museums across Canada are at the community level and have served their community, province, and country for many years.

Museums are addressing the challenges of the 21st century, such as digitization, which was discussed at the session on Tuesday. Youth engagement is absolutely critical. There are dramatic changes in demographics, not only with the baby boomers and the aging population but also in terms of the ethnic composition of our Canadian society, including the arrival of new immigrants every year. For example, most national museums serve as sites for citizenship ceremonies, as will the Rideau Canal heritage site this year on Canada Day. It is unbelievable.

We also deal with the global economy. On top of that, we're dealing with just the old-fashioned traditional issues of tight budgets, retention of incredibly good professional staff, increasing demands on our museum services, and infrastructure problems.

Museums are a critical part of Canada's cultural industry, which contributes billions of dollars annually into Canada's economy, yet the returning investment into culture is, relatively speaking, quite minimal. The Department of Canadian Heritage has not updated its national museum policy or its museum assistance program since the 1990s, and those policies no longer reflect the needs and realities of museums and cultural services in the 21st century.

The Canadian Heritage Information Network serves Canadian museums and galleries well with regard to online requirements and digital requirements. CHIN services have been transferred to the Canadian Museum of History.

• (0955)

If I emphasize anything else apart from the idea that we need to address a suite of policies and programs to support museums and galleries across Canada, it is that digitization of collection records and museum services to provide local and global access to museums is the most critical 21st century reality for museums. It is the foundation of their future.

In my humble little museum, the Bytown Museum, in under four years we have already digitized 4,000 images and uploaded 2,000 records and images onto an online database for public access. We've done that with one provincial grant—and that program has been cut—and two MAP grants, for which I am eternally grateful. My problem is that I can't apply for another MAP grant for that project because it will be considered operational after two years.

These are all project-based grants. There is no operational funding, and digitization for any museum is a long-term project, so we need to have funding in the long term. There are no other grants at any level of government, whether provincial, municipal, or federal, for technology in museums.

In addition, museums are becoming community hubs and centres. They have always been, but they are becoming more so. For example, the Bytown Museum has a community gallery, which we make available for free to any community group, any ethnic community group, any local artist, or any local photographer to put up their own display. In four years, we've had the Chinese community, the Guatemalan community, the Mexican community, and the Polish community. We're about to get the Indonesian community into that community gallery, and we've had a lot of local artists.

• (1000)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Pierre Nantel): You have two minutes left, ma'am.

[Translation]

Ms. Robin Etherington: Thank you.

[English]

I'm going to skip over the rest.

The government reviews and updates the funding model, and I'm asking you to do so. It is 2016, yet the federal funding model is based on 1970s economics and currently does not reflect or respond to the needs and reality of 21st century museums and galleries across Canada.

Here is a list in point form of some of the issues that all of us are facing.

Enhance museum infrastructure physically and digitally. We are a multicultural society, and community museums and galleries are at the ground level. That's where multiculturalism is happening, and we are dealing with that in our exhibitions and programming.

Invest in enhancing cultural heritage and management programs—and I think this was discussed before—not only for the current professionals in continuing to upgrade their skill sets, but also to address the college- and university-level programs in museum management and cultural heritage management.

This last point is very important: the federal government needs to work with us to coordinate federal, provincial, and municipal granting programs and other programs, not only to reduce and streamline the application process that Mr. O'Regan mentioned the other day but also to ensure that we can do our work well for the Canadian people.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Pierre Nantel): I'm sorry, but your time has run out.

[English]

Ms. Robin Etherington: I'm going to leave it at that.

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Pierre Nantel): Thank you very much, Ms. Etherington.

I will now give the floor to Ms. Badzak and the chair back to Ms. Fry.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak (Director and Chief Executive Officer, Ottawa Art Gallery): Good morning. My thanks to the committee for inviting me to appear today.

[English]

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. In the interests of time, I will stick to my notes.

I am the director and CEO of the Ottawa Art Gallery. I have the honour of representing our municipal art gallery, but also to speak more broadly on behalf of municipal and regional galleries across Canada.

