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Chair: The Honourable Hedy Fry



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• (1545)

[English]

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

Welcome to meeting number six of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is taking place on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

We have a little housekeeping to do before we get started. The Minister of Canadian Heritage has confirmed that he will be available to the committee on Monday, February 28, from 3:30 to 4:30, and that the 4:30 to 5:30 slot will be filled by his officials. On Wednesday, February 16, we will proceed to the study on Rogers Communications' takeover of Shaw, which is a one-meeting study. For that meeting, if the committee is in agreement, we will have two one-hour panels.

Pursuant to the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, January 31, 2022, the committee is meeting with witnesses about the challenges related to the recovery of the arts, culture, heritage and sport sectors, which have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. That means there are some people in the committee room and there are some people at home.

Given the ongoing pandemic situation and in the light of the recommendations from Health Canada, as well as the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on Tuesday, October 19 to remain healthy and safe, all those attending the meeting in person are to maintain two-metre physical distancing and must wear non-medical masks when circulating in the room. It is highly recommended that the mask be worn at all times, including when seated—I always like to add “including when speaking”. We must use the hand sanitizer in the room. As the chair, I will be enforcing those measures for the duration of the meeting.

For those participating virtually, I want to outline a few rules. You may speak in the official language of your choice. Interpretation services are available for the meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of the floor, English or French. If interpretation is lost, please let me know immediately and we will ensure that interpretation is restored before returning to the proceedings. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. I

also hope that you will mute your microphones at all times. When I call your name, you will unmute it and you'll speak.

With your permission we will begin, starting with witnesses from the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, Canadian Women and Sport, the Conseil québécois du théâtre, the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance and Special Olympics Canada.

The witnesses will all have five minutes to speak. At the one-minute mark, I will indicate that you have one minute left. Do not be distracted; I'm just giving you a timeline so you can wrap it up if you can. If you can't finish everything you wanted to say, you will have an opportunity during the question and answer session with committee members to be able to answer some other things that you felt you wanted to say at the time.

We will begin now with the Art Gallery of Hamilton and Shelley Falconer for five minutes.

Go ahead, Ms. Falconer.

Ms. Shelley Falconer (President and Chief Executive Officer, Art Gallery of Hamilton): Thank you.

Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I'm honoured to be here with all of you and with my colleagues from the sector, including my fellow CAMDO members, Jean-François Bélisle and Alexandra Badzak.

I will be speaking to you today specifically about the impact of the pandemic on the Art Gallery of Hamilton, and then relating it to some of the broader sectoral needs.

First, I'll give a little background. At 108 years old, the Art Gallery of Hamilton is Ontario's oldest municipal art gallery and the province's third-largest public art collection, with a repository of over 10,000 significant works by regional, indigenous, national and international artists. Of course, we are located in the city of Hamilton, which is one of Ontario's and Canada's fastest-growing cities.

We are indeed part of Ontario's arts, culture and heritage sector representing, before COVID, almost \$28 billion or 4.1% of the province's GDP and over 300,000 jobs. In fact, the arts and culture tourist spends more, stays longer and engages in other sectors of the economy, generating almost \$4 billion annually in GDP. This of course is in addition to an annual educational value of \$3.1 billion across Canada. The AGH's actual economic impact locally is \$18 million, and almost \$24 million to the provincial economy.

I mention these facts not to justify the arts on economic terms alone but to underline the fact that our cultural institutions must be seen as more than repositories of objects bringing important cultural, educational and social value. We also represent a significant economic driver in and of itself. We provide a variety of direct and indirect economic benefits and serve a crucial intellectual resource that cannot be replaced by other activities or institutions.

Today, like many arts institutions, our institution counts on a tremendous amount of private support. However, the AGH relies on this private support more than most. In fact, close to half of the AGH's operating revenue in 2019 came from individuals and corporations. With the average revenue for an art gallery in Canada being at 33%, we typically double that number. For example, in 2019, pre-pandemic, we exceeded 70%.

Although the AGH receives government funding, unlike our national, provincial and municipal counterparts, we remain, for our size of collection and building—we're at about 88,000 square feet—one of the least government-funded art galleries in the country.

What has been the impact of COVID? As it has for everyone else, the pandemic has disrupted most of the AGH's activities and our plans for the past two years—and I think probably for the next few years. Our earned revenues have been severely impacted to the tune of several millions. Our sponsorships, donations, memberships and admission have been eroded. However, our ongoing commitment to community engagement remains powerful. We were one of the first galleries to quickly pivot to online programming, supporting a number of the curriculum educational needs with very close relationships with our local school boards.

We're also deeply engaged in supporting wellness through the arts with our award-winning programs. Of course, I think we are all well aware of the much-needed and dramatic increase in terms of mental health needs in our communities. We're deeply grateful for the support of the federal dementia strategic fund, which is supporting us with a national program. We're also very deeply grateful to the government for the ongoing federal programs that have allowed us to maintain much of our staff and to continue to do the programming we do.

Although we're deeply grateful, I would like to draw your attention to some areas of concern in order to see the sector survive. Long-term operating support for the sector has not grown in keeping with the rate of increased expenses. We have seen year over year declines in government support at all levels. Considering the current rate of inflation, this is a concern.

Across Canada as a whole, the 2019 survey of heritage institutions indicated that 43.6% of our Canadian cultural organizations have aging infrastructure—fair, poor, or requiring attention. This will be an ongoing concern. Certainly, the last few years have only made all of these concerns much deeper.

We remain confident that with your government's renewed commitment to the sector, you'll recognize and support the essential role that institutions like the AGH play in bringing art collections to the public so that we can help build a strong, vibrant economy in years

to come, a sense of well-being and identity, and a place for all of our citizens.

• (1550)

Thank you for the opportunity to present today.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was very efficient.

I will now move to the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization. We have Alexandra Badzak, president; and Jean-François Bélisle, vice-president.

You may split your five minutes, or however you wish to speak.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak (President, Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization): I think that's the plan, so we're going to go back and forth a little bit.

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the standing committee.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for inviting us here today.

[*English*]

It is a privilege for CAMDO-ODMAC, the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization to address you today on this important topic.

CAMDO-ODMAC has existed since 1964 to really strengthen the ability of Canadian art museum directors to champion art and its significance in society, and to help people imagine and create a better world.

Our members are cultural leaders and champions, like Shelley. We have over 80 individual directors who oversee Canada's visual arts museums and public art galleries from coast to coast to coast and on various treaty lands and unceded territories, including the Haida Gwaii Museum on the west coast, the Yukon Arts Centre up north, and The Rooms in St. Johns, Newfoundland.

We present and engage art with our communities across Canada, with budgets ranging from \$300,000 to \$55 million, and our organizations range from international destinations like the Art Gallery of Ontario to the provincial institutions and municipal art galleries like the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, and university galleries as well.

CAMDO-ODMAC really does facilitate regular peer discussions and activities with their members. Therefore, we feel very confident that we have the pulse of their pandemic experiences, which is why we're here today.

Jean-François.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Bélisle (Vice President, Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization): Although art museums across the country were severely affected by the pandemic, they reinvented themselves on numerous occasions to continue their role as arts and community leaders across Canada. They have made an important contribution to the lives of Canadians throughout the crisis. Federal support, primarily through the Canada Council's and Canadian Heritage's wage and top-up subsidies, has been essential to the survival of Canadian museums. We are extremely grateful. Thank you.

This financial support has helped us, among other things, to reinvent ourselves on many occasions over the past 24 months. We have transformed our activities and migrated our community and educational actions to the web with a very high success rate. However, this has come at an immense financial and human cost. The lessons learned over the past two years will positively shape the future of museums and galleries in Canada.

• (1555)

[English]

However, Madam Chair, our members are still hurting.

Most art museums were closed for a minimum of seven months last year. Some still are, like the Ottawa Art Gallery and many university galleries.

As you know, varying provincial guidelines and the inability to forecast COVID-19 variants and waves have seriously affected all of our members. The main revenue-generating activities of our members died in 2020 and never came back. That includes educational and community activities, event room rentals, philanthropic activities, corporate sponsorships and membership fees.

