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## **Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, February 27, 2018**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin**



## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

• (0845)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair (Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.)):** Welcome to the 96th meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

We are continuing our study on the state of Canadian museums.

[*English*]

I'm pleased to welcome today two witnesses for our first panel: Mr. Henry Kim, director and chief executive officer of the Aga Khan Museum, and Ms. Anita Price, executive director of the Association of Nova Scotia Museums.

Each of you will have 10 minutes to make a presentation, and then we will go to a question and answer period.

We'll begin with Mr. Kim, please.

**Mr. Henry Kim (Director and Chief Executive Officer, Aga Khan Museum):** Thank you very much.

I'd like to begin with a bit of personal background so you know who I am. I'm the director of the Aga Khan Museum. I've been the director since 2012. The museum opened in 2014, so as a museum we've been open for the last three and a half years.

My own personal background is that I'm actually a Greek archeologist. I've been an academic for most of my life. I was born in America. I did most of my professional career in the U.K. before coming out to Canada six years ago to take up this post, so my experience with museums is from the U.S., from the U.K. quite extensively, and of course now in coming into Canada as a new entrant into this wonderful ecosystem of culture.

The Aga Khan Museum is one of the newest museums in the country. It was opened in 2014, and its specialty is the art and culture of the Muslim world, which is a very unusual specialty. It is actually the only museum of Islamic art in all of North America. It was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan because he wanted to create a cultural institution that allowed people to understand the diversity of the arts and cultures of the Muslim world across 1,400 years. As a museum, we're here not simply to showcase wonderful works of art: in particular, we are here in order to tell people stories about the multitude of cultures that make up the Muslim world and how it connects the cultures that surround it across time and space.

As well, we are a very unusual museum because we're not simply about objects and visual arts. We're also about the performing arts.

As a museum, we're a hybrid between objects and performances. The reason is very simple. When it comes to the arts, you cannot draw a distinction between what is visual and what is living. You have to look at all of it if you want to talk about the cultures from which these objects and these musical and literary forms come.

As a museum, we have many challenges in common with the museums across this country. Of course, being a new museum, we have the important challenge of trying to establish our identity in terms of what makes this museum unique among its peer groups and also what makes it unique among international institutions.

Despite the fact that we're a museum based in Toronto, Canada, we're a museum that very much views itself as an international museum. Most of our exhibitions are drawn from objects and expertise from throughout the world. I'm very pleased to say that when it comes to the 15 exhibitions we've created, 10 of them, I believe, have been created with expertise coming from outside the country into Canada. I think this is very important, because when you're looking at an area that is absolutely new, you have to be part of a wider international community.

Establishing our identity has been one of the challenges. Also, of course, one of the major challenges has been marketing our museum and making those marketing dollars work. I think the one thing you'll hear time and time again from all smaller cultural institutions is that funding remains one of our greatest challenges.

Even though this museum was founded by and created with a gift that His Highness made to create the building and to gift the collections to the museum, we actually do fight for every single penny that we spend as part of our budget. The capital costs may have been part of a gift, but our operating costs really do come out of our fundraising efforts. Only 25% of our operating income comes from earned income, while 75% comes from fundraising and donations. I'm pleased to say that we've been able to achieve quite a good target for fundraising over these years, but when it comes to sustaining institutions of this nature, funding remains the primary challenge that we all face. I think this is emblematic of smaller museums throughout Canada.

Look at the smaller museums in this country. There are so many of them. When you count up the number of provincial, federal, and municipal major museums, there's just a handful. There are perhaps 20 that you would name within that colossal category of big museums. When it comes to smaller museums, there are hundreds, if not thousands. I believe I saw a statistic that talked about 2,000 smaller museums in this country.

• (0850)

What's important about these museums is that they provide diversity, ideas, and stories and they also represent the many communities of which they are a part or in which they are situated.

All of these smaller institutions face an uphill battle when it comes to funding their operating expenses. Most of these museums receive very little government funding to operate, yet they have a very important role to play in the ecosystem of heritage and the arts within this country. I think one of the great things about these smaller museums is that some great ideas are coming out of these smaller museums because they have diversity and a multiplicity of talents.

When I look at my peer group within Toronto—the Textile Museum, the Gardiner Museum, the Bata Shoe Museum—these museums punch above their weight, in terms of coming up with ideas and also in drawing international talent and ideas and collections into this country. They reflect their specialties, and again one thing you will find with these smaller museums is that they are specialist museums. However, due to their specialties, they have focus, and that focus is wonderful because not only do they have focus in their subject matter, but they also have focus within their communities since they do represent communities and they have wonderful followings. I think that the health of the smaller museum sector in this country is wonderful in the sense that the ideas are there, but funding remains the biggest challenge.

I've mentioned that 75% of our operating budget comes from grants and from fundraising, with less than 1% of this coming from government funding of all sorts. Part of this is that as a museum, we have to be in existence for either three or five years to even apply for government funding, in many cases. We're just starting to cross that threshold. One of the things I will say about government funding is that it does provide very important funds for museums to create these programs. The funding that is put forward is very much appreciated.

As a criticism of government funding for smaller museums, it tends to be very much based on projects and the short term. When you have project-based and short-term funding, while it may help to enable these programs to take place, the one downside is that it does not help with the planning of a museum in the long term. It's short term. It's not growing a museum in its capacity or helping it fund itself in a long-term horizon.

If creativity is to be fostered, if it's to be nurtured in this country, and if good practice is to be perpetuated and even innovated, I do believe that the funding model for smaller museums and institutions needs to be looked at very hard. We need to look at ways in which funding can actually enable these museums to look at the long term and not simply at the project-based short term. I think that is going to be one of the biggest challenges as you look at how smaller museums work with government funding in the future.

Thank you very much.

• (0855)

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

Go ahead, Ms. Price.

**Ms. Anita Price (Executive Director, Association of Nova Scotia Museums):** Thank you, Madam Chair and committee members, for this opportunity on this most important subject that you have undertaken to study.

I'm going to provide a little context for the Association of Nova Scotia Museums and then bring forward what I feel are very specific examples of our work as it relates to the work you've undertaken with this committee.

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums—we refer to ourselves as ANSM—is a non-profit organization dedicated to work in support of the museums of Nova Scotia. Our vision is that all museums in Nova Scotia are valued by Nova Scotians, are sustainable, and operate according to established standards of excellence. Our mandate of the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, working in partnership with museums, communities, and supporters, is to encourage the development of professional best practices in Nova Scotia's museums, educate Nova Scotians about the value of museums and Nova Scotian stories, and act as a champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia.

ANSM is one of a network of provincial and territorial museum associations across Canada. These organizations fill essentially the same functions in their respective parts of the country, though each has evolved to address specific interests and issues within their region. Typically, the PTMAs are all involved in providing training and related supports to museum workers.

ANSM provides programs developed to provide foundational support in key areas of museum practice. A museum evaluation program addresses the importance of standards and accountability for museum organizations. An advisory service is focused primarily on collections management practices and provides a collections management system, which in turn populates the NovaMuse collections website. A museums studies program provides foundational education modules in key areas of museum and non-profit practice. This program is supported by specialized advanced learning opportunities. The ANSM brief to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage will be provided within the context and knowledge gained through the provision of these programs.

With respect to the museum evaluation program, in 2016 ANSM began the delivery of a new evaluation program for museums—MEP—in the province. This important new initiative seeks to advance standards of practice for museums. Evaluation of community museums had previously been undertaken as part of the accountability criteria for a provincial government operating grant program. The new process is built on best practice from similar programs, both nationally—Alberta—and internationally in the United States and United Kingdom.

MEP seeks robust information from the museums in a two-phase approach. Documentation submissions are required in key areas of museum practice. A documentation review is followed by an evaluation site visit conducted by a team of three evaluators with an average of 30 years' experience working in a museum or heritage field. Site evaluations build a deeper understanding of the museum organization's accountability and capacity. Information gathered in both phases of evaluation is distilled into a detailed report for each organization. An overarching report is prepared for the use of the provincial government and is shared as an information resource. I've included a full report in the information package that I have provided for you. This brief will share some of the findings of this report as relevant to the purpose of the committee's work.

The areas of activity reviewed in the evaluation process are governance, management, collections management, facility, interpretation, community, and marketing and revenue generation. Sixty-six community museums were evaluated, with an average overall score of 64.6%. While governance scores were reasonably stable at an average of 75.5%, the related management scores were averaged at 53.9%. This suggests a significant lack of procedural implementation in management practice from governance framework and policy. Support for museum workers, both paid and unpaid, in the form of HR procedures and training was seriously lacking in many of the organizations.