My perspective and a lot of my examples come from my local public art gallery, which is in the midst of a major expansion project, not only in the physical plant and infrastructure—we are moving from 12,000 square feet to a new building that is over 80,000 square feet—but also in undertaking growth in human resources, development, fundraising, the adoption of new technology and digital platforms, revenue generation, governance, and expanded programming.

The OAG expansion is slated to open in the fall of 2017 as a cultural legacy project for Ottawa, and many of the challenges and expectations faced by our sector, including the shifting paradigms of the 21st-century museum that are occurring, are paramount in our organization's collective mindset.

No longer just a temple of high culture, a public art gallery needs to be that third space, a cultural hub, a thought leader that can help set progressive agendas within our cities.

What is working? As Robin mentioned, the museums assistance program is one. I can really speak to the impact of this program, because we received a major MAP grant for our Alma Duncan exhibition. Not only did this grant allow us to do primary research on this little-known female artist, who was the first Canadian filmmaker with the NFB—so it was essentially a feminist recovery program—but it also allowed us to create a major publication that went along with that, and then we were able to tour that exhibition regionally. Nobody would have known about this very important artist without that essential funding from MAP.

However, as Robin mentioned, we need that grant, as well as other Canadian Heritage department grants, to be looked at, reviewed, and updated for the 21st-century museum.

As for Cultural Spaces, I can tell you that the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund is fundamental to our growth currently. At this stage, we have accessed that grant through the “specialized equipment” category, but it helps with feasibility studies and things like that. It is fundamental. No gallery considers growth without looking at the support of that grant.

We were very pleased to see that it was reinstated, and with more funds, but given the state of cultural infrastructure across Canada, the demands on this program are going to be extreme and over-subscribed. I will say that a lot of galleries have struggled with the matching portion of that particular grant.

Robin also mentioned the Canadian Conservation Institute. I can't tell you how important they have been for us, guiding us through all aspects of functional design and planning for our new museum, as well as reviewing all major milestones for our design plans. Essentially, they are making sure that when we are in our new building in a year and go back to the federal government to ask for our museum designation, we are compliant on temperature and humidity control, HVAC systems, security, etc. They have been fundamental to us. This essentially allows us to be a museum, a designated space, allowing us to take in cultural property and to share cultural property with our sister organizations.

A lot of galleries across Canada that are not in Ottawa, where CCI finds its home, can't access that program and risk not receiving their museum designation.

Some of the challenges are donor dollars, of course. I think you have talked about it a bit, but I can say from real experience with the Canada Council's acquisition fund that matching programs really are attractive to donors. We would love to see a national matching donation program that would allow us to leverage our donor dollars and stretch them even farther.

Accessibility is a long-underserved but now hot topic for museums and galleries. We need to create accessibility on numerous fronts: physical space, digital assets, retraining of staff, and accessible workplaces, which were often put into buildings that have not been built for people, as is the case of our current home, which is an old county courthouse. We need infrastructure support, but we also need capacity-building, not just to be compliant with the law but to become leaders.

•(1005)

Another aspect is indigenous representation. As a member of the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, we are very aware of the steps we need to take to ensure first nations, Inuit, and Métis people are integral to our museums and galleries, and not just at the programmatic level—because I think we're doing quite well there—but in leadership and at the governance level on board and staff. We need incentives to help us get there, but then we also need the government to have some oversight.

In terms of copyright and new digital skills, there is no doubt that the digital world and all of the changing social media platforms are forcing galleries to rethink the skill sets needed for all of their positions, not only in communications but in all aspects. This is putting pressure particularly on art galleries because, of course, we are not the sole copyright owners of the art that we display. In order

to promote and engage through social media, we have some real challenges that have a direct correlation to the copyright legislation.

With regard to governance, I have the benefit of saying that the OAG board of directors is strong and reflexive and is adopting a new generative model of board governance for our gallery as we move into a period of great growth and change. However, my reality is rare, and I will say that one of the greatest pressures on not-for-profits is the schism that can occur between professional staff and boards. Therefore, we would love to see some training and some oversight from the federal government.