The pandemic has forced all museums to shuffle their programming at the cost of cancelling exhibitions, closing others early, and cancelling tours in Canada and abroad. Adapting to a shift in visitors, now primarily regional and virtual, has also been a great challenge. Less tangible, but highly important, are the human resource impacts, which is a sector challenge even in the best of times. The pandemic has further exacerbated this with employee loss, retention and attraction challenges, impacts on the mental well-being of employees and communities, and remote and hybrid work adaptations.

The future does not look bright financially, as it will take months, if not years, for revenue-generating activities to reach their 2019 levels again. We're actually working on a three-to five-year horizon to achieve this.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: Madam Chair, this brings us to how the federal government can help our members move forward.

We have a few recommendations.

Number one, as key tourism anchors in our communities, our members, art galleries and museums need to be able to access the "\$1 billion over three years" promise to the tourism sector recovery. This will require some changes to the current financial criteria—

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: —to reflect cultural not-for-profits.

Number two, we need to diversify our revenue streams in order to be resilient and sustainable in the long term. This way, we want to really engage in the already existing Canada cultural investment fund. It's designed for the performing arts, but the visual arts need it too.

Number three, we know digital funds are essential to our future, but the time has come for us to invest in in-house capacity-building, no longer strategic planning.

Number four, the CEWS wage subsidy has worked really well for so many of our members, but it needs to be extended. We're not getting out of this anytime soon.

The proposed recovery fund, the arts and culture recovery program, is not going to assist museums and galleries that offer free admission like the Ottawa Art Gallery. We have, like Shelley, a lot of other significant revenue streams that have dried up during the pandemic, and so these, too, need to be eligible.

In conclusion, Madam Chair and members of the standing committee, as beleaguered citizens emerge from the pandemic's hold, they'll seek the life-affirming inspiration offered by art museums and galleries. Our organizations tell wonderful, complex stories of our communities and we contribute to the well-being of our citizens.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Badzak.

I'll now go to Canadian Women and Sport. I think we have Allison Sandmeyer-Graves, chief executive officer.

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Women and Sport): Hello.

[Translation]

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

[English]

My name is Allison Sandmeyer-Graves, and I'm the CEO of Canadian Women and Sport. Our 40-year-old organization is committed to building an equitable and inclusive sport system that empowers all women and girls, within sport and through sport.

I'm here today to speak to you about the sport sector's recovery from COVID-19 and to share our recommendations for your consideration.

In short, the pandemic has had serious, and potentially lasting, negative impacts on access to sport in every community in Canada. The effect of this children and their families is deeply concerning. Without access to sport during COVID, children report that they have found it hard to reduce stress and anxiety, and parents are reporting that their children are already less physically fit. On top of this, more than 17,000 jobs have been lost in the sector over the past two years. We are grateful for the support of government—federal, provincial and territorial—to help provide relief to the situation; however, it's clear that ongoing government support for the recovery remains important to the long-term viability of the sector and its ability to serve Canadians.

Today my comments will focus on two elements that we believe should be prioritized by the government as we move forward: the community level of sport and equity in sport.

I will share a few highlights of some reports that have been shared with the clerk. Canadian Tire's Jumpstart charity's "State of Sport Report", released in March 2021, indicated that three in 10 community sport organizations were temporarily or indefinitely closed; already a third were bankrupt or approaching bankruptcy; and those that were not yet permanently closed were fearful that it might be the outcome for them. These findings really highlight the acute challenge faced by community sport and the potentially long-lasting effects of the pandemic on the sector overall.

The underlying challenges are multiple and complex, including financial shocks when revenues plummeted and costs simultaneously went up; disruptions in access to facilities; a loss of volunteer coaches at all levels; loss of staff, as mentioned; and loss of participants. Our own research shows that one in four girls are considering not returning to sport as it resumes.

This loss of capacity to deliver sport in Canada will impact Canadian kids and their families from coast to coast to coast, and kids from under-represented communities will lose the most.

With scarcity comes fewer opportunities to play and rising costs to participate, and with it, some very serious equity questions. Who gets priority for the spots remaining, whether it's access to ice time or access to a team? Are we comfortable with more and more kids being left out because their families cannot afford the fees?

Every child in Canada should have an opportunity to play quality sport, but unless we prioritize equity in the recovery, the risk is high that the kids who could benefit most from sport are left on the sidelines.

With that, we have two recommendations to continue the support for the sport sector to bridge from relief to recovery and beyond.

The first recommendation is that the Government of Canada strengthen and expand mechanisms for providing funding to community sport, now and into the future. The "community sport for all" funding announced in budget 2021 is an excellent start, but it cannot be the end. Community sport serves the most Canadians and creates the greatest public good, yet it has the least access to government dollars. If community sport isn't strong and sustainable, the system above it starts to crumble. Recovery funding should be for operations and infrastructure, not only for programs. A sustainable

mechanism for directing government funds to community sport should be established as an outcome of this.

The second recommendation is that the Government of Canada make equity a core strategy and criterion for all investments in sport by the federal government. Directing more funding to community sport will contribute to alleviating the COVID-induced inequities but will not go far enough. Sport organizations typically lack the necessary know-how to address inequity and to expand inclusion in their policies, programs and operations. To that end, we would like to see more targeted funding for sport organizations led by and directly serving under-represented Canadians, as well as ongoing investments in capacity-building for mainstream sport organizations—

• (1600)

The Chair: You have 35 seconds remaining.

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: —to increase their understanding and competency for inclusion.

Addressing those two points will be essential to the recovery and the long-term viability of the sport system to serve Canadians inclusively and well.

Thank you for your time and consideration today, and of course, go Team Canada!

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now move on to Conseil québécois du théâtre with Rachel Morse.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rachel Morse (Co-chair, Conseil québécois du théâtre): Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today.

Today, I am speaking as co-chair of the Conseil québécois du théâtre. This non-profit organization brings together and represents Quebec's theatre practitioners and professional organizations to promote the development and influence of the art of theatre in all its diversity.

Over the past two years, we have been assisting our community through this historic crisis, in order to support as best we could a sector of activity that was extremely fragile already. We were ill-equipped to face the storm that hit us, and we are starting the recovery with exhausted and psychologically shaken troops, and a growing feeling of precariousness.

In recent days, the Quebec government of François Legault has announced that the reopening of theatres at full capacity will take place on February 28. Although we hope that this date marks the beginning of the end of the crisis, it seems inevitable that it will continue to plague us for many years to come. The challenges ahead of us are many, touching on many areas of artistic practice, and we very much hope that the dialogue established with the governmental authorities will continue.

Needless to say, the fifth wave was a real blow to the professionals in the sector, who thought they could finally start thinking about the future. This unfortunate situation only accentuated a feeling that had become permanent among the people in the sector, namely the fact that their profession was hanging by a thread. That is why I want to express to the members of this committee the need to see the recovery as a reconstruction. It is imperative that we use the lessons learned from the pandemic so that arts and culture can enjoy a balanced and prolific ecosystem. Given the complexity and richness of the theatre community, the collaboration and understanding of decision-makers will be necessary to bring about those major changes.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, a significant amount of public support has been provided through agencies and institutions. While we applaud the federal emergency assistance programs for individuals, particularly the Canada emergency response benefit, we must highlight those for whom it will be extremely difficult to recover, namely artists, creators and craftspeople. These people, who form the basis of the creative chain, have had their shows cancelled many times, and have suffered from the lack of predictability; and those who make up the next generation sometimes have not even had the chance to enter the labour market. In this regard, I encourage the members of this committee to increase funding to the Canada Council for the Arts so that special attention is given to individual artists and emerging artists.

Moreover, if we wish to retain the rich expertise of our creators and professionals, we must be able to offer healthy and competitive working conditions. We also welcome the consultations on the reform of the employment insurance program that take into account the specific realities of self-employed cultural workers in the context of the modernization plan. This update is an example of an issue about which our sector's representatives and associations have been sounding the alarm for many years.

We are nevertheless relieved to note that, by accentuating the urgency of this systemic shortcoming, the pandemic has facilitated adjustments. In this sense, I hope that the members of this committee will continue to follow this issue closely, while ensuring that the changes will be applicable as quickly as possible and that these reforms will take into account the specificities of the cultural sector.

For the recovery, we hope that audiences will quickly get back into the habit of going to the theatre. Presenters' reopening plans will need to be supported. They know best how to reach their own audiences. After months of scarcity, risk-taking can be terrifying, and all presenters should be encouraged to dare to present all types of shows.