A worrisome trend observed as a result of the evaluations in 2016 was the number of museums with no personnel with any experience of the evaluation process. Twenty-eight of the 66 organizations evaluated reported that no one currently affiliated with the organization had been involved with the previous evaluation process or had been with the organization for more than five years. This represents 42% of the museums functioning with a substantial loss of corporate memory. Aside from the practical loss this represents in organizational functionality, it is almost catastrophic in terms of loss of knowledge relating to museum collections and their relevance.

● (0900)

This exemplifies the very real situation we face nationally as the baby boomer generation retires out of the workforce and increasingly from the corps of volunteers who initially established these heritage organizations in the 1960s through 1980s. Museums have traditionally relied very heavily on the goodwill, expertise, and passion of the individuals engaged in supporting their work. It could be argued that no museum is sustainable without the substantial goodwill contributions of its personnel. Succession planning is an important practice that few museums have the capacity to undertake. As strained resources have been stretched thinner, hiring young professionals to begin the professional development process of learning management and curatorial roles has faltered. Salary levels in museums are typically poor in comparison with national averages, in particular in relation to the complex skill sets required and time commitment needed beyond regular work hours.

There is a profound need for a national training strategy for museum workers in Canada. We must do a better job of providing training support in a manner accessible to all museum personnel. As the old guard steps back from their custodial role of Canadian heritage, a new generation must be supported and given the tools and knowledge they need to carry museums forward and be the

accountable, effective public organizations Canadians expect them to be.

Standards of practice are vital for museums. As service organizations operating in the public trust, museums typically receive high marks in surveys seeking public impressions on their relevance and importance to society, yet museums are often operating in a severely under-resourced manner that does little to ensure that standards of practice are in place or adhered to. Many museums serve as vital community-focused centres, and are effective organizations in providing a rich, complex service to society as an understanding of our world today within the context of our shared history. The community engagement area of evaluation had an overall average of 52%, which is a weak showing for this most important part of museum function. The community museums, which scored well overall, typically showed strong results in community engagement. There is likely no coincidence in the relationship between an organizational understanding of and commitment to community service on the one hand, and strength in operational functionality and adherence to standards of practice on the other.

On collections management and NovaMuse, a key area of practical support for community museums in Nova Scotia has been the provision of an advisory service for 12 years. This service rose from a grassroots initiative in the province that recognized a collective need for collections management software systems and related training, technical support, and equipment. Collectively, community museums could leverage public funding to support the shared need much more effectively than they could individually. This service is a strong example of cost-effective shared resources supported by professional standards.

The service has evolved over time to provide public access to collections information for 50-plus community museums in Nova Scotia. Over 300,000 collections records for primarily social history-related artifacts are publicly accessible through the NovaMuse website. This website is an interactive tool through which the public can engage with collections information by making their own contributions to artifact information as well as build their own online collections.

Other provinces and territories are following the Nova Scotian model and moving toward shared collections systems with public access capacity. Canadians have an expectation to access information resources using information technology. Museums have a responsibility to meet this public access expectation, particularly in relation to robust and accurate information about collections and their relevance. We can do more with shared resources but need the fundamental understanding and flexibility within federal funding programs to support the public use needs of Canadians in this digital age. This work is fundamental to the museums' public service role in society, and federal foundational support is key to effectively moving forward.

As an example, ANSM's Canada 150 project, "Touchstones", was a three-phase initiative designed to engage the public in the selection of artifacts representative of Nova Scotia's role in the evolution of Canada. The first phase involved museums contributing to the NovaMuse website encouraging their followers, through social media, to select artifacts from their collections. The second phase was a distillation, or curation, of the public selections by grade 11 history students to 150 representative artifacts—

• (0905)

**The Chair:** Ms. Price, I'm sorry, but you're at your 10 minutes right now, so if you can try to wrap it up, that would be good.

**Ms. Anita Price:** Thanks. I'll just head to the social relevance of museums, which is the conclusion. Is that okay?

**The Chair:** It is if you can do it in 20 seconds. You can perhaps bring it out further during the questions.

**Ms. Anita Price:** Right.

In conclusion, the federal government provides critically important support for Canada's museums. This must evolve to better support these vital national resources in the manner in which Canadians of the 21st century expect they will serve our society.

We commend the work of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in undertaking this study on the state of museums in Canada. We urge the conclusion of your work with a result that not only provides an overview of the state of museums but delivers strong recommendations for building relevant, stable, and vital museums in service to all Canadians.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're now going to go to our question period. The first round is seven minutes for the question and the answer. Some of the questions you may be getting will be in French, so you have earpieces to help you with translation, if you both can bring those out.

[Translation]

Ms. Dhillon has the floor first. You have seven minutes.

[English]

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Thank you to our witnesses for being here this morning. I'll direct my questions to both of you, so anyone can answer if you see fit.

Heritage institutions should ensure that their exhibits meet the tastes of their clientele. What methods are you using to assess visitor satisfaction?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** You're absolutely right that when it comes to creating exhibitions and events, it is absolutely vital to judge what our visitor response has been. We incorporate a number of different methods to judge visitor satisfaction, the most important of which is simply surveying people immediately after their visit or the event. We have a screening program in which we provide cards, basically, for people to fill out with regard to their satisfaction. We also do customer surveys that involve having members of staff ask people questions. As well, we bring in external organizations, such as the University of Toronto and a group called the G6 within Toronto,

which is a group of museums that collectively look at marketing and visitor statistics. They bring in their own surveyors.

I'd say there are probably at least five or six different methods of surveying our visitors to find out whether their experience or the content was what they were looking for.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Okay. You mentioned before that there are hundreds and thousands of small museums all over Canada. What makes your museum different? It's a newly established one, from what I can understand. What makes yours different from all the hundreds and thousands that already exist?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** I don't think there's much that differentiates us. We face exactly the same challenges all these other museums face, and that is, how do you get people through the door? How do you get the attention from the media and the press for what you do? No matter what you spend on marketing, the number one way to get people through the door is word of mouth, as well as reports from the press. I think in that way we're no different from other museums.

What makes us different, of course, is our specialty area, but even with that specialty area, the fundamentals remain. What is our unique selling point? What's our brand? What's our messaging? How do you actually get people of different communities to come in? For us, our biggest challenge has been to define "communities". When you look at a city as diverse as Toronto, there are so many different communities. Not only do you want to have an all-encompassing, all-embracing wider community, but there are target communities that are very important to us. Defining and nurturing those communities has been one of our biggest challenges, because it takes resources and it takes manpower. The will is there, but it takes time.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Have you, Mr. Kim or Ms. Price, seen a difference in museum attendance over the years? Has it decreased?

**Ms. Anita Price:** For Nova Scotia we've seen, actually, a significant increase in museum attendance in the province in the last couple of years. That may or may not be coincidentally tied to an increase in tourism figures. I would say 90% of the museums that have reported to me on their attendance have said that they have been really pleased with an increase in visitors.

• (0910)

**Mr. Henry Kim:** From my point of view, it's hard for me to say, because I have very little data to talk about. I will say that when it comes to getting visitors through the door, good programming will always be the starting point. If you come up with a great idea, people do come. That, I think, is one of the essences of museum management. How do you get those ideas out there, and then how do you get the media and bloggers and social media to comment on them? That's what drives the attendance.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** I think there has been a great increase in tourism and, since you both see that, how would you take advantage of that to increase donations or sponsorships for your museums?

**Ms. Anita Price:** We are an organization that supports museums. We don't actually operate a museum.

We see the greatest strengths in museums in those that are very actively engaged with their community and have strong community partnerships. Those partnerships that build on their programming offerings typically speak to their relevance within community.

Tourists who are coming from out of the province or out of their community are the icing on the cake. The Aga Khan Museum is probably an exception to this, but most museums will tell you that their bread-and-butter visitations are the people within their geographic area. They're close partners. If every person who is walking through the door of your museum is asking themselves what this mean to them, then those museums engaged with their communities build strong partnerships and their programming from that relevance and are the ones that have the strongest future. There is no coincidence that those museums are typically the ones that are more stable financially.

**Mr. Henry Kim:** I certainly agree with the point that tourism is the icing on the cake.

For us, the majority of our visitors are people who live within the GTA. Tourism helps, but I certainly wouldn't call it the driving force for us. I think that's one thing that does separate a lot of the smaller museums from big museums. Big museums tend to benefit from tourism far more because they are part of the checklist of what you do when you go to this city or that city.