In my last few minutes I want to talk about the national capital context. Both Robin and I have national experience in other galleries across Canada, notably in Saskatchewan, but the national capital context is very particular, so I would like to take a moment to talk about it. I would say that our reality could be transferred to Winnipeg or Halifax, other municipalities that have national museums.

One area is staffing and competitive wages. It's extremely hard for us to attract and retain staff when we have these great national organizations. Both Robin and I have trained staff, engaged them, and have then had them leave to the National Art Gallery and the Museum of Nature. We're happy for them, but it's tough on us.

Another area is bilingualism. The OAG is the only bilingual gallery of its size, and the pressure to find and retain bilingual staff to translate all of our myriad marketing and social media communications output puts a major financial strain on our organization.

Another is marketing and expectations. Our marketing department and dollars can't compare to the nationals, but we're expected to play at the same level. Although we're nimble and responsive and can do very interesting things that national galleries can't, we're often overshadowed.

I don't want to come off as whiny by any means. I think, as Robin said, we have great relationships with our national organizations, but what we'd love to see is more initiatives like the National Arts Centre scene festival, which engages the local communities' galleries and museums, gives us some funding to do parallel programming, and then wraps us into this larger marketing piece. That's very helpful for us. We've become day two of your trip to Ottawa. You see the nationals on day one, and you come to see that local, on-the-ground element on day two.

•(1010)

The Chair: You have two minutes, Ms. Badzak.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: Thank you. I'm very close.

In terms of donor dollars, let's face it: there's a lot of competition here as well in the national capital region. Although our national museums indicate that they have a national membership, a national sponsorship, and national donors, in fact, when you look at their donor walls, it's simply not borne out. A lot of our community leaders and donors who would naturally come to us go to that national level. We're often also overlooked by corporations, which only look at the region, in that they're not making a distinction between local and national institutions. Again, that puts a real strain on what we can do for our own revenue-generating elements.

In closing, I think I can speak on behalf of our sector to say that we're very pleased that the Canadian government sees its museums as key aspects of our cultural identity and embraces the pluralism and the hopes and aspirations of our country. I encourage our government, as Robin indicated, to look at a new national museum strategy and policy in a way that sets the stage for sustainable growth, so that we can truly reflect our demographic changes and regional and global trends. This policy, again as Robin indicated, needs to look at other legislation and policy that in turn affects museum policy. It can't be done in isolation.

To end, I'll quote Max Wyman's wonderful polemic to define imagination. He says:

To maintain a distinctive, pluralistic Canada in which its people's stories are heard and valued, we must nourish the elements that manifest that uniqueness. It is a task the cultural community and government must approach together...

With that, I thank you for beginning the dialogue with us today.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we will go to the question-and-answer round, starting with a seven-minute session. I don't think we'll have time for a second round.

We begin with Ms. Dabrusin for the Liberals. You have seven minutes, please.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you to both of you. It was really interesting to hear about your experiences. I suspect that the Ottawa experience might be quite different from the experience in other cities across the country when you're talking about national museums and small museums.

I wanted to pick up on something. Both of you talked about digitization of what you have in your museums. I wanted to ask you why it is important to digitize what you have in your museums. Is it a marketing piece so that people know what's available, or is there another purpose as well?

Ms. Robin Etherington: Through you, Madam Chair, that is an excellent question, and I'm thrilled to answer it to the best of my ability.

All our young people are accessing information this way. Therefore, to get our information online, we have to digitize not only the collection records and images but also our services. That does not preclude people coming into the museum. In actual fact, in four years we have doubled attendance and we have doubled revenue. It is not one or the other; they are in tandem.

There are now global research reasons. We now have people in Europe and in Mexico asking us for information about our

collection. It has enhanced our reach and our capacity. To do it and to stay competitive with all the other organizations, we have to do the same. We have to digitize our collection and our services.

To your other question, as well as Madam Chair's question two days ago, they actually facilitate our marketing strategy. We put them on Twitter and on Facebook, and that increases our dialogue and our presence not only in our immediate community but also provincially and nationally.

In tandem with that, we have audio tours in six languages. Ottawa Tourism loves us. We've uploaded those onto our website. It's not just digitization of the collections, per se. It again is a suite of strategies and tactics that allows us to be known throughout our community and province and internationally.