In addition, the repeated cancellations and the absence of programming for many months have created a funnel effect that leaves

little hope for some producers, particularly those of the next generation. I must therefore stress to the members of this committee the importance of developing alternative modes of presentation while providing greater support to the teams that coordinate their feasibility.

In summary, we believe that we need to support individual artistic careers in a sustainable way by allowing support for artists through Canada Council programs and by recognizing their work status under the employment insurance program. We must also support the presentation of performances by allowing presenters to assume more risk than ever before—

[English]

The Chair: Could you—

Ms. Rachel Morse: I'm sorry?

I'll wrap up.

• (1605)

The Chair: Yes, thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Morse: It will also be necessary to support the presentation of performances by allowing presenters to take on more risk than ever before, to launch initiatives to promote audience return and development, and to consider alternative modes of presentation to counteract the funnel effect.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I hope that the concerns and solutions that have been presented will be reflected in your upcoming recommendations.

On behalf of the Conseil québécois du théâtre, I sincerely hope that the next government programs and funding will ensure a sustainable recovery and that this recovery will act as a new beginning for the performing arts sector.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Morse.

I am now going to the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance with Barbara Kanerattoni Diabo.

You have the floor, Ms. Kanerattoni Diabo.

Ms. Barbara Kanerattoni Diabo (Chair, Grand Council, Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Witness spoke in Mohawk as follows:]

Shé:kon, Kanerahtón:ni íontiats. Kanyen'kehá:ka niwakenaker-ahserò:ten. Kahnawà:ke nitiwaké:non tánon Tiohtià:ke nón:we ki:teron.

[Witness provided the following translation:]

Hello. My name is Barbara Kanerattoni Diabo. I am from the Kanien'keha:ka nation, the Mohawk nation, of Kahnawake and I now live in Montreal.

[English]

I am here representing the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance, or IPAA. We are a national, multi-faceted, not-for-profit organization that works with indigenous performing artists, arts organizations and our allies.

Regarding Canadian heritage, what does the word “heritage” mean to you, members of the committee? For us it means tens of thousands of years on this land, our evolution, our people, our relationship with the land, our ancestors, our languages, our traditions, our resilience, our songs, our carvings, our stories, our dances and our art existing for millennia, but, as you know, the challenges of keeping this alive and being supported as artists started long before COVID. I believe it is important to keep this in mind while I discuss COVID’s impact on our community in order to truly understand our fear of being forgotten once again.

In the spring of 2021, we at IPAA, with the help of Indigenuity Consulting Group Incorporated, set out to undertake a study of the impacts of COVID-19 on indigenous artists on a national scale. The following information is based on this and other studies as well as my own observations of being part of the indigenous arts community for years.

Many of our artists echoed the same challenges as non-indigenous artists’ voices, for example, lack of work, financial struggles, depression, feeling unsafe, general insecurity and feeling isolated. Some additional challenges were the loss of connection to community and culture, less support, fewer resources and opportunities available in more isolated indigenous communities, misunderstanding or ignorance of our art and culture that weakened support for us and difficulty living and navigating in a colonial system in fear of being forgotten.

Let me elaborate on some of these points.

The first point is financial struggles. Only 29% of our respondents said they had personally accessed government or program-level support. Many recipients also found that government support insufficient, noting that it was not enough for people to thrive on. It is important to note that our financial baseline was already challenged in many ways. In a study done by Canada Council for the Arts, it was found that indigenous artists earned 68¢ on the dollar compared with non-indigenous artists.

The second point is loss of connection to community and culture. Some indigenous artists shared how their culture felt threatened and that it was challenging to continue to build relationships, practise tradition and maintain cultural connections. For many of us, community is the centre of well-being. It influences our art on many levels. The ability to travel and gather had a huge impact on many indigenous artists on different levels than perhaps the rest of the mainstream population.

The third point is that misunderstandings or ignorance of our art and culture has weakened support for us. We must be very aware of not falling into a one-size-fits-all artist support model through COVID and beyond. This system created challenges around maintaining a unique indigenous identity when producing art to the mainstream world.

The fourth point is that less support and fewer resources and opportunities were available in more isolated indigenous communi-

ties. Lack of spaces, jobs and even basic technology such as high-speed Internet created challenges for indigenous artists that made them unable, for example, to transfer work virtually. Please remember that many indigenous communities in regular times have less access to health services, adequate housing and clean running water. COVID exacerbated these problems. How can our artists flourish in this?

In conclusion, as many of you are aware, to help our artists grow, create, feel safe and have equal space in society, the problems go beyond COVID. If today we are focusing mainly on COVID’s effect on the arts, please remember this: For indigenous artists you must take the time and care needed to keep us safe, to keep us creating and to listen. Indigenous arts are an essential part of heritage on this land we now call Canada. Take actions that will assure we are not—

• (1610)

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Ms. Barbara Kanerattoni Diabo: —left behind or forgotten. For our artists, this is more than just loss of job; it is loss of identity and culture, which has already been so precarious for the last 500 years. Don’t let COVID erase what little ground we have gained over the last decade.

While much damage has resulted from the pandemic, I hope we can use this as an opportunity to reflect on the system that is not working, devise a better way, take real actions to make it sure and to ensure that care and support are equally available to all of us. These changes can be better for all of Canada.

Nia:wen Kowa. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The final witness for today is from Special Olympics Canada, Sharon Bollenbach.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach (Chief Executive Officer, Special Olympics Canada): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Excuse me—I’m kind of fighting Mother Nature’s spotlight here.

It’s great to be here. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee. I am Sharon Bollenbach, and I’m the CEO of Special Olympics Canada.

Special Olympics Canada is a national multi-sport organization providing year-round community sport training and competition opportunities for athletes with an intellectual disability. Working within a collaborative federated governance model, we have 12 provincial-territorial chapters. Each day of the week in communities large and small through grassroots sports programs and competition, we provide athletes with an intellectual disability the opportunity to experience the transformative power and joy of sport.

The impacts of isolation caused by COVID-19 have been exceptionally difficult for our community. Today I really appreciate the opportunity to summarize several of those key areas of impact on Special Olympics across Canada.

The first is athlete registration. From a trajectory of growth prior to COVID-19, we have experienced a 49% decrease in athlete registration. For both the physical and mental well-being of our athletes, we aim and hope to get them back when it is safe to restart our programs and activities.

The second is volunteer registration. Similar to the situation with our athletes, we have a 39% decrease in volunteer registration. Our programs are run by our volunteers. They are our coaches and our administrators. They are really the ones who do and drive our work. Volunteers' re-engagement, recruitment and training will be essential to our recovery.

Third is grassroots program delivery. Prior to COVID-19 we were offering 6,000 grassroots sports programs in 340 communities. These sports programs are at the heart of who we are. All were suspended at one point during COVID. Some are starting to come back with specific restrictions and protocols. Access to facilities like schools and recreations facilities is proving to be challenging and costly.

Fourth is competitions and national games. All competitions at the local, provincial and territorial levels and our national games have been cancelled. With no training and no pathway to compete and qualify, we as an organization prioritized fiscal and human resources on getting grassroots programs back up and running. Our aim is to return to sport and to return to competition when it is safe to do so and our athletes can adequately train in preparation.

Fifth is technology. The pandemic has certainly highlighted where we have gaps in technology. Now more than ever the need to create and deliver platforms that are national in scope and that can digitize our movement is very important. While most funding agreements prioritize program delivery versus infrastructure, there's heightened need for us to invest in technology that keeps us connected and working more efficiently.

Sixth is mental health. As all of us as Canadians have experienced during COVID-19 and while our chapters have done a really great job of offering virtual programs and activities to keep athletes connected and active during the pandemic, the abrupt stop and continuing absence of daily routines, programs and in-person contact has severely impacted the mental health of our athletes, putting further strain on their families.

Finally, there is financial. The financial impact of COVID-19 has been significant, and recovery will take a long time. Pre-COVID, our 2019-2020 fiscal year pan-Canadian revenue was \$40 million.

In our 2020-2021 fiscal year we had a 30% decrease in revenue, and we are forecasting the same for our 2021-2022 fiscal year.