When you look at smaller museums—and again there are exceptions, small museums that are very much there for the tourist trade—most small museums have to rely upon building their community partnerships. That's what provides the stability, and I think also the growth in the future.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** So—

**The Chair:** I think you have 45 seconds.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Okay.

It's important to save a little money. We need money to carry on these institutions. Do you have volunteers, and would you offer them internship so that these volunteers can also use that credit? It would help you financially as well.

**Mr. Henry Kim:** As a museum, I have 60 staff. I have over 400 volunteers. I think that's what you'll find as typical of most museums.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Van Loan.

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

My first question is for Mr. Kim. You spoke about the challenge of funding and government funding and say that's what is out there now does not help museums fund themselves in the long run. What could government do, other than funding museums directly, to help museums fund themselves for the long term?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** I think there are many different ways that you can look at this. Again, from my own experience in looking at how government funding works, one of the best ways is to look at funding that doesn't simply go on a project basis. It's funding that may carry on for three, four, five years, because that's what allows museums to start looking at resource mobilization and increasing their capacities. That, to me, is very important. I think that the project funding unfortunately gives you a nice kick. It allows you to get a program done, but it doesn't allow you to train people, to keep people as well. I think that's an important thing. A lot of project work

is done by people who are brought in for a very short-term basis, and that's where I think extending the horizon for how funding works is absolutely essential.

I think also that the nature of government funding programs needs to be looked at very strongly. Right now, the federal government operates a very important fund, the museums assistance program. Again, I think that's a very good program, but it may be something that needs significant revision. When you look at the opportunities there, you see they are quite limited. As a museum, we've looked at the MAP program many a time, but in truth it doesn't address the concerns or the needs that we're looking at. There are very few opportunities that fit within what we do because, from our point of view, that program is very much about travelling exhibitions. There's work that can be done in enhancing collections management, but our collections management is relatively simple. We have only 1,000 objects. I worry about museums that have hundreds of thousands of objects.

● (0915)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** That's so far.

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Exactly. I'd say that you have to look at the longer-term basis. I think that the current program itself needs some very significant reworking, because times have changed. These smaller museums require different sorts of funding opportunities. Of course, you're right, it would be wonderful to have a lot more funding out there, but in truth even the programs that are there right now have to be refocused.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Elsewhere in the cultural sector the federal government has a program that matches, up to a cap—it's an annual cap—contributions that are made to some parts of the cultural sector, to organizations, to foundations that are designed to support them in the long term. My understanding is that is not available to the museums sector. Is this something that should change?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Absolutely. I have to say it's something that, as a museum, we've tracked over the years, and we have been very excited by the prospect that it may actually happen. It hasn't happened at this point. It's been primarily focused towards performing arts organizations, which, again, is wonderful. I think performing arts organizations need it. Museums do too, because if you can have a matching funds program for endowment, that makes a tremendous difference. Endowment fundraising is ultimately what museums require. If you studied the health of smaller museums in this country, the one thing you'd find is that endowment funding for the long term simply doesn't exist. The big players have been able to develop endowments, but small museums have largely been deficient at this, and that is one of the areas that has to be opened up.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** For the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, within Nova Scotia there is this interesting model called the Nova Scotia Museum, which is, I gather, provincially operated. It's an association, too, because it's an umbrella of 28 different museums. We're going to hear from one of them later this session, the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. Can you tell us a bit about that model, how it works, and the relationship between your organization—which, presumably, goes beyond that—and that Nova Scotia Museum?

**Ms. Anita Price:** I always describe the evolution of the Nova Scotia Museum as very organic. No one sat down at one point and created a plan and built the Nova Scotia museum. It largely evolved over opportunistic things that happened over the decades, and eventually was built to 28 sites of varying types and sizes throughout the province.

Within the Nova Scotia Museum's 28, there are 13 sites that are actually operated indirectly by third party not-for-profits. You have larger sites like the Highland Village Museum in Iona, Cape Breton, which is operated by the not-for-profit society that manages that and does it on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia.

There are other sites that are seasonal for the province. Some are like the Wile Carding Mill in Bridgewater, which is operated by the town of Bridgewater through the DesBrisay Museum as a third party contract with the Province of Nova Scotia.

We actually evaluated the Nova Scotia museum sites in 2017. I didn't include any of those statistics because the province hasn't released permission to me to share those statistics. However, it is a very complicated set-up. Kim may speak to that. She operates one of the directly managed sites. Her staff are all provincial government employees. That's not the case for all of the other sites.

From my organization I provide training and other supports, such as the advisory service with the collections management system. That supports the activities, mostly of the indirectly managed sites, but they all participate in the training opportunities, conferences, and such that we offer.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Very quickly, do you think the Nova Scotia Museum model is a good model?

What are its advantages over being out there and just being part of an association?

• (0920)

**Ms. Anita Price:** It was a way for the ambitions of different communities to receive provincial government funding support on an ongoing operational basis and to tell the Nova Scotian story.

It is a very complex organization, and it is going to be under review over the next couple of years, because they need to look at the manageability of that structure and its sustainability into the future.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Nantel, you have seven minutes.

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

I would like to thank both of you for being here this morning.

Earlier, Mr. Kim answered Mr. Van Loan's question about endowment funds. Ms. Price, could you also talk about these funds? It seems to me that it might be relevant for small museums or small sites. An endowment fund would be practical, wouldn't it?

[English]

**Ms. Anita Price:** The Canadian Museums Association has been urging, for the last five or six years, the federal government to establish an endowment fund for Canadians supporting their museums, the idea being that it will match public donations from

Canadians dollar for dollar with federal dollars. There's always been a quietly warm response from members of Parliament when they've been approached on the subject, but we've never seen any real traction.

The observation is that there are similar endowments in place for the arts, but museums are very specifically excluded from participating in those opportunities. I think nationally we do need to address that. We all speak about federal funding and the importance of federal funding, which can be linchpin funding, but the museums need to be able to stand on their own two feet as well, and things like endowment funds help them to do that.

When we were developing the museum evaluation program and talking to Nova Scotians about their understanding of standards and so forth, one of the things that really came forward to us was the absolute confidence of Nova Scotians—and I would suggest most Canadians—that their government dollars—municipal, provincial, and federal—are actually holding all of these institutions together. Canadians think their tax dollars are doing that job, and their tax dollars are not. We need a way to constructively address that situation. I think an endowment fund is a very positive way of doing that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Absolutely. In the Montreal area, funds like these are all sent to the Foundation of Greater Montreal. They also make an extremely important social contribution by supporting community organizations, while preserving capital, because that's the very nature of things. That kills two birds, even three, with one stone, which is outstanding.

You meant to talk about the social role of museums. Did you want to finish your answer?

[English]

**Ms. Anita Price:** Yes, we find that those institutions in the province that are actively involved in their communities, that are engaged in their communities, that have a broader relationship with their arts communities and with other cultural organizations are by far the strongest institutions for a variety of different reasons, but I think it speaks to their relevance, to their job in public service that's so very important for them to do.

We have been tasked by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to move forward on a number of the recommendations of the commission. There's willingness but very little capacity at this point to do those sorts of jobs in a meaningful way. There is an enormous job for Canada's museums to undertake in these sorts of important societal areas that some of us step our toes into. Others are established very specifically to address areas of our cultural life, and others are really struggling with how they step into that and move forward in real ways such as in addressing difficult knowledge. Museums can be safe and respectful spaces for people to have discourse on any number of subjects that people can possibly dream up. It's an important job for us to do, very important.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Absolutely.

Madam Chair, how much time do I have left? Three minutes? Fantastic.



Mr. Kim, you currently have a temporary exhibition called *The World of the Fatimids*. Based on my experience of major museums, like the Museum of Fine Arts and the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal, temporary exhibitions inspire the desire to go to the museum and see the permanent collection as well.

Do you expect to renew that consistently? There is no doubt about the great relevance of your museum's capacity for cultural mediation.

Many of us will be at the Canadian Screen Awards on Sunday, March 11. If you and the organizers of this event are interested, we could organize a group visit on Monday. I do not know if your museum is closed on Mondays, but we could go in groups. It would be a great opportunity to see your work.

● (0925)

[English]

**Mr. Henry Kim:** There's absolutely no question that temporary exhibitions do help drive visitation. From our point of view as a museum, the renewal of our temporary exhibitions three or four times a year is crucial for renewing people's interest. That is part of what we do.

At the same time, I think we also find it very important to change the permanent collections. That's something that I think museums always find a challenge, because once you put up a permanent collection, that's kind of permanent, but in truth it requires renewal, and it requires dialogue with communities to understand what should be changed, what people are looking at.