• (1015)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: What about the Ontario Art Gallery?

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: It is the Ottawa Art Gallery.

Yes, I would pick up on what Robin said in terms of dialogue. In particular, yes, for marketing, it is absolutely important, but social media is a dialogue between people, and there is an expectation that this information can flow freely. If that's not possible, if we have to control it, if we have to pay for every time that image is going out there, it is a huge challenge for us.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: That leads me to what my next question, the copyright issue. It's come up a couple of times now. I don't know what your thoughts are. How do we protect the rights of our artists and content producers, yet also allow the shift to a more digitized environment? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: I won't claim to be an expert on it. It's something we're certainly struggling with. Obviously, we care deeply about artists and artists' rights to their cultural property. Nonetheless, the expectations in terms of how we move those images around have changed dramatically. I think there has to be an easing off on the institution, whose job it is to promote and present and interpret this work, so that we can get it out on all those platforms in the way that society is demanding. That would be one aspect of it.

You know, I guess we're looking at ways around it. We're having to become much more savvy in the way we, say, take images of installation shots when we're putting up a work. We're not directly showing the work, but we're showing the activity of putting the work up on the wall. We often do interviews with the artists. Again, it is a way of adding to the dialogue and not just using the image of their artwork.

That really changes the type of skill set we're asking our curators to have now. It used to be just research and writing; now we're going to need them to be experts in interviews and videography. It's a challenging landscape ahead.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Do you know from your interactions with museums in other countries and jurisdictions how they are dealing with digitizing their collections and with these copyright issues? Have you seen other jurisdictions deal with this in a better way?

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: I would love to say that I have, but I think we're all struggling with it.

Ms. Robin Etherington: On that note, a resource for you is ICOM and ICOM Canada. The new president of ICOM Canada is Audrey Vermette. They are also doing a phenomenal amount of research on this issue and a number of other issues.

I'll go back to Mr. O'Regan's question to my colleagues prior to this presentation. UNESCO and ICOM are where you're going to find the best practices internationally. We keep forgetting about Latin America. It's not just Europe and the United States, and I can speak to that one, but I won't. We also have incredible museums in Latin America, especially Mexico. Their museography is very distinct from ours.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: You've gone there, you've talked about Mexico, so what can we learn from them? You said they have something distinct.

Ms. Robin Etherington: They have an incredibly deep tradition of museography and museology, which is quite distinct from European and Canadian and American. Their history is a little longer than ours.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: As far as populations go, our history would have, I presume, the same length. Is it the museum part—

Ms. Robin Etherington: Their museography is distinct.

● (1020)

The Chair: Thanks very much, Ms. Dabrusin.

Now we will go to Mr. Van Loan, for the Conservatives.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Ms. Etherington, in your presentation you mentioned the national museum policy and said that it's due for an update. You referred to a full suite of federal programs and things like that. If I were talking to my local museums, I would never hear those phrases come off their tongues. I'm interested in hearing the nuts-and-bolts problems that you face today in running your museum, not in the context of those federal bureaucratic buzzwords but in what your challenges are on a day-to-day basis.

You spoke about digitization, for example, so let's go beyond that one.

Ms. Robin Etherington: Beyond that is the grant-writing aspect. We're not arguing about writing grants; we're arguing about having that whole application process streamlined and coordinated with all three levels of government, because all three levels of government ask the same information, but in different forms. Quite often it's like getting a square peg into a round hole.

Alex mentioned it, and I'm going to expand on it. We have to be compliant with every law. I go annually to the Carters legal workshop for not-for-profits, and the phrase that I remember distinctly, apart from getting a rebate on the HST, is that charities and not-for-profits have to be compliant with every other single law that corporations and businesses have to be. We need to be compliant with occupational health and safety, accessibility, the heritage laws, human rights, labour laws, etc. For a small organization to be compliant on an ongoing basis is really a challenge. I'm not saying it's impossible, and we manage it, but it is indeed a challenge.