• (1615)

The Chair: You have one minute left.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Most impacted has been our local fundraising. We tapped into the Sport Canada recovery fund in 2021, and many chapters have benefited from federal government employee salary benefits. We will be tapping into the newly launched funding through Sport Canada.

We've had a tough go of it, but our aim and our priority are to recover, rebuild and reignite our movement.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

These have been very interesting presentations, everyone. I heard some things today that I hadn't heard from other witnesses in the past. You put new chapters on the table. Thank you.

Now we're going to go to the question-and-answer session.

We're going to the first round of questions and answers. This is a six-minute round. I just want to warn you that the six minutes includes questions and answers. Everybody is going to have to work well to be able to get as many questions in as they can. Perhaps witnesses could keep their answers short so that we can get in as many answers as we can.

The first round is for the Conservatives with Kevin Waugh.

Kevin, go ahead for six minutes.

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

Welcome to the six groups that joined us here today.

To the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, Alexandra, when you look across the country, many arts and museum organizations are tired of the Ottawa precinct taking most of the money. You've mentioned a wide range of \$300,000 to \$55 million, but the animosity of many museums in this country is that the precinct of Ottawa, with its big museums, gobbles up most of the money.

I'd like you to comment on that.

• (1620)

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: Thank you very much.

Through the Chair, it's a really interesting question. I come from the west. I lived and worked in Saskatoon for many years at what was then the Mendel Art Gallery, so I understand the perception of Ottawa as the seat of all the national institutions and that there is a perception that the funding pots go toward their....

As the Ottawa Art Gallery, we're a local, regional art gallery. We've carved out our space to tell the story of Ottawa's municipal and regional perspectives. There's that perception out there that they're crown corporations, so they get funded differently than the rest of us.

Typically, art galleries and directors across Canada have the trifecta of local government funding, provincial government funding and then funding from the Canada Council for the Arts or from Heritage. We feel that those are solid programs. They just need better funding pots within them for us to access more funds because, let's face it, we're all struggling. However, I think that the nationals sit outside.

Where we might pick away at that a bit is that corporations and patrons, perhaps potential donors, don't often see the distinction between the local and national institutions. That may be an area where we could encourage more localized or regional support, at that corporate and individual donor level.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Of course, the Mendel family was synonymous with our city of Saskatoon. Now it's Ellen Remai and the Remai Modern art gallery. So I see where you're coming from when you say that individuals pick up the slack of provincial, municipal or even federal governments.

I have a question for Ms. Bollenbach from Special Olympics Canada. About a month ago or less, I had in my office Greg Donaldson, a Special Olympian snowshoer in my city, along with Faye Matt, the CEO of Special Olympics Saskatchewan. They're concerned about the federal funding, because in 2021 your organization received \$3.8 million from the federal government. Right now, they estimate that only \$2 million will be coming forward in 2022.

They asked if \$1.8 million is the shortfall or if this federal government is going to fill the void of 2022, as they did in 2021. You didn't talk about the funding, yet I had Special Olympians in my office three weeks ago who were very concerned about this.

Is that a concern of the Canadian Special Olympics?

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Yes, it is. We had what we call our Hill Day, when we met with over 150 members of Parliament across the country.

You are correct. You met with some local folks in Saskatchewan, but across the country, we were speaking to members of Parliament to talk about the gap in funding that we will have in some incremental funding that was awarded to us four years ago. We are looking at a gap, starting April 1, of \$1.8 million. We have been speaking to MPs about getting that gap filled in our funding.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Good luck with that. We're only two months away.

Greg was very depressed in our office, talking about the opportunities that sport has given him, mentally and physically. He's a great snowshoer. His mom was on hand, plus Faye Matt was there.

Is there any hope of getting that \$1.8 million from the federal government?

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Thank you for bringing it up.

We certainly are. I had it in my notes and got short on time. I had it included to speak to today.

We are hopeful. We've put in the ask. We've made a written submission to the Standing Committee on Finance. As I've said, we've spoken to over 150 MPs, who have said they are showing their sign of support for our ask. I know many of them wrote letters to the Minister of Finance, to the Minister of Sport and to the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance to support that ask.

We are very hopeful. We've spread the word across the Hill of this need for finance. We hope that we will be showing up in the budget when it's presented.

• (1625)

The Chair: You have 36 seconds left, Kevin.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you.

If the \$1.8 million is not there, what happens to your organization?

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: We will have cuts in funding. We've already created an alternate budget with the \$1.8 million not included. It will definitely mean that we will be cutting programs and services that our organization provides for athletes with an intellectual disability.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I think that's it, Kevin.

Now I'm going to go to the Liberals for six minutes.

Lisa Hepfner.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for their time and opening statements today.

I'd like to focus my questions on Shelley Falconer from the Art Gallery of Hamilton.

First off, thank you for the good work that you do. The art gallery is a key institution in our city. When my son visited the art gallery, it was one of his favourite and most lasting memories of elementary school. For me, I think the last time I was there was for the exhibit to celebrate the life of Milli, one of our iconic fashion designers. I don't think that exhibit could have happened anywhere else. It was really important.

I've heard anecdotally that people have been clamouring to get into the art gallery when you have been open. I think that's my first question for you, Shelley. Do you feel that the art gallery will have to work to overcome people's reluctance to be in crowds again or do you feel that there's a pent-up demand and you'll have lots of people coming to visit the art gallery when they can?

Ms. Shelley Falconer: Thank you Lisa, for the shout out and the question. It's a great question.

We opened our doors this past weekend with our new exhibitions. I'd like to point out that our Margaret Watkins exhibition, like a lot of things right now, are tied up with the supply chain issues. Half of the exhibition is in crates in Istanbul. They didn't get on the plane. We're missing one of our exhibitions. In our history, that's never happened before.

We did open this past weekend with most of our new exhibitions and there was a line-up outside the door. That doesn't always happen. That answers part of your question.

We have noticed though, with the last few re-openings—because we all know that we've been in a few lockdowns—our younger audiences are much more ready to come back. We do find it more challenging—and my colleagues can jump in with their comments on this—with the older audiences. They're quite reluctant to be in crowds. In fact, we've been reaching out directly to quite a few of them and offering to bring them in when the gallery is closed to the public, so they can feel secure.

I'm not saying it's for all, but it seems to be that certainly the younger demographic is more willing to go and our older audience is far more reluctant.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Those are really interesting observations. Thank you.

In your opening statement, you talked about aging infrastructure. I don't know how old the building is that the art gallery is in, but I know it's at least several decades old. I'm sure that you have challenges to deal with.

At Canadian heritage, there's a relatively new fund called the cultural spaces fund. This is grants and contributions for construction and renovation projects, specialized equipment purchases, and feasibility studies for professional non-profit arts and heritage infrastructure projects.

I'm wondering if you're aware of this fund. Is this something that would help you to address some of those aging infrastructure projects?

Ms. Shelley Falconer: Yes. Thank you for bringing up cultural spaces. They've been dear friends to us. They funded our feasibility study.

You're well aware of the aging infrastructure in downtown Hamilton. The new revitalization of those buildings that is about to occur is by a group of developers that will be taking over those buildings for the city. We are one of those buildings. However, we were not included in the city's plans to be taken over. It's an odd situation to be in. It's a city-owned building with aging infrastructure. I'd say that the gallery, to date, has put in millions to keep it going as a public institution.

Cultural spaces has started to assist us with the very extensive feasibility study that we have now completed and submitted. We will be going back into cultural spaces for support, but as you know these are very expensive projects.

One of my points in raising the infrastructure issue is that in Ontario alone the ceiling for cultural spaces is \$10 million to \$15 million. To renovate a building like ours—

• (1630)

The Chair: Excuse me for one second, please.

There is an echo. An interpreter or someone is speaking.

Please make sure that your mikes are all muted. They seem to be, so I don't know where that's coming from.

Carry on, Shelley.

Ms. Shelley Falconer: Thank you.

The Chair: I'll give you the extra time that I just took from you.

Ms. Shelley Falconer: My point is that this program has been in place for some years now. Given the problems we're having across the country with our aging infrastructure, I think that, like the operating funds, it needs to be looked at. I was trying to bring up the issue of both operating and infrastructure. I think the fund needs to be a fund that is bigger if we're going to do anything to reinforce or to renovate the aging infrastructure that we have. We are holding collections worth billions of dollars when you bring them all together, so they're really important assets.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Thank you for that.