I think back to the whole question of the social roles of museums. One of the parts of museum practice that's changing nowadays is understanding what your stories and messages truly are. Museums can do that, and it's going to come through community engagement, not just the minds of curators. Those are the ones that I think will create the products that will get people through the door from a business point of view, and that, to me, is essential.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** You're right. The National Gallery in Ottawa changed up its national collection and made it even more interesting from a mediation perspective, while the Canadian Museum of History decided to have temporary exhibitions that are somewhat questionable. In particular, I'm thinking of Hot Wheels. I am a fan of Hot Wheels, and I had them when I was little, but I find it a little curious.

Sometimes temporary exhibitions can have somewhat strange effects. For example, the MAC exhibition in Montreal led many people to discover Leonard Cohen through the artistic interpretation of contemporary artists. It was fantastic.

I don't have any more questions. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now be going to Mr. Virani for seven minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Mr. Kim, I'm going to address most of my questions to you. My riding is Parkdale—High Park. That's in a sort of downtown area of Toronto. I know about the Aga Khan Museum because I'm an Ismaili Canadian representative, and I'm very proud of it. I think it's fair to say that there's a bit of a buzz about the Aga Khan Museum. There's a buzz in the city. I would say that there's a buzz in the province, and probably there's a buzz right around the country. I would put that down to a few things. One is because of the actual grandeur of the space. I've had the occasion to be there many times, and it's not just the museum structure, but the courtyard and the Ismaili Centre that's facing it as well. It's quite magnificent and striking, but I also think it's because of the quality of what's on offer. Lastly I think it's because, as you outlined in your opening comments, it's the first of its kind in North America.

I want to ask you three things. First, can you tell me about the vision of the Aga Khan in terms of placing the museum in Canada? As well, can you say a bit about that investment you mentioned at the outset in terms of capital cost, the personal investment that he made to make sure that this happened?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** I think that's one of the—

[Translation]

**The Chair:** We've lost the French interpretation.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** I can repeat my question in French if you like, Madam Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** We're going to have to pause until it comes back on. We've been having some technical difficulties throughout the session, so bear with us. That's better. Why don't we pick up from where we left off?

● (0930)

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Yes, I think the story you've mentioned is very important. When it came to placing this museum anywhere in the world, His Highness the Aga Khan chose Canada. I think this is very important, because when it comes to the mission and mandate of this museum, we're here to explore diversity among cultures and how connections between cultures are made across time. That purpose is there in order for people to understand not only the Muslim world better, but to understand all the world better, because the cultural connections that happen between people are not unique. It happens all the time, but we tend to forget it. When it comes to this museum, our mandate is very much driven towards that. The reason for His Highness choosing Canada is that he looked at Canada as one of the most successful of multicultural and diverse societies.

I have to say from my point of view as a museum director that it's been absolutely magnificent coming to Canada and having this museum here, because I have never been asked why this museum exists. I haven't been challenged as to why there is a museum of Islamic art here. People actually say, "I want to learn more." They're seeking what we're putting forward in the museum. Again, I think that's very much down to the vision the Aga Khan had when it came to developing this museum.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** The size of the financial investment either from the Aga Khan or the Aga Khan Cultural Trust was...?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Correct.

Right now we receive about \$5 million a year from the Aga Khan Development Network. That's through the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. That is their contribution to the museum, but that is a declining amount. Right now that's \$5 million out of an operating budget of \$16.5 million. That amount will decline year by year as we build up our fundraising opportunities. We're very grateful for the contribution that the Aga Khan Development Network makes to this museum, but I think there's a real opportunity for Canadians to truly support this museum, because what we're talking about is something that is very Canadian.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** You said the original building and land was a gift from the Aga Khan.

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Correct. For the entire development of the Wynford Drive site, where the museum, the Aga Khan Park, and the Ismaili Centre exist, that was all capital that was contributed by the Aga Khan. That is a major gift to this country.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** I want to ask you a bit about what you mentioned in your first response about the mandate to promote diversity and pluralism. We obviously know that there is a global centre for pluralism right here in Ottawa and that this is a key focus of the Aga Khan. Tell me about how that manifests through some of the exhibits, the temporary exhibits. I'm thinking specifically about the exhibit on Syria that ran in part of 2016 and part of 2017. At the same time that the country was receiving 48,000 Syrian refugees, there was an exhibit that documented and detailed Syrian civilization through the ages. Tell me about how that achieves the goals of promoting pluralism, diversity, and inclusion and combatting the forces of division and ignorance about Islam and Islamic culture.

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Exactly.

I think that exhibition in pluralism is very much at the heart of what we as a museum stand for. When it came to the Syrian crisis, we all remember what happened at the end of 2015 and into 2016 with the influx of Syrian refugees into this country. I think it was a very important moment in this country's history, because while many refugees have come to this country, the case of the Syrians was one of the most poignant of all, given the civil war that was raging and also the doors that were closing. Canada opened its doors.

As a museum we decided to respond to that in a very short period of time by coming up with an exhibition that looked at the cultural diversity of Syria. Part of the reason was that with 40,000 refugees coming into the country, we wanted people to understand who Syrians were. We didn't want them simply typecast as being Syrians, refugees.

We wanted people to realize that if you look at their past, over 5,000 years, Syrians are Greeks, Romans, Babylonians, Mesopotamians, Byzantines, Mameluks, and so on and so forth. The cultures that are part of Syria are extremely diverse. People who are Syrian are diverse. That's something a museum and museums in general should be able to grasp and showcase, because what other public institution can do this?

We felt it was very important to showcase that to address an issue that was burning at that very moment. Again, if you can show people

what diversity and pluralism are, that's the beginning of learning, understanding, and getting people to think outside of the box.

• (0935)

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Chair, how much time do I have?

**The Chair:** You have just under a minute.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** The last piece is that outward-looking piece. You talked about how it situates the museum in a global context. Can you tell me about how it situates this museum and how it revitalizes the understanding of culture here in Canada and creates here in Canada a new centre for revitalizing Islamic civilization, the study of Islamic art and culture broadly speaking, and engaging internationally with other museums or institutions of its kind?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Yes.

Planting a museum in Toronto of this nature means that suddenly the Islamic art world starts looking to Canada. Our name recognition abroad is actually very strong, but I think most important of all is that it reflects one of the fastest-growing populations in this country and in Toronto, the Muslim population, and we can showcase the cultures from which these works of art come.

**The Chair:** Great.

We will now be going to Mr. Eglinski for five minutes.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I thank both of our contributors today.

I will go to Ms. Price first. You talked about an evaluation process that you have within your province and you threw out quite a few numbers during your presentation. I realize that you have some very large and some very small museums. Isn't Pier 21 part of it?

**Ms. Anita Price:** It's a national museum.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Do you evaluate all of your museums on the same level, or is there a different level? A lot of museums across Canada, especially our smaller ones in smaller communities, are run mostly by volunteers. Then we have the larger ones that have professional people like Mr. Kim leading the charge, and they probably have better training and stuff like that.

When you're doing your evaluations within your provincial thing, do they all have to reach a certain standard?

**Ms. Anita Price:** At this point in time, the evaluation program is really intended to create a benchmark baseline of a standard approach to operating a museum. It's not a Cadillac version. All the governance and management pieces of evaluation, for example, ask is simply whether you have a governance structure. Do you have a board of directors? If you're managing a museum, do you have an HR policy? Do you have contracts for your staff? It's all these sorts of very basic things. In terms of collections management, do you have a collections management policy? Can you find your stuff, and do you know what your stuff is? It's very basic at this point.

One of our recognitions was that we are working with a lot of smaller institutions. Nevertheless, they're public institutions. They're accepting personal property from people. They need to be accountable for that. They need to be accountable for the information they're providing to the Canadian public and they need to be accountable for the taxpayers' dollars that they receive to help with their operations.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Is your organization helping the smaller museums to achieve this? I think it would be difficult for a very small museum to try to match some of the larger ones.

**Ms. Anita Price:** What we do is work with them through 12 months of the year. When they are scheduled for an evaluation in a year, they will know that well in advance. Obviously we have just started the evaluation program, but it's not a sneak attack. They have lot of time to prepare. We have a staff person who is dedicated—that's their job—to work with the museums. They are on call. For any questions that they have in any area of evaluation, they have a resource person there to provide them with meaningful help. That helps a lot.

One of the stats I didn't share with you is the difference between those institutions that engaged with us as they prepared for evaluation and those that didn't. There was a big difference in the evaluation scores. It's a supported process.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Thank you very much.