The reason I said it should be a review of the suite of policies and practices and strategies that affect us is that if you just change one, if you just update your museum policy—which, by the way, after 30

years would be a really great thing to do—then none of the other ones are in sync with that updated policy. It isn't just the federal government; all of us need to sit down and review it and work together to make sure that everything is in sync. If one is not in sync with the other, it cascades down like dominoes and it will affect us.

Does that make any sense?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: You started on my question, and then you went to another place, but...

Ms. Robin Etherington: Okay. Go ahead.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: It was the question of those nuts-and-bolts problems, and you touched on some of them quite well—

Ms. Robin Etherington: On my nuts-and-bolts problems, I'm going back to something that I referred to about federal departments talking with each other and talking with community museums. My specific problem and huge challenge is NAC's construction, because I'm at the bottom of the hill. I haven't been able to get deliveries for a week. My bread and butter, the way I balance my budget, is lemonade and ice cream. I can't get lemons and ice cream down to my... I get people because they figure out a way to walk down, but I cannot get my deliveries. That is a huge challenge.

The other thing is that I'm on Parks Canada's property. The NAC is at the top of the hill. If the NCC, the RCMP, and the parliamentary precinct make a decision, it shuts down my museum. None of them talks to the others, and the last person to find out that I'm being shut down is me.

If you want today's specific challenge, that's what it is, but it is representative of the situation ever since I've been here.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: A rather radical idea that I've heard from some museum directors and that we've now heard from some witnesses is that there may be too many museums. Some are answering this situation by shutting down. Some are answering it with mergers, such as that of the McCord and Stewart museums in Montreal. Do you guys, from your perspective, think of mergers as being ways of pooling resources at an executive management level?

What are your thoughts on that, both of you?

● (1025)

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: I think that's a reality that we're all going to have to face, to be honest.

I think a natural progression for those that can find the means and the support to move forward and grow organizations versus those who started from a great place but just can't take it to the next level is that inevitably some museums will close. It's not what we want to see by any means, but I think that's the reality, given the pressures facing museums.

That puts on pressure to make sure that other museums are then taking on the mandate of those museums and ensuring that their collections are cared for and preserved and that their stories are told and interpreted.

What we're seeing is that a lot of grassroots community museums are suffering. Some of the larger institutions within their region might have to have that dialogue with them, but it's a huge process of thinking about deaccessioning works or artifacts from their collections and offering them back to their original donors, if they can even find them, and then looking at how best to create a collection management strategy for this foreign collection that might be coming in to some museum.

Yes, I think this may be the reality, but it's not a great one. What we would all like to see is sustainable funding that allows even the smaller organizations, which have such unique stories to tell, to survive too.

Ms. Robin Etherington: I concur. That assessment is spot-on correct.

Forty-nine years ago, for the 100th anniversary of Canada, many communities wanted their own community museum. There was an incredible growth in the number of museums across Canada. You're absolutely right.

One of the multiple issues now is the founder syndrome. Those people who founded those museums are either no longer with us or are about to step away as volunteers. The resources to support that number of museums are increasingly limited. We need to start thinking about partnerships and hubs, and not just in terms of the national museums serving as resource hubs for us, but in general.

Take, for example, the Ottawa Museums Network. All the community and city museums of Ottawa have joined forces under OMN. If nothing else, it allows us to work with the city on an overarching digitization project for the entire city. It helps us have—

The Chair: Can you wrap with one sentence, please?

Ms. Robin Etherington: Thank you. It helps us to have benefit packages for staff, which we couldn't do on our own, as well as to have joint marketing.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next is Mr. Nantel, for the NDP. Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My thanks to both of you for being here with us this morning.

Ms. Etherington, I can confirm that your museum sells excellent ice cream. I was there last year and I ate a Magnum bar, and my wife scolded me for it.

I was quite impressed to participate in a session dealing with a specific page of history. About 15 people were seated and listening to a presentation. They did not seem to me to be tourists, but rather people from the region who were passionate about history.

I'm not sure whether you take care of local mediation much, but we are talking about the national capital, which is not just a simple region. Many tourists come here to visit. Do a lot of people in the region participate in your activities?

The next question is more specifically for Ms. Badzak.