You also mentioned in your opening statement that the Art Gallery of Hamilton was one of the first to go online and start offering programming. Can you reflect on how maybe the pandemic has changed the way museums may operate in the future? Do you expect that digital programming will continue? Do you have any advice on that?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Ms. Shelley Falconer: I'll be very quick.

I think it was largely due to our size. As a mid-size institution, I think it's easier to be a little more nimble, but I think the problem we have is that funds were released for a lot of strategy: We need infrastructure. Most of us do not have the technology or the skilled employees to be able to run our institutions like a television studio, which is what I feel like I have become this past year.

We did move quickly. We were fortunate, but I know that we and others are struggling because we simply don't have those kinds of funds built into our operating—

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: If I have a couple of seconds left, I will—

The Chair: No, Lisa. You don't have any seconds left. Thank you so much. I'm sorry.

Now we get to the next person, who is from the Bloc Québécois.

We have Monsieur Martin Champoux for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank all the witnesses for coming today. Again, it's always very informative and interesting to hear them. We appreciate that.

My first question is for Ms. Morse from the Conseil québécois du théâtre.

Ms. Morse, since we undertook this study, in recent weeks, there has been a lot of talk about recovery in the cultural sector. Last week, we heard Ms. Prigent, the president of the Union des artistes. She talked about the seduction campaign that must be undertaken to win back audiences.

Of course, the typical theatre audience is a very loyal audience— at least that's what I assume. Theatregoers are generally very passionate people. Do you feel that once the health measures are relaxed, it will be a big challenge to win back the hearts and loyalty of the theatre-going public?

Ms. Rachel Morse: As for winning back the hearts of theatregoers, I don't know. I think their hearts remain loyal, as you said.

Earlier, colleagues spoke about the concern for our older audience members. The COVID-19 prevention measures created fear among older people. They were told that the virus was more dangerous for them than for other age groups, and they were asked to stay at home. We will certainly have to do a lot of work to restore the confidence of these audience members.

Our premises are obviously adapted and we respect the measures of the CNESST and the various authorities. Nevertheless, this trust must be regained, of course.

Many cultural spectators are also cultural workers. At the moment, they are plunged into an inevitable precariousness. Let's just say that our sector is not very competitive in terms of wages. The further along we got into the pandemic, the more difficult it has been to keep employees and artists in the sector and to offer them the best possible support, especially with the fifth wave that we have just gone through. Because it's hard to support them, they won't go to shows either because they're exhausted and can't necessarily afford it.

Indeed, it will be a big job.

• (1635)

Mr. Martin Champoux: Ms. Morse, I think it's wonderful that you managed to segue from the first question into the second. It seems as if we have been rehearsing a text together.

You talk about the precariousness of cultural workers, whether they're actors, stage technicians, or else. When we met a few months ago, we talked about reviewing the federal Status of the Artist Act. We also talked about reviewing the employment insurance program to find a way to make workers in the cultural sector eligible. As we say in France, these workers are often called the “intermittents du spectacle”—the contract workers of the entertainment industry.

Can you explain to us what the benefits of such a safety net would be for these self-employed workers and the cultural industry?

Ms. Rachel Morse: Of course. It allows for some continuity in the work. It would be a monumental challenge for any profession to live the way artists do, from one contract to the next and from one stage to the next. The creative process is extremely difficult. We are very grateful for the support that has been provided.

For example, increasing operations subsidies is a fundamental help to organizations that are funded in this way, obviously, but people who don't have access to operations subsidies fall through the cracks and can't seem to get out of that situation. I was talking about the new generation and diversity earlier. It is artists from these groups who find it difficult to access funding and support.

I'm moving from one topic to another, but we're going to do a big promotional campaign to build trust with audiences and so on, but the situation for workers remains the same. The Canada Performing Arts Workers Resilience Fund has been announced, and that's great news, but again, it's through the institutions and the representative organizations. So how do we support these artists with a social net? That's a huge question.

The revision of the Status of the Artist Act is obviously a solution, and the reform of employment insurance helps tremendously, but we need to create programs that will support individual artists. That is when we can best support artists.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Are you under the impression that the disengagement that we see from many cultural workers is somewhat due to the fact that artists are tired of having to literally beg every time there is a dip in the market?

Ms. Rachel Morse: Yes, exactly, and this exhaustion becomes all the more severe when you don't have the means to get out of it.

[English]

The Chair: Excuse me.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Yes.

[English]

The Chair: Clerk, there is feedback that is making it difficult. It sounds like we are either listening to the interpreter or there is something in Ms. Morse's room where there is feedback, but I am hearing someone else speaking rapidly.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Morse: Okay.

This exhaustion is compounded by the fact that conditions have never been optimal. Now we are asking for more competitive salaries and a new injection of funds, especially for individual artists, in a new scholarship program for artists, and not in operating assistance programs.

Mr. Martin Champoux: This was one of the recommendations that came out of the previous study we did on the same subject. It is a matter of ensuring that the financial assistance provided by governments makes it to the end of the chain, to the artists and workers, who are often the ones who do not have access to this funding.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Martin.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: That answers my question quite well. We will have the opportunity, Ms. Morse, in the next few weeks, to come back to a study on the status of the artist. We will talk again then.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Martin.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: I think it is when Ms. Morse is speaking that I'm getting somebody speaking very rapidly.

Could the technicians look at her in the interim to see if there's something going on in her room? It may be the feedback from her hearing or whatever, but I can definitely hear it. It's very clear and it only happens when she is speaking.

Thank you very much, Martin.

I'll move forward now to the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Peter Julian, you have six minutes.

• (1640)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thanks so much to our witnesses. We know that these are difficult times during the pandemic. We thank you for your service and hope that you and your families and loved ones are staying safe and healthy during this pandemic.

I want to start by asking Ms. Sandmeyer-Graves to what extent does there continue to be discrimination against funding in women's sports? What is the per capita funding for women's sports in Canada today compared with men's sports?

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: That is an excellent question, and I appreciate it very much.

Frankly, it's a difficult thing to assess. Sport is a very big, diverse sector, with everybody working autonomously, so we don't always get those numbers rounded up. What we do know—some proxies, if you will—is that when we look, for instance, at sponsorship of women athletes and women's sports compared with male athletes, women are receiving, approximately only 4% of sponsorship dollars. That reflects a major infusion of private dollars into the system—

Mr. Peter Julian: Sorry, so that's 4% for women and 96% for men's sports?

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: Yes, it's a very substantial gap when it comes to private sector funding of sports. Within government, there have certainly been efforts to increase the amount of financing or resources flowing to women's sport. Those decisions ultimately happen within every organization. For instance, the federal government in 2018, as part of Budget 2018, announced \$30 mil-

lion in support for gender equity with a goal of achieving gender equality at all levels of sport by 2035. Our view is that this was an excellent start, but it's certainly not enough to correct the historical imbalances in investment and support throughout the sport system. We are currently advocating for follow-on funding to support continued efforts towards gender equity in the sport system.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you for those figures. It's stunning to me that in 2022 we're still talking about women's sports getting 4% of the sponsorship dollars. That stuns me. After all the successes of women's team sports and our women athletes, that's very surprising, so thank you for that.

I have a lot of questions, so I'll move on to Ms. Bollenbach about the Special Olympics. I'm a strong supporter and sponsor of local Special Olympians.

You talked about the contingency budget where you don't receive the money that is absolutely essential to your operations, and you talked about cancelling some programs. I'd be interested in knowing to what extent that will have an impact on Special Olympians.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: What we tried to do, so that there wouldn't any programs completely 100% cut, for lack of a better term, is that we sort of shaved some off the top of a number of different programs in that \$1.8 million. We are still getting funded by Sport Canada. That \$1.8 million was incremental funding awarded to us four years ago. It has increased each year, and this particular year we're at \$3.8 million. Starting in April, that incremental funding will go down to \$2 million. That's where we get to that gap of \$1.8 million.

What we'd be looking at doing is taking a little bit off of a number of programs that we do, so I spoke to the direct grassroots delivery of programs. A little bit would come off of volunteers and volunteer development, and a bit off competition. There are a number of areas that would be impacted, and we would just have to sort of pull back on some of those funds going out to our provincial territorial chapters where that money really hits at the grassroots community level.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much for that.