On Friday, I was visiting the University of Alberta and had some spare time in the afternoon, so I went to the Alberta Aviation Museum. I had to get an airplane fix because I'm a pilot, so I wandered around. There were a couple of volunteers sitting there. One of them asked if they could help, and I said maybe after I've had my fix. I met him afterward and we chatted for three hours. I just stayed there. It was so interesting.

I know of many museums where volunteers spend all their time. This gentleman was 75 years old, a very successful retired businessman. He said that he spends three days a week at this museum and two days a week at another museum in Edmonton. I said that was great, and he said that he loves meeting with people. He is a self-taught historian on World War I and World War II, so we had some great conversation.

We have so many people like that across Canada. Is there any program, maybe funded by the federal government, maybe that we should be funding, whereby we recognize outstanding volunteers? I go back to Mr. Kim's comment about having 400 volunteers.

Is there any type of program, or should we be looking at some type of program, to recognize some of these great Canadians who spend a lot of their time to pass on the history of their communities to others?

• (0940)

**The Chair:** Please be very quick. You have less than half a minute.

**Ms. Anita Price:** There is a recognition program through the Office of the Governor General of Canada. There is a whole section that acknowledges exemplary museum volunteerism support.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Great.

Am I out of time?

**The Chair:** You're out of time.

We will be moving to Ms. Dzerowicz, please.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you so much for your great presentations.

My riding is also in downtown west Toronto. It's Davenport. I have a very multi-ethnic community and a growing Muslim population for sure. I have not had a chance yet to go to the Aga Khan Museum, although your marketing is excellent. Every week I think I have to go and I haven't gone yet. Believe me, there is a huge draw, so I want to say kudos to you for the excellent marketing.

One of the comments that struck me a little was a comment around tourism and how, for the most part, tourism will go to some of the larger museums here in Toronto. Do you have some thoughts of how we can be helpful, at a national level, to help promote some of those smaller museums or other museums across the country? I don't know if you have any comments on that. I don't think we can promote everything, but to be honest, I would promote the Aga Khan as much as I would the Royal Ontario Museum or the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Do you have any comments on that?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** Yes.

I think that when it comes to tourism, any help is going to be appreciated. When it comes to marketing museums, it's a tough sell, because people have so many other things to do. If there is a way the government can help, I think it would come through....

To tell you the truth, I think it would be looking at the hidden stories you have around not just Toronto but everywhere. Small museums have wonderful stories to tell. We have wonderful stories. I think the museums in Nova Scotia have wonderful stories to tell. If you can get people to realize that there's heritage and history in people's midst.... They don't have to go downtown; it might be right around the corner.

That's very important, because heritage is quite literally everywhere. We just forget it's there. I think that's probably the biggest challenge we face as a museum sector. Everyone hears about museums and everyone has heard about us, but what gets people there is usually some sort of trigger. One method could very well be looking at how you look at heritage within people's living spaces, because it exists, but we just don't recognize it.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** You talked a lot about how your museum is funded and some of the things you would be looking for in terms of support from the national level. I know you come from Oxford where you spent some time previously.

Who does museums well? Who supports their museums? Which country supports their museums? Is there a model that you think we might want to look at?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** That's the United Kingdom, I think. Again, I've had a lot of experience in that country. The support for museums is very strong. I think the reason is that there's a recognition in the population base that heritage is part of everyone's everyday life. This is very important. It's not just funding that's coming from the centre or coming from other directions; it's the fact that heritage is recognized as very important. Again, look at the United Kingdom and throughout Europe. Heritage is quite literally everywhere.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** What is it that they do that makes it...? Does the national government fund their museums? Is it the way they support them? Is it the way they promote it? What is it that makes them a model?

**Mr. Henry Kim:** There are so many organizations. I have to say that I'd single out organizations such as the National Trust, English Heritage, and the Scottish Heritage organization. These are wonderful organizations that probably boast somewhere in the range of a quarter of the population as their membership, and that's again, I think, something: it's the way they organize themselves and the way they open up properties throughout the country.

Here's the other thing. In the United Kingdom, most museums are free. That is something to look at very strongly, because when you lower the barriers to access, suddenly the numbers increase. When the V and A, the Victoria and Albert, cut their admission price from four pounds to zero—and I used to wait until 4 o'clock so that I could go into the V and A for free—suddenly their numbers increased fourfold.

When you look at funding, also look at how funding affects ticket prices, I think, because that will make a huge difference to visitation.

• (0945)

**The Chair:** That takes us pretty much to the end of our time. You have 20 seconds left.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** I think that's fine.

**The Chair:** I just figured that I would give you a heads-up.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Yes, you interrupted and that wasted the last of my time, so no problem.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** I have tons of questions.

**The Chair:** Well, I think we all have a lot of questions. The only reason I prompted there is that we are actually out of time for this session as a whole.

I want to thank the witnesses for coming. It was really helpful.

We're going to be suspending briefly while we move to our next witnesses, who are coming to us via video conference.

• (0945)

(Pause)

• (0950)

**The Chair:** We are now here with our second panel, which takes us from coast to coast. We have the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, with Kim Reinhardt. From the Vancouver Maritime Museum, we have Duncan MacLeod, curator, and Tom Beasley, vice-chair, board of trustees.

As a word to our witnesses who are here by video conference, you will not be muted, so just be aware that if you're having a conversation while someone else is presenting or asking questions, that's going to create interference.

Why don't we start with 10 minutes for Ms. Reinhardt from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic?

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt (General Manager, Nova Scotia Museum, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic):** Certainly.

To begin, thank you very much for inviting me here today to speak to you about the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic is part of the Nova Scotia Museum system, which is responsible for the provincial collection of over one million artifacts and specimens. The Nova Scotia Museum, consisting of 28 sites, is the most decentralized museum in Canada. It is also one of the oldest museums in the country. It includes more than 210 buildings, four floating vessels, and nine locomotives. It's all across the province.

The Nova Scotia Museum tells the stories of our communities, our natural history, our people's history, our seafaring traditions, our industrial heritage, and our artistic life. The Nova Scotia Museum is governed by the Nova Scotia Museum board of governors through the Nova Scotia Museum Act.

Its sites are either directly or indirectly managed by the Government of Nova Scotia through financial allocations and through the policies, procedure, and accountability of the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic is one of the sites that are directly operated by the Province of Nova Scotia.

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic is located on Halifax's historic waterfront. The museum tells the stories of Nova Scotia's rich maritime history, our seafaring heritage, and our relationship with the sea, from small craft boatbuilding to world war convoys, from the days of sail to the age of steam, from the *Titanic* to the Halifax Harbour explosion. We are the oldest and largest maritime museum in Canada.

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic is open year-round and offers both permanent and temporary exhibitions. There are a wide variety of programs in support of the exhibitions, including guided tours for student and adult groups, directed and self-learning assistance, lectures, demonstrations, and educational hands-on opportunities.

We also host many special events throughout the year. As the most visited provincial museum in Nova Scotia, with an annual average visitation of between 130,000 and 150,000 visitors, the maritime museum is considered a provincial icon.

In terms of our facilities, there are two parts to our building proper. We have a circa 1860s heritage building called the Robertson Store. Then we have a new addition that was built in 1980, which is larger. Throughout the two buildings, which are actually combined to be one building, we have nine permanent galleries. We have a temporary exhibition space of approximately 1,500 square feet. We have a very extensive library available by invitation or by request. It's probably one of the largest marine nautical libraries of its kind in North America. We have a small 50-person theatre for different presentations that we host and provide.

We're also, as I said, on the Halifax waterfront, so part of our footprint includes the museum wharves. We have two large jetties and a marginal wharf in between, as well as an anchor yard. We're very fortunate to be located right in the middle of the Halifax waterfront, which is the most visited visitor attraction in Nova Scotia. We do get a lot of people just passing by. From our wharves they can take in *CSS Acadia*, our 104-year-old exhibit that is out on the water, as well as programming and activities that take place. We're also able to host visiting ships at our jetties.

We also have boat sheds out between the museum proper and the wharves. In the boat sheds we have a number of different hands-on programming and learning opportunities.

• (0955)

We are exploring more and more partnerships through boat-building. In the last couple of years we initiated a family boatbuilding program that has really helped us to connect with a variety of community groups, particularly youth. We have activities like that. In the summer one of our boat sheds serves as a gift shop, and we have a year-round gift shop that operates inside the museum proper.