I visited the site called "Ottawa, Canada's Capital" at the address www.ottawatourism.ca, but I was not able to find you there, Ms. Badzak.

[*English*]

Ms. Robin Etherington: I'm going to answer in English. I'm sorry.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: That's no problem.

Ms. Robin Etherington: We really do participate with the community. Apart from partnering with our colleague museums and community museums—of which there are a handful, and they are very good—we also partner with the businesses and the business improvement areas that sponsor us. The Downtown Rideau BIA sponsors our Winterlude ice sculpture. The ByWard Market BIA helps us with our joint programming and marketing. The Kichesippi Beer Co. sponsors our receptions and, because we're going to be 100 next year, is doing a 100th anniversary Bytown Museum beer next year.

We partner with The Haunted Walk for their school programming in haunted walks. We partner with the Department of Canadian Heritage and deliver their youth program called "Click!". We partner with Ottawa Tourism, and they bring down their familiarization tours, etc. The fam tours are the tour operator tours.

As I said, we have a community gallery. One of my pride and joys is our youth council for those 16 to 23. Forget writing essays—we let them do blogs and podcasts. We let them redesign an exhibition in the museum. In actual fact, we've made presentations at national and international conferences about it because everybody is asking how we pull it off, but we're also going to be in the Ontario government's new history textbook as an example of how to engage youth.

● (1030)

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Obviously you are very active in networking in the area.

Ms. Badzak, I've had the chance to be here for a few years, and you're very close to the University of Ottawa. Why don't I see you in the official offerings from Ottawa Tourism?

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: That's a really good question.

Ottawa Tourism is a pay-to-play process. To be honest, I felt that we just didn't have the space to live up to the national offerings, and so we didn't feel it was worth our money yet to spend that money with Ottawa Tourism. Now, with their game-changing expansion, which is happening right next door, as part of which we will have the Ottawa University theatre department, that's a game-changer. That's when the dialogue with Ottawa Tourism will begin. That's where I hope to see us as part of day two on that trip to Ottawa.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I'm asking you this because if you were in a region other than Ottawa, you could have a network, as an offering for tourism, that would be related to a mine or to a specific activity. We've been very pleased to hear that at the nomination of the new president of the nature museum, if I'm not mistaken, they did take the initiative of gathering three museum offerings in one card for Canada 150. I think clearly for foreign tourists to come here, it will be so easy to go through a network.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: It's a lovely idea. We'd love to see more of that sort of initiative. I think that at a local level, we're very interested in having that dialogue. I've been having conversations with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and with Ottawa Dance Directive. Robin and I have had many conversations about how to create some cross-marketing.

You're absolutely right. We know that tourist dollars are limited and tourist time is limited, and if we can package that up and deliver it in a way that's easy and palatable, all the better.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I will piggyback on the question from my colleague, Ms. Dabrusin, about digitization. Your approach to making an interpretation and a contextual exposition of the art work is very different from having a picture of the art work, which then can be used by people making their own birthday cards.

Do you think it would be a good opportunity for Canada to offer to the lowest bidder some centralized approach to digitizing, to volunteering for education, storage, etc.? Do you feel there may be a need for some central...? All of these small museums do not have the resources, but if they all gathered together in one program, could it be helpful?

The Chair: Make it one minute, please.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: I think it would be challenging, that's for sure.

It would have to be regional in its approach. I don't think you could do it on a national level, unless you were dealing with the national institutions. Local solutions could be found in that way, and those are conversations we're having right now about how to find efficiencies amongst ourselves.

I think we have to take a good, hard look at board members, insurance plans, and all those sorts of things. It would not be so much for institutions at our level that are now ready to take that next step forward, but for many institutions that will go under if they don't find those efficiencies.

•(1035)

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have Mr. Samson for the Liberals, for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I will first turn to Ms. Etherington from the Bytown Museum.

You said that the national policy has not changed in over 20 years and that it no longer reflects your challenges and needs. Would you happen to have two or three suggestions for a possible new policy?

[*English*]

Ms. Robin Etherington: Thank you, sir. I think I'm going to also let Alex answer this one, because it's—

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: —because it's so huge?