As I have many questions, I'll move on to Ms. Badzak and Ms. Falconer.

When we talk about our arts museum sector, what are the impacts of not receiving the supports that are so vital across the country? Do you anticipate potential closures of some of our arts museums? What do you see as the consequences?

• (1645)

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: Shall I start, Shelley—

Ms. Shelley Falconer: Absolutely.

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: All right, thank you.

I think we can say safely that without CEWS and the amount that we received from the Canada Council, as well as some provincial funding bodies, we most likely would see significant closures of art galleries and art museums across the country. I could say for myself that those two supports from both the Canada Council and through the CEWS program kept us going when we lost over a million dollars in our revenue-generating unit during this period of time. It was essential, and we need it to continue.

Shelley.

Ms. Shelley Falconer: I'd just like to add something that relates to a question that was asked earlier about funding, and I hope I get this out in time.

It's a little complicated. Different institutions—it was asked about the Ottawa Art Gallery—have different funding models. Federal, provincial and municipal galleries that receive extensive base funding feel the impact less, for example, than an institution like the Art Gallery of Hamilton or like Jean-François' gallery in Joliette. We are at 17% of base funding, so we have to make up all the rest in those earned revenues and donations.

I would say that for those of us in the position we're in, it means not only structural deficits but perhaps also closures. For the more heavily funded government organizations with base funding, I think they will probably fare better.

Certainly, we're not all created equal. I think that's the main point.

Government-based funding and project-based funding are two very different things. One is applied and one is a given.

The Chair: Ms. Falconer, maybe you can round that up when you get another question and include it in there. Thank you very much.

We will now go to the second round of five minutes each, beginning with the Conservative Party.

Ms. Thomas, you have five minutes.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

My first question goes to Canadian Women and Sport.

Ms. Sandmeyer-Graves, you talked about wanting to go “from relief to recovery and beyond”, and about the importance of sport and how it creates public good. Perhaps you can expand on how it creates public good.

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: I think sport is probably best known for its positive physical benefits and mental health benefits. Sport, of course, if you look at it through a gender perspective, is also a place where girls and women first get to establish their leadership, which, they've shown through research, has translated into greater educational attainment and even greater career attainment. From a newcomer perspective, sport has shown to be a fantastic way for newcomers to settle and integrate into communities. It is, in and of itself, a large cultural experience in our country, and people being able to access it is key.

Sport is also used as a vehicle for development in a lot of respects. We know that it's an attractive pursuit for young people to

be involved in, and it becomes a platform for life skills development and career skills development and so many other aspects that can really support them well beyond the field of play. It is an economic driver in many communities, a source of great employment, and more.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Perfect.

As we come back into our pursuits of normality in this country, as we recover from the pandemic and look to what you called “beyond”, would you say that those of us who are in places of leadership have a role to play in terms of the language we use? I know that there is definitely a role to play in terms of legislation, and of course in terms of funding models. I understand that. But so much of the language we use as leaders does in fact impact society. It either normalizes or stigmatizes certain activities.

What is our role to play in bringing sport back to a place of normal engagement?

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: I think it's a really interesting question. As has been described by so many of the witnesses today, there's been a real stop-start. Frankly, across provincial and territorial jurisdictions, there have been very different rules and very different expectations of what it means to engage and how that engagement will be supported in sport as well as in other places.

What we know is that as much as sport has not been available because the organizations weren't providing it, people have also been opting out of sport because they themselves didn't feel comfortable putting themselves into those scenarios. In fact, one of the things we're very concerned about is that there is a high dropout rate of youth from sport during adolescent years—among both girls and boys, but girls certainly at higher rates. There's a generation of kids who now are going through COVID where this is maybe the thing that has forced them out, and they won't come back again. That represents a loss of opportunity for well-being throughout their lives.

So to your question about how we should be thinking as leaders about framing the recovery and coming back, I think we want to be encouraging people to be active. We want to be encouraging people to re-engage and resume their participation. As much as possible, I think, the sport system has done a wonderful job of responding to the restrictions and to adapting and ensuring that things are safe. We now need to inspire confidence in people to return.

• (1650)

The Chair: You have one minute left, Ms. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Okay.

That's excellent, Ms. Sandmeyer-Graves.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach from the Special Olympics, I have the same question for you. How do we help athletes come back and fully engage?

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Thank you for asking. I'll just add to what Allison said, because I certainly agree with that.

I think as leaders we can communicate coming back and re-engaging with community. It's something that sport does so well. It creates and builds community. From a Special Olympics perspective, I know that athletes with an intellectual disability feel part of community by being involved in our organization. They gain confidence on the field of play and other skills, as Allison mentioned, that extend far beyond sport.

I think we can be speaking about coming back to community and what that looks like related to sport, that it has physical health benefits and mental health benefits and all of those things that create that kind of unique transformative—we always use that term, but it's true—power of sport.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Bollenbach. You can elaborate during the next question.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

The Chair: I'll go to Tim Louis for the Liberals.

Tim, you have five minutes.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair; and thank you to all the witnesses. This has been very informative and I appreciate it.

I'll start by directing my questions to Ms. Diabo. There was something very impactful you said that I took notes on here, that in indigenous communities there's a different definition of heritage and theirs has existed for millennia.

What we're hoping to do here is learn from this pandemic experience. Regarding the time-limited emergency responses that we provided to first nations, Inuit and Métis, what can we learn from them?

I looked at your website and you had ideas and programs like the tech bundle program, which sounds amazing and is going to help artists get the tools they need to digitally share their work: record and livestream video, record music and put on shows. How can we take ideas like the tech bundle program or micro innovation grants that support that digital creation? How can we use the supports now as a move ahead for it and continue to provide that support?

Ms. Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo: Thank you.

Regarding the tech bundles, I'm really proud of that baby. We managed to get about 20 tech bundles that will go to various communities across Canada, to indigenous organizations that will allow indigenous artists to use it to be able to transform their work into more virtual forms.

As I mentioned, in many northern communities, even Internet is a challenge. Even that, we have to figure out a little more.

I always come back to it being really not a one-size-fits-all. While our artists do have the same challenges as every other artist that my peers here have mentioned, it's important to have a focus, to make sure that there is perhaps an extra focus on indigenous community and arts, because as we know, we have to build trust through reconciliation. We're on that journey now to build trust with each other.

For example, when I lived in Quebec, I know that when Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du

Québec started indigenous programs specifically for indigenous artists within their larger programs, more artists would apply.

For example, in a committee such as today, it's really important to have that extra time to continue building the relationship. Talk to us, the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance. We're national and we know what's going on. Have a meeting with us.

These relationships are the only way we're going to be able to really take the time to move forward together.

• (1655)

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you.

The Chair: You have one minute and 45 seconds.

Mr. Tim Louis: I'm going to have to stop most of the questions I had.

Building trust, building that relationship, is so important. Can you explain the resilience of the indigenous arts ecosystem and how we can strengthen those connections through dialogue through art?

Ms. Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo: I get that a lot. I give a lot of talks to organizations about how to build relationships, and it really is relationship-building with time. It's not like, "Hey, we have this; come in to our space and talk to us." No, you're going to go into the communities; you're going to build a relationship. You might take a language class or you might take a beading class.

This is where the trust is being built on a personal level, and not just starting a program and expecting people to come. You have to be able to talk and communicate in a way that is trustful. Go out and learn. Go out and meet some of the organizations and the people involved.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Tim, you have 30 seconds if you want to go with that.

Mr. Tim Louis: Please, in 30 seconds or less, explain the importance of broadband Internet and how that will help share your message.

Ms. Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo: Absolutely. There are some places I've been, for example, that don't even have electricity or cell service.

Regarding Internet, how can we be competitive? How can we even start to involve ourselves in this transformation in which so many people are going virtually now, when so many communities can't even have that access? It would be so important to have that access and to be able to bring it and at least have that competitive edge as everyone else does.

Yes, it's very important.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Good questions there, Mr. Louis.

Mr. Champoux, for two and half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My questions are for either to Mr. Bélisle or his colleague from the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization.

Aren't the rules a bit strict when it comes to certifying museums? There is a museum here in Drummondville that I think is magnificent, the Musée national de la photographie. However, it does not have museum certification, which would probably give it easier access to various forms of assistance.