In our services at the maritime museum, as mentioned, we offer a number of different types of tours for different groups. We have large visitations from the cruise ships that come to Halifax, particularly between mid-May and the end of October. Some of them are for visitors from outside the country or the province. We also do tours with schools and we do a lot of outreach in the newcomer and diverse communities in our region. We have a number of tours for English as an additional language that are facilitated by partners coming to our museum. We host a number of different types of demonstrations, ranging from traditional maritime knitting to boatbuilding, as I said, with people learning how to bend frames on a boat or having other traditional marine experiences.

We have a number of school programs whereby students come to the museum and participate in activities, and we have developed relationships and partnerships with other community groups, such as the Halifax Amateur Radio Club. Volunteers from their club will come to the museum and work with students on different types of communication, which has been great. As well, we have model-maker volunteers who have played a huge role in preserving our various ship models or making purpose-filled activities. They also engage with the public quite a bit, and we really value that.

We have public talks on a regular basis, and those are free to the public every Tuesday night, generally speaking. In the summer we pause the public talks, or do fewer of them, and shift to concerts in our courtyard space at the museum, which we do in partnership with Waterfront Development.

We are trying more and more to bring in some cultural experiences to the museum. We have a volunteer program, as mentioned. Some volunteers are from particular clubs, such as the model-makers' guild or the Halifax amateur radio operators, but many come as individuals with a particular interest in having experience in a museum.

We do a certain amount of facility rentals, and we bring in travelling exhibits as well. We share exhibits throughout the Nova Scotia Museum system that we create in-house, and currently we have one exhibit at the war museum on the MS *St. Louis* that will be opening later in March. We host visiting ships, whether they are tall ships or interpretive vessels, and sometimes the navy will bring a vessel to the museum. We have family programming and March break programming and holiday programming, to name a few. There are more.

Our vision at the maritime museum is that Nova Scotians will live in welcoming, healthy, and prosperous communities. They will participate in opportunities for learning and experiencing our diverse

maritime culture and heritage. They will feel engaged in current events, feel a strong sense of identity, and will take an active role in advancing the health and prosperity of their communities.

We see our purpose through our work at the maritime museum, which is guided by the Nova Scotia Museum's interpretive master plan and by Nova Scotia's culture action plan. One year ago Nova Scotia launched its first culture action plan. The plan brings to life the mandate of the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, which the Nova Scotia Museum is a part of, to contribute to the well-being and prosperity of Nova Scotia's diverse and creative communities through the promotion, development, preservation, and celebration of the province's culture, heritage, identity, and languages.

• (1000)

Nearly 2000 Nova Scotians as well as 188 cultural organizations provided input to help create the culture action plan. A formal consultation was held at the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs—

**The Chair:** Excuse me; sorry. You're at 10 minutes, so could you start wrapping it up, please?

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** I will, certainly.

The culture action plan and the interpretive master plan are key to guiding the work that we do at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic under the five pillars of promoting Mi'kmaq culture; promoting creativity and innovation to strengthen partnerships; promoting education and understanding; advancing cultural diversity; and excellence in cultural stewardship.

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic preserves, protects, promotes, and presents Nova Scotia's seafaring-culture heritage. We are proud of the work we do, and I would like to take a moment to close and thank the staff for their commitment, passion, and value to their work. Our museum has incredible opportunities to leverage the value of our important cultural assets to ensure all Nova Scotians know and appreciate our maritime heritage and culture.

Thank you very much for inviting me.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We are now going to go over to the Vancouver Maritime Museum for 10 minutes. I'll just ask you to keep an eye on the clock a bit, because you can't see me wave my hands at all.

• (1005)

**Mr. Tom Beasley (Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, Vancouver Maritime Museum):** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Tom Beasley. I'm vice-chair of the board of the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

I'm going to give a little history of the museum, a little history of my involvement with the museum for context, some statements on the evolution of the museum and evolution of the board, and a summary going towards, I think, what your mission is here, which is understanding the state of Canadian museums from a local and community perspective. Duncan MacLeod, the curator, will then give some comments about the collection and the management of the collection.

The Vancouver Maritime Museum was created in 1958 to house the *St. Roch*, the historic RCMP boat that was the first to go from west to east through the Northwest Passage and to circumnavigate North America, an important sovereignty issue right now that is very topical for Canada.

It has been a national historic site since 1962, with no federal funding. It operates under a lease-grant arrangement with the City of Vancouver. We're on city property. We get 25% of our monies from the city and the rest from other grants and from the gate.

We have a volunteer board, of course. Our substantial collections, which Duncan will talk about, are below sea level, near the water, which is not a good thing, even without climate warming. We've made several attempts to move over the last 30 years, and I'm going to talk about that.

As for my involvement, I'm an employment lawyer with a focus on workplace harassment. That's my day job. I'm also heavily involved in the underwater archeological community, diving community, and shipwreck community, and have been involved in that passionately for many, many years.

I got on the board in 1986 and became chair of the board by default in 1989. Then there was a changed board and a changed vision, and a new director was hired, Jim Delgado, who may be known to many of you. He's a rather iconic, charismatic person in the maritime archeology and maritime history world. I left the board when he was hired because I'd done my job. I got back on the board after Jim left to go back to the States 10 years ago. I was asked back, perhaps because they wanted some dinosaur representation. I'm not sure.

Regarding the evolution of the museum, as I said, we wanted to move off that site, which is a wonderful, tremendous site and has the best view in the city of Vancouver from Vanier Park, but it's not near traffic and it's not accessible from a number of perspectives. We've wanted to move off the site for a long time. There was a move 10 years ago to create the national maritime centre of the Pacific and Arctic in North Vancouver. That failed, and then we were on palliative care for several years.

A couple of hires as executive director did not fare well. We hired a new person, a non-museum person, who was a manager. He turned the museum around, reduced our debt to almost nothing, and created an operating surplus for the last four years. He stepped aside because he had done his job. Ken Burton was his name. He stepped aside eight months ago, and we hired a new director, Dr. Joost Schokkenbroek, who is from the National Maritime Museum in the Netherlands and who is going to bring us, I think, to the next move, wherever we go.

We've moved outside the doors of the museum and brought in a number of people as experts, including my friend Bill Haley—not of the Comets, but of Haley Sharpe—an exhibit designer from England. He designed exhibits for the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa and for Stonehenge, and he is currently designing nine exhibits for the Smithsonian.

Bill has engaged our board and our staff and brought us outside to create very interactive exhibits with the Centre for Digital Media, an academic institution in Vancouver. He reset our vision, reset our mission, and talks in the mission about creating a centre for dialogue, research, and artistic expression and experience for the maritime heritage in the Pacific and Arctic.

● (1010)

I think the word here that's key for me is “dialogue”. Museums are about storytelling. Yes, they're a collection of artifacts, but the artifacts are nothing without the stories that evolve out of them.

With that, the next steps are going to be... The board made a decision in November of 2016 to move. The board made a decision in February of 2017 to move to a site a little higher than we are now, yet relatively close by, but it seemed nimble to other opportunities.

The board has evolved—and I think this is an important step for museums generally—from people on the board with a passion for the subject matter to those with a collection of diverse skills and backgrounds. Our recent board members from the last board meeting are reflective of that. There is Kelly Speck from the Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay, Shaleena Meghji from the RCMP, and a younger person, Peter Helland, with a robotics background.

We've also reached out on indigenous matters. I think it's very significant for any museum in Canada to reach out and bring in indigenous communities. I could go on with this one because a personal interest of mine is the Whaler's Shrine. I'll just tease you a bit with it.

The Whaler's Shrine was collected in 1904 and brought to New York. It's one of the most iconic west coast—and I hate the word 'artifact' on this—belongings. It's a collection of material, about 100 pieces of art, that's stored in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

We have a pledge of substantial money to help repatriate that to the Mowachaht Muchalaht people in the Gold River area. We're about to sign a memorandum of agreement with the Royal BC Museum to assist the Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation to bring it back. It's been a passion of mine for eight years, and I think we're on the cusp of doing that.

In summary, I think it's important to reset the mission vision. It's important to strengthen your board and get more diverse backgrounds, connections, and passionate people. It's also important to set the governance and make sure you know what the board's role is and what the staff's role is. That's a struggle for any small museum. Know your audience. Diversify your funding opportunities. Above all, have fun, and make it a fun experience.

**Mr. Duncan MacLeod (Curator, Vancouver Maritime Museum):** With the few minutes we have left, I'll give a little bit of background on what we're doing with the collection. Without a collection, there's not much to the museum. It's all really built around the collection. A strong collection supports exhibitions, educational programs, and even facility rentals.