Ms. Robin Etherington: Well, it's about updating the museum policy. I don't have a specific answer, but we're not in the 1970s anymore, and with 21st-century challenges, museum policy has to

incorporate youth engagement, multiculturalism, technology...and not just digitization.

I stepped onto the dark side in my career and was a technical writer for Nortel Networks. Even back then, there was a revolution in technology every six months. We ended up just putting the manuals online, because by the time we finished a manual, it was obsolete.

Museums and all cultural organizations are faced with that challenge of keeping up with the technology. The policy actually has to address all of that and the fact that we are working in an international world economy and society. Canadian society is contributing to the global society and the global culture, and we need to have our resources making us strong enough to play at that level.

On a long-term basis, this not going to happen overnight. This is a long-term review and research process that will incorporate all of the programs or get rid of some programs and build new programs. Again, I'm going back to a suite of policies and procedures that will affect us.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: To add to that, I think the original policy was very object-based and very protection-based. Those are all very important things, since we won't be museums without objects—the human rights museum may be the exception—but we now need to turn it around on a really basic level in terms of our thoughts and ideas about places of celebration. We know our spaces are beautiful spaces in which people want to congregate and commune with art, but because we have so much strength in our protection of the art work, we don't allow for that natural social gathering to occur.

That's just one tiny, small example. As Robin indicated, the digital world and all of its myriad factors weren't addressed at all.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson: Thank you.

Ms. Etherington, in your document, you say that, next year, we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Rideau Canal's designation as a UNESCO world heritage site. Has that designation added value to your museum in some way?

[*English*]

Ms. Robin Etherington: Merci, and yes, absolutely.

Being on a UNESCO world heritage site is... First of all, Canada doesn't have many, and we need to celebrate being on one. It's also a national historic site. I think next year is the 75th anniversary of national historic sites in Canada.

We're a national historic site and we're a UNESCO world heritage site. You're absolutely right, the museum, the federal government, and the City of Ottawa need to incorporate that remarkable status in all of their promotions of Canada and of Ottawa.

In 2017 we're going to have millions of people here. They want to know that there is something that they can connect with at the international level.

•(1040)

Mr. Darrell Samson: It's three celebrations, in a sense: the 10th year anniversary of the canal, the 100th year anniversary of your museum, and the 150th year of Canada. It's quite impressive.

Ms. Robin Etherington: Absolutely. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Darrell Samson: It should play to that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Badzak, I may have misunderstood, but I felt that, in your view, the bilingual services that are being provided added pressure on and costs to your services. I have a bit of a hard time understanding that. Actually, bilingualism attracts more visitors and generates more revenue. Could you just tell me what you think?

[*English*]

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: It certainly does, and that's our expectation. Nonetheless, it does mean that unlike the majority of art galleries across Canada, everything we produce is done in two languages. That just doubles our costs for everything. I don't want that to come across as a complaint, but it's a particular budgetary pressure that we face. It's an exciting one in the sense that we can draw upon a wider audience. We can form partnerships with Gatineau and their cultural institutions, not to mention the strong relationship we have with the University of Ottawa, which is a bilingual university.

I take your point that it came across as a complaint, I suppose. You were asking for the realities facing small museums, and those are some of the budgetary realities that we face.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson: Could you both speak to the challenges in terms of training and development opportunities for your staff? Do

you have enough money for that? What type of training and professional development do you provide to your paid employees?

[*English*]

The Chair: I think you have 30 seconds within which to answer this question.

Ms. Robin Etherington: It's an excellent question.

It's an ongoing challenge. We have a small professional development budget or line, and we use every penny of it. On top of that, I sit on the Algonquin College museum studies programs advisory committee, and the committee for UNAM, the Mexican university. Both of us are guest lecturers at Algonquin College, the University of Ottawa, Peterborough, and the University of Toronto. We're trying to contribute to the professional development of our young people.

There is a longer answer to that. Yes, it is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I want to thank the witnesses for coming. I want to thank the members as well.

We now have to go in camera, so I would ask everyone to please leave as quickly as possible, ensuring that there is one staffer for each member of parliament and one for each party's whip. Everyone else should leave.

Thank you very much.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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