Is this an isolated case or are there several that you know of?

What is your opinion on this?

[*English*]

Mr. Jean-François Bélisle: Alexandra, do you mind if I go ahead?

Ms. Alexandra Badzak: Yes, go ahead, absolutely.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Bélisle: In Quebec, the museum certification to which you refer is managed by Quebec's ministère de la Culture et des Communications. This certification is not very difficult to obtain, but it involves a lot of paperwork.

In fact, one of the lessons learned with respect to this certification, which I think is important in the transformation that has taken place as a result of the pandemic, is that it was created, initially, by officials in Quebec City who were not in the field. In talking to museum directors across Quebec—who can be easily reached through the Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization, or CAMDO—these federal public servants found that they could get information showing that some of their basic ideas were perhaps not appropriate or not right.

I think that CAMDO is a really good partner; it allows the exchange of ideas with the people who will set the future rules for this kind of institution.

Mr. Martin Champoux: In fact, it's a pretty essential relationship in this case.

Thank you, Mr. Bélisle.

I will now address my questions to Ms. Sandmeyer-Graves.

Earlier, you mentioned a ratio that also made my hair stand on end. It applies to women's amateur sport, which receives only 4% of funding, apparently.

Does this ratio represent the participation rate of girls versus boys? This split seems completely disproportionate to me.

• (1700)

[*English*]

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: I would certainly echo your point about unfairness.

I think what we're dealing with is historical bias towards men's sport. In fact, women have had to fight many battles for recognition and respect and support for their participation in sport as well.

Certainly, we're encouraged by the fact that it is increasingly becoming the norm that people believe that women should be supported in sport. Sport leaders are increasingly committed to pursuing gender equity, but there is a long history of men's sport being funded substantially in comparison with women's sport.

We are in catch-up mode. We're in catch-up mode financially. We're in catch-up mode in terms of the competency of delivering sport that's effective for women and girls. It's a big capacity issue for the sports system. We're optimistic. We're seeing signs of progress. Investment from the federal government has certainly been helpful. It is a long game not a short game.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you for your answers.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much, Martin.

Now I'm going to go to Peter Julian for two and half minutes.

Peter.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My questions are for Ms. Morse.

Ms. Morse, I thank you for your work. I will ask you two questions.

First, we know that some sectors are currently facing difficulties and challenges. Are there models in other countries that would be interesting for Canadian artists?

Secondly, the NDP raised the issue of a guaranteed basic income. This would allow artists to continue to practise their craft and cultivate their talent without having to worry about not being able to pay their rent. A basic income would therefore give them more security.

What are your views on some international models, and what do you think of the idea of a guaranteed basic income?

Ms. Rachel Morse: In fact, several examples have emerged quite recently elsewhere in the world, such as in Scotland, and the “intermittence”—the contract work—that we see in France, in particular, is an excellent example.

Your two topics intersect, so I'll move from one to the other. The idea of a social safety net and a guaranteed basic income is obviously a huge step in the right direction. In fact, it goes hand in hand with the employment insurance issue. Given the instability and the very changeable nature of these jobs, it would provide some security for artists, who would not have to worry about being able to pay the rent. That's a lot of what we're looking for, really: to be able to forget about the basic needs of our lives to really create interesting work.

It is therefore a question of supporting artists, not only to achieve their projects, as is currently the case, or not only to support the venues, but also to provide them with a certain minimum standard of living.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

I wanted to go to Ms. Kanerattoni Diabo.

The Chair: You have 15 seconds, Peter. Do you want to go with 13 seconds or do you want to leave it?

Mr. Peter Julian: No. I'm always willing to ask a question.

What do you think of the concept of a guaranteed livable basic income for artists, including indigenous artists?

The Chair: You have two seconds, Ms. Morse. I guess that's a yes-or-no answer.

Mr. Peter Julian: It was to Ms. Kanerattoni Diabo.

The Chair: I'm sorry.

Go ahead, Ms. Kanerattoni Diabo.

Ms. Barbara Kanerattoni Diabo: That sounds wonderful.

As an artist I realize the pressure to produce and to sell work. Even for my theatre colleagues, if they have that pressure to sell seats and make sure the box office is always full, it is so important to have that time to breathe and create. That is part of the artistic process.

Absolutely, a guaranteed income would be wonderful.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kanerattoni Diabo.

Now, I'm going to move to Leslyn Lewis.

Ms. Lewis, you have five minutes for the Conservatives.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Thank you, Madame Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Sandmeyer-Graves.

You indicated there are under-resourced communities. Can you explain why you stated that the cost to sports would increase or could increase to a point where there would be a negative impact on these under-resourced and under-represented communities?

• (1705)

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: Frankly, the rising cost of sport was a trend before COVID. I would say that COVID has really exacerbated it. For instance, there are the costs for cleaning facilities and the protocols of having fewer participants in the space due to greater spacing requirements, and things like that. It means the

costs of accessing that space has gone up. That would be one very substantial way that we're seeing that it place.

Will they go away as restrictions start to go away at the provincial and territorial level? Perhaps they will a bit, but organizations are still struggling with a massive financial shortfall. We expect that fees will go up as they have fewer participants they're drawing from and they need to still cover their costs. Those same costs are going to be then spread across fewer participants.

There are a few different things coming into play there. Ultimately, the risk that we and sports organizations are seeing is that their ability to serve folks, particularly those from the lower income communities, will go down because they simply cannot afford to provide programming at an accessible cost.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: That ties into my next question about equity.

You stated that equity should be a criteria for funding. I would like to know how you define "equity". What are some of the groups you say are under-represented and really need to be considered in the equity profile?

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: Equity really recognizes that there are groups that have encountered historical disadvantages, or that have been historically disadvantaged and have confronted many barriers to accessing what sport has to offer. Equity really recognizes that and seeks to address that. It seeks to meet the specific needs of participants so that they can access and enjoy the benefits of sport equitably and equally with others.

Within sport, there are many communities that have not been well served. They really represent similar dynamics across Canada. In the absence, for instance, of Special Olympics Canada—and even with Special Olympics Canada—folks with intellectual disabilities and disabilities more broadly in our communities are being left out of sport. The Black community has historically not had sufficient access to sport. Indigenous participants absolutely are under-represented in sport. Women may represent the largest group, but there's such an intersectional component to that. It's not all women who are equally unable to access sport; it's Black women, indigenous women, women with disabilities and LGBTQ2S.

Sport has a long way to go to improve how it serves our communities. Unfortunately, the struggles that the sports system has encountered in COVID has set back its ability to prioritize this and to invest in it going forward. This is why we believe that targeted support, which we know is going toward expanding opportunities for under-represented communities, through sport is an important approach for us to take.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Thank you.

My next question is for Ms. Sharon Bollenbach.

The Chair: You have 41 seconds.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: You mentioned that if you don't get funding you'll have to make some cuts. I want to hear about some of the additional costs that the Special Olympians have, like equipment and chaperones, that average athletes don't have.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: That's a great question.

Many of our athletes have low socio-economic status as individuals with an intellectual disability. We offer our programs at little to no cost. No one is denied access to any of our Special Olympics programs because they can't afford them.

We as an organization are not receiving the bulk of our income from registration revenues. We're the ones paying the facility rentals, buying equipment, and as my colleague, Allison, mentioned we are seeing that facility rentals cost more post-COVID. Equipment costs are higher and all of those things that we're experiencing.

• (1710)

The Chair: Can you wrap up please, Ms. Bollenbach?

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Yes.

The Chair: Maybe you can get a chance to answer it when it's Mr. Housefather's turn or someone else's.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Sure. All right.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

We have Mr. Housefather, for the Liberals, for five minutes.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to all the witnesses. I really appreciate your contribution today.

Allison, our mutual friend Adam van Koeverden wanted to say hi. He's sorry he can't be with us right now.

You were just speaking in response to Ms. Lewis's questions about equity-deserving groups, and I wanted to highlight the community sport for all initiative, which seeks to remove barriers and increase sports participation for these equity-deserving groups, in particular Black, indigenous, racialized, LGBTQ2+ and women, etc. For the funding I believe the date to apply is April 4, 2022.

I wanted to check with Ms. Sandmeyer-Graves and Ms. Bollenbach. Are organizations you know about applying? Is Special Olympics going to apply?