We are focusing this coming year and in the next few years on strengthening our collections management program. We've been collecting at the Vancouver Maritime Museum for almost 60 years. As with many museums, I'm sure, we have found that as the mandate changes, items in the collection no longer fit that mandate. We're trying to de-accession a lot of our collection to focus on stories that we want to tell, with a focus on the community stories of local Vancouver, stories of British Columbia, and stories that pertain to the Arctic.

This helps in a number of ways. First, it allows more space in the collections areas. Many museums struggle with overcrowded areas and collections. Having a more honed collection will allow for better access, both for staff and for external researchers from other institutions. Along with that is the idea of digitization and putting our collections onto a publicly accessible website as a searchable database. This will have a number of benefits for access.

• (1015)

**The Chair:** Could you quickly wrap that up? You've also gone over 10 minutes.

**Mr. Duncan MacLeod:** Okay.

The other thing we're trying to do is make connections with non-traditional institutions and local groups to broaden our reach. We recently partnered with the Vancouver Civic Theatres. They run some of the main opera theatres and presentation theatres in Vancouver. We're working with them to find ways to deliver our collection to a broader audience, to reach more demographics, a larger demographic, than we do traditionally with the Maritime Museum.

**The Chair:** Perfect.

We're going to move to our question and answer period. We have seven minutes for the question and the answer. Perhaps you might be able to finish up some of those thoughts as well in the course of questions and answers.

The first person who will be asking questions is Mr. Hogg.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.):** Thank you.

I'd like you to look like you're really happy now, please. Out in British Columbia, where it must be warmer than this—

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** We haven't had coffee yet this morning.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** You haven't had coffee? Well, you can tell that we have.

Thank you very much for that.

We've been hearing a number of witnesses, and I've been trying to pull out some themes that seem to be evolving from that testimony. One of the themes I think I'm hearing is that museums are about

connecting people across time, place, beliefs, experiences, cultures, and the stories are the things that you want to tell.

Can you talk a little more about whether that fits with your understanding and with what you're doing at the Vancouver Maritime Museum? I've been there a number of times and quite enjoy seeing the *St. Roch* over and over again, for some reason. I think I see it differently each time that I'm there.

Can you talk a bit about those connections and what they might mean? Can you talk about it happily and smiling?

**Mr. Duncan MacLeod:** Yes.

I'll talk briefly about an exhibition we are currently hosting that deals with personal stories and community connections. It's called the Lost Fleet. It's the story of the seizure of Japanese fishing vessels on the Canadian Pacific coast during the Second World War.

We look at it from the beginnings of immigration of Japanese people to B.C. and take it up to the seizure of the vessels in 1941 and 1942, and then the subsequent internment. We have found that it has been a powerful story, and people from the Japanese community connect with it. Even beyond the Japanese community, a lot of local Vancouverites were not familiar with the seizure.

Through the Japanese community, this has allowed a lot of people to come in to tell their story. They've wanted to share their stories with us of their experience with the internment or the seizure of their family's property. We've created an educational program around it that ties in with the B.C. school curriculum. As well, we have started to create an archive of the people who want to come in and tell their stories. A lecture series around this brings in artists, storytellers, and historians to expand on some of the themes we deal with in the exhibit that touch on immigration and connections to current societal issues around immigration, systematic racism, and issues like that.

Tom, do you want to talk about anything?

• (1020)

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** I'd just sum up there. It's creating an opportunity, through the artifacts, for a dialogue that's not just on the past—on what happened in World War II and the seizure of the boats—but on the issues from it that resonate today on immigration and systemic racism. It's very important.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** One of our first witnesses, Mr. Kim, was asked where the most successful museums are and what's happening with them. He talked about the United Kingdom and some connections they're making there. He said that all of their museums are free to go into, but the successes have come by identification with particular cultures. The Scottish and the Irish and the English all seem to be able to identify with and become a part of that.

You talked a bit about that type of connection. Is that your experience as well?

You've just described a specific with respect to looking at other cultures and what has happened in the past, and identifying with people who are feeling more engaged with it. Will museums be more successful, in your experience, if they connect like that in personal ways, as Mr. Kim talked about in the United Kingdom and your one example there? Do you have other examples of that? Is that something that works well for you?

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** You have to connect with people and you have to know your community. Our community is made up of people who are interested in and focused on all things maritime in the Arctic and the Pacific. I think it's of great significance if you can reach out beyond the doors of the museum and engage with those communities and make them feel it's almost like a community centre for things maritime where people who are interested in the ocean, water, and engagement on and about it can come together and enjoy common experiences.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** Are there some values or principles that go across all museums? You're focused on maritime museums. Are there some principles that go across all museums that might be of value to this committee to look at—principles that might help enhance and grow the type of things that you're talking about in terms of connections and stories?

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** I would encourage the committee to reach out into the professional world of museums, to people like Bill Haley, who, as I described, designs museum exhibits around the world—not the shell of the museum, but the guts of the museum and the storytelling in it.

That's enough from me.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** What are the two most important things that we need to know?

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** For museums, to make them successful? Know the audience, have fun, engage.

**Mr. Gordie Hogg:** Okay.

Can you tell us a joke that will be funny?

**The Chair:** Thank you, that's perfect. Thank you very much.

We will be moving to Mr. Van Loan for seven minutes, please.

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

Mr. Beasley, you have been around and seen some ups and downs and all kinds of interesting changes.

I'm intrigued by the part in the cycle where you guys were at a low, and you went to a non-museum manager. There are of course some government programs that depend on people being professionally trained curators in order to get funding. I've certainly seen in my visits to museums that some of those that have been most successful are those that have turned to non-museum people with considerable expertise in marketing or in knowing the local community. Stratford Museum has a former local newspaper editor who is a very charismatic fellow, and it has been quite successful.

I wonder if you could provide your observations on the non-museum person as manager, on that experience and how it helped.

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** We were near death. No museum professional wanted to join us. We needed to have somebody who was a true manager to right the ship and get us on a good path. We hired Ken Burton, who was retiring from the RCMP. We had him for six months free, which is not bad. He turned the ship around, because he managed the place well and he had a strong focus on people.

That's my background as an employment lawyer: do the human resources side well. That wasn't good before. He did that well and he got the budget in line, but then he hit a roadblock, because the

museum professionals got a bit uptight about it. They were snotty about it, saying, "You don't have a degree." Well, Ken had the passion and the skills. He recreated the voyage of the *St. Roch*. In 2000, he left Vancouver in an RCMP ship, turned right, and came back.

• (1025)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Thank you.

I have a question for both sides here. We've heard a little about tourism as the icing on the cake but not the bread and butter of museum attendance for the Aga Khan museum. I was wondering if you could provide your perspectives on the importance of tourism, and the economic impact that your museums may or may not have.

We could start with the Atlantic folks.

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** As I mentioned in my presentation, a very big portion of our annual visitation comes between about mid-May to the end of October, and it's very closely aligned with the cruise ship industry. A lot of cruise ships come into Halifax.

Probably one of our strengths in terms of the tourism market is the fact that Halifax has a strong connection to the *Titanic*. I won't lie: a lot of people who come to visit the maritime museum, particularly those off cruise ships, come with the assumption that they're coming to the local *Titanic* museum. We're always happy when those visitors come and enjoy our *Titanic* exhibit, but they walk away or come up and comment to us afterwards about how they didn't know about the Halifax explosion, about the role of Halifax during the wars, or about just how active and busy our harbour was and is.

Certainly having a really iconic exhibit or something that really resonates with people from all over the world, that being the *Titanic*, helps our visitation in terms of the tourism market. It is a very substantial part of our revenue stream in terms of the visitors who come in throughout those months. We appreciate that, we need that, and it's essential, but we are always asking ourselves what we will do if for some reason they decide to move the cruise ship terminal. For many years now, because of that and also because of our changing mandate in the department that we're a part of, we have been trying more and more to make sure that we are building meaningful connections with our community. That goes back to the previous question about connections.

We do put a large focus not necessarily on increasing the visitation from the local markets but on making sure that we're important to the local communities and markets. We're hoping that the visitation follows the fact that we've become relevant to them in some way. It might be that we partner with groups so they can make their programs happen, programs that we may have a connection with. Sometimes it's a pretty vague connection, to be honest, but I think the benefit is that we are working with community groups and developing relevance and value for them. Often there's a snowball effect in new opportunities that end up coming out of it and are many times more closely aligned with our mandate of promoting maritime culture and heritage.



Tourism is very important. We do benefit greatly from it, but that doesn't lessen our efforts or the value we see in connecting more with the local communities.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** I think we have 30 seconds for the Vancouver folks on the same subject.

**Mr. Duncan MacLeod:** Very briefly, I can't talk about the numbers related to what kind of economic impact we have, but I will say that museums are regarded more highly than any other source—there are recent reports on this—in terms of their credibility of information. Museums are highly respected and believed when it comes to credible information about history, so I think that plays a significant role in our economic impact for tourism, for people who come to learn about the city where they visit.

●(1030)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** We'll now go to Mr. Nantel for seven minutes.

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

[English]

I'll speak English.

Do you get the English translation when I speak French? There's a problem with the French translation, so I'll speak in English.

Mr. Beasley, you mentioned your perception of the impact of local museums in the community. I haven't had the chance to visit the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Actually, some of us will be going to the Junos in Vancouver, which are on March 24, 25, or 26—I can't remember—so if you want to invite us, please forward that to the clerk, and we'll do as much as we can to see your venue.

Mr. Beasley, your commentary brought me to my recent visit to the Halifax maritime museum. I can say I did go out of general interest, but I did pay a lot of attention to the *Titanic* exhibit. It was a very hands-on experience, and I really appreciated it. What shocked me most about this museum is how it's sitting in the old port of Halifax.

I wanted to ask you, Ms. Reinhardt, whether you think the museum has played a key role in the vitality that you can sense in the area, on the waterfront. It is the most human-scale, lively wharf or harbour area I've seen, and you are right in the centre of it. Did you play a key role in this vitality? I could see that you had many prizes about 20 years ago, so I guess you've always been very popular, and now the site actually needs to be a little more renewed and fresher. Am I right to say that?

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** Yes, and thank you for that question. It's an interesting thing. One of the challenges with our facilities is that the loading bay and all of the access for operational things were all put on the waterfront side of the museum. When the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic was first developed in its current site, they always thought the main entrance would be the roadside entrance. Of course what happened was that the waterfront side became the main entrance to the museum.

When the maritime museum was there originally, there was really nothing. It was parking lots and old warehouses. It's was quite derelict, actually. I think it's a fair assessment to say the maritime museum did play a role in revitalizing that area and creating a little

bit of impetus to develop the waterfront so that it could become a destination. Now it certainly is. The waterfront side of the museum is very, very much the main entrance during our peak season.

We have begun partnering with Waterfront Development, which manages the entire waterfront, to do things like host public concerts and activities, to showcase seafaring music and other cultural community music, and just do what we can to continue to leverage our position in a really vibrant part of the waterfront. That's been done through efforts such as concerts and workshops and activities and through engaging as much as we can with the community on the waterfront. I think that's fair to say.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** As a tourist in such a location, you appreciate talking about boats and actually getting on a boat. There was an old boat there, the *Acadia*, and it was a very nice experience with the family to go on the boat. If I'm not mistaken, you also have the Art Boat, which is actually involving everyone around to get—

●(1035)

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** Yes, that was a program a couple of years ago. That was a community-driven partnership. Some artists came to us and said, "We'd really love to do this and we'd like to build a boat", so the whole process of building the boat out in our boat shed became an artistic, creative, musical experience. It was just a fun, whimsical boat.

If you've been in Halifax in the last year, there's a major development happening now directly to the north of the maritime museum. There was a parking lot there, and that's now one of the last chunks of land on the waterfront to be developed. They're developing a major—

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** The jazz festival was there.

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** The jazz festival was there, and that will probably move down further south. There's a development directly beside us. The developers are very keen. They have come to us. They really want to work with us because they value the fact that we create this unique, authentic heritage experience on the waterfront that is unique among all the fancy restaurants and pieces. They want to find ways we can complement what we offer with what they're beginning to develop and design. I think that is another good indication of how we have served as a connection to further the development of the waterfront in a really positive way.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** I could sense there that the whole place was 20 years old. You can feel this. I wonder if an interpretation centre, for example, from Irving shipyards, could be shared. Do you get support from them? Do you get involved with them? They are an important shipyard there, and they do get contracts.

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** Are you asking if we could approach them for support for the museum?

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Yes. When I went to see this maritime museum and saw the big Irving shipyard just beside it, I would have loved to see all the boats that have been built there, for example. Do they get involved?

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** They do, indirectly. The foundation works closely with the museum. The Canadian Maritime Heritage Foundation provides an award annually. We've formed a partnership with Cunard on the *Queen Mary 2*. For the past three years they've brought the *Queen Mary 2* into Halifax and they host a very wonderful luncheon on board, and provide a Cunard award to an individual who, like Samuel Cunard, who was a Haligonian, has the characteristics of pure entrepreneurship: vision, courage, and creativity.

The first award on the *Queen Mary 2* three years ago was awarded to Jim or John Irving, one of the Irving brothers. They received it, and it was a partnership with the Maritime Museum and the foundation. This program was developed as a way for us to connect with the donor class. Unlike a university, for example, we can't hand out honorary degrees, but we can hand out this prestigious award.

We made a connection with Irving—

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'll have to cut you off there. You might be able to continue.

[Translation]

We'll now continue with Mr. Breton.

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

Thank you for being with us today. I can't wait to visit your museums in eastern and western Canada. Today, with the help of your excellent presentations, you have made me want to go.

My first question will probably take all the time I have. Each of you can answer in turn.

The Department of Canadian Heritage has various government programs to assist the museum sector, the museum industry. Could you talk to me about how the Government of Canada can help you more in your activities, whether by commenting on current programs, or simply speaking from a financial or other point of view, and tell us how we can be good partners or better partners for you?

Perhaps we could start with Ms. Reinhardt.

[English]

**Ms. Kim Reinhardt:** We are a provincial museum, so we might be a little bit different from most of the museums you'll be having dialogues with in terms of how we access funding.

I can say that every year we have been fortunate to bring in folks through the Young Canada Works program. That has been a huge benefit to us. It's been a great way for us to try out a new type of program or to just bring in new people in general. We've had in the last several years at least two different ones, often in both official languages. It's been really wonderful to have somebody come in and

just focus on developing an experience for people whose first language is French.

In the last couple of years we've also brought in somebody to work on some of our cultural programming in artistic and musical programs and activities. These are things we wouldn't be able to do if we didn't have Young Canada Works.

In the past we have had, through partnerships, some funding to develop some exhibits, but it's been a while since we've done that. ACOA helped us, through the foundation I mentioned earlier, to bring funds together for the travelling exhibit on the *MS St. Louis*, which is soon to open at the Canadian War Museum.

Moving ahead, I think that the partnership and collaboration will probably be a strategic way forward, not just for us but for all Canadian museums. We all have different challenges. I think the storage issue is a challenge for museums probably coast to coast. It certainly is a challenge for us. Unique to maritime museums are vessels in the water. Those provide very unique challenges. Our *CSS Acadia* is 104 years old. It's a national historic site, but it has no funding coming with it other than what we have. That is a real challenge.

We have a partner on the waterfront with the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust's *HMCS Sackville*. They come down seasonally beside us. I know that they come to us and want to discuss possibilities in terms of the needs they have for their vessel in the water and the needs we have for our vessel in the water. I think it would be great down the road if there were some type of forum where we could talk to national partners, and other partners in the industry, to address unique projects like that.

I'll end it there.

• (1040)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** Thank you.

Could the people from the Vancouver museum answer the question?

[English]

**Mr. Tom Beasley:** Just very quickly, handing out money is not the solution. I mean, yes, of course museums are after money, but you need true partnership with the federal government. The federal government has expertise in collection management and funding sources. All museums need to mature on collections management. Ours is one of those. As Duncan said, we need to mature.

There are wonderful opportunities for the federal government to engage with museums, to tell stories, and to create dialogue on issues of importance across the country.

To focus on our museum, a couple of things pop up. Of course, there's the *St. Roch* and the sovereignty issues it evokes. It's the vessel that went west to east and around North America first. There are sovereignty issues through our museum, and there are indigenous and reconciliation issues. I mentioned the Whaler's Shrine, which is a national historic site too, by the way. We have no funding to us for *St. Roch* and we have no funding for the national historic site Whaler's Shrine.

There are just a couple of issues there that I think resonate for the federal government in opportunities with museums to tell stories and

create dialogue of importance to Canadians—the Northwest Passage, sovereignty, and indigenous issues.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The bells are ringing. We're out of time, in any event.

To the witnesses, thank you for the presentations you made today. They were very helpful.

The meeting is adjourned.

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