Allison, maybe you could go first, and then Sharon.

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: Sure. This has been a program that has been highly anticipated within the sport system. I think there's a lot of enthusiasm for the fact that it will be for community sport. It was a little bit unprecedented, to be honest, listening to our national sport organization counterparts talk about the importance of community sport and their concerns about how community sport had been negatively impacted, because they do see that it certainly has ripple effects throughout the system all the way to, of course, our performance at the Olympics and the Paralympics. It's very exciting.

I think what is going to be interesting to watch is that the federal government does not have a lot of existing mechanisms for getting funding to community sport. Its purview has historically been high-performance sports, that is, national teams.

Sharon and my organizations would be among some of the exceptions where we do work throughout the system. Getting money right to the communities is not something that we have a lot of experience with within the sport system. It's a lot of money. It's a very short period of time, so I think it will be very interesting to see how this progresses and proceeds and how effective it is. Of course, I'm very optimistic about that.

As I said in my comments, I hope that this is only the beginning and that we do in fact see mechanisms federally for continuing to support community sport, because it is under-resourced from a government perspective.

Sharon, I'm curious to hear your thoughts.

Ms. Sharon Bollenbach: Yes, I feel the same way. I can say that we do have mechanisms to get down to our communities through Special Olympics. We work very closely with our provincial sport organizations, who are directly involved in communities.

To answer your question, the applications just came out last week or the week prior, so my team and I are exploring them. We're working with our chapter counterparts to look at how Special Olympics could benefit from this new funding model.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: That's amazing. I think a lot of times people aren't aware of programs that actually do exist. I'll highlight another one that I'm aware of, the innovation initiative, which aims to address the challenges of participation and retention of girls and women in sports. I'm sure you're very familiar with that, Allison.

One of the things I wanted to raise is that a lot of times people don't know about these programs. We need to better communicate that they do exist, that they're out there, so people can actually apply.

I have one last question before the chair will end my time.

Allison—

The Chair: You have one minute and 35 seconds.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Perfect. I have plenty of time for to ask a question and you to answer.

Allison, one of the things that has been the most effective in the United States for women's sports participation at the high school and college level has been Title IX. As a competitive athlete growing up on the national level, I saw in the United States the distinctions between how universities treated women's athletics versus what they did here because of that law.

Is there something at the provincial or federal level that should be done that is similar to Title IX?

Ms. Allison Sandmeyer-Graves: Absolutely. We're often very envious of our American counterparts with Title IX.

I think what it did was create a legal framework and also very clear expectations for equity within the broader educational space, so it really applies to sport, which takes place in an educational context. There are very clear expectations of that.

I think there's also a lot we can learn from the failures of Title IX. Very few colleges and universities are in compliance right now with it. Title IX has led to a collapse in women's coaches and a comparable rise in men's coaching opportunities, which is really paradoxical.

I think that there are clear expectations and accountability for meeting those expectations, and I would hope we would do a better job at it than the U.S. in implementation and learn from their lessons over the last 40 years.

• (1715)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thanks very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That was bang on.

I think we have ended the sessions. I want to thank the witnesses for coming and taking the time.

I must say I was quite disturbed to find that the gap of 60¢ to the dollar for indigenous performers is still that wide. Moreover, I was absolutely blown away to find this private funding of 4% versus 96% for women versus men in sport. Maybe Anthony might have an idea in the question he asked, and maybe we can talk about some of that stuff because this is....

What I also heard repeatedly is that, if you're going to be a resilient community, you need technology, and that is a really big piece.

I want to thank you again for taking the time. I don't know what you're doing this evening, but I want to wish you all a happy Valentine's Day. Enjoy. Be loved. You are loved, I'm sure, by everyone even though you may not have a partner. Again, happy Valentine's Day, everyone.

I'm going to ask the witnesses to clear so we can move to Ms. Thomas' motion. We do have resources to take us to 5:45 p.m., but we must stop there.

Thank you.

Mr. Peter Julian: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Peter Julian: I want to say that I have to step out for a media interview, but I am being replaced by the extraordinary new member of Parliament for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Lisa Marie Barron. She will carry our standard through the debate.

The Chair: We'll miss you, Peter, obviously.

All the witnesses have left, so we can now move on.

Ms. Thomas, would you read your motion, please?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you, Chair.

I'm hoping that this won't take too long. I'm looking to move my motion, which was put on notice last week. It reads as follows:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the harms caused to children, women, and men by the ease of access to, and online viewing of, illegal sexually explicit material, and the extent to which online access to illegal sexually explicit material contributes to the prevalence of violence against women and girls and sex trafficking in Canada; that the committee hear from organizations, victims, and law enforcement experts; that the committee hold a minimum of four meetings to that end; that the committee consider legal frameworks to prevent the harm caused by online access to illegal sexually explicit material; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

Of course, this motion is made available on the committee's website and has been sent out by the Chair in both French and English.

The reason I'm bringing this motion forward is that I believe it's a topic that deserves consideration, and the heritage committee seems the most appropriate place to do this, mainly because it is in the minister's mandate letter, which includes a mandate to combat serious forms of harmful online content to protect Canadians and hold social media platforms and other online services accountable for the content they host, which, I hope you would agree with me, should include anything having to do with using minors in a sexually explicit manner.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Thomas.

I notice that Mr. Champoux would like to weigh in on this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Certainly, Madam Chair.

I would like to ask Ms. Thomas a few questions. It is possible that the spirit of the motion has been somewhat modified in the French translation.

Let me explain. For example, the motion talks about "... une étude sur les méfaits que cause aux enfants, aux femmes et aux hommes la facilité d'accès..." A "méfait" is an act that is covered by the Criminal Code, and I think that, in the French translation, it should have been called a study on the "torts"—the harm caused to children. It is possible that a slight difference in the translation changes the meaning of the motion. So I want to make that clarification.

I would like to ask another question, perhaps to Ms. Thomas, but perhaps also to the law clerks. The motion proposes to look at the legal frameworks. In the English version, it says "consider legal frameworks." I wonder if it is the responsibility of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to consider this type of framework, or if it is that of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I would like to ask Ms. Thomas if she would like us to review the regulatory framework, such as the regulations that the CRTC might put in place, or if she would like us to review the legal framework.

If so, I would like to ask the law clerks if it is the responsibility of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to undertake this type of study. Otherwise, I think it's a very relevant study.

• (1720)

[English]

The Chair: Marion or Gabrielle, would you like to take that on?

[Translation]

Mr. Marion Ménard (Committee Researcher): Mr. Champoux, at present, the CRTC website clearly states that the CRTC does not regulate the Internet. That could eventually change. So that's my answer, and that's also what the CRTC would tell you.

Mr. Martin Champoux: If I may, Madam Chair, I'd like to speak.

Mr. Ménard, I want to know if the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage can examine legal frameworks. I would like to know if this is one of the mandates that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage can give itself. Can we do that, or is that a matter that falls exclusively under the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights?

Mr. Marion Ménard: You know, the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage is very broad. Based on my 20 years of experience, I would say that just about anything can be covered by this act. Having said that, I would ask the clerk if she would like to add anything to that.

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Aimée Belmore): Thank you very much, Marion.

I would say that it is up to the chair to determine admissibility as far as legislative frameworks are concerned. If the committee chooses to study it, then it certainly is something they could study. The harms are mentioned in the mandate letter of the minister of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Chair: Thank you, Clerk.

Ms. Hepfner.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Thank you, very much, Madam Chair.

I want to be clear on exactly what we are hoping to study with this motion. Maybe Mrs. Thomas can elaborate a little bit more.

I wasn't a part of this committee previously, but I do know there was a study that seems to be similar in intention. I want to make sure that we don't redo work the committee has already done.

There was the study on the protection of privacy and reputation on platforms such as Pornhub, which I believe this committee studied in detail and made recommendations for. That's still pending.

I'm just looking for clarity, to make sure that we're not covering ground the committee has already covered.

The Chair: Mrs. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you, Chair. I have a couple of comments.

Mr. Champoux, I would gladly accept a friendly amendment with regard to the French version. There certainly might be a misinterpretation there, so I'd be happy to amend that.

In terms of the overall motion, the goal here is to look at the harm that is caused to those individuals who are underage and are having their photos or videos uploaded online, which fits directly within the mandate letter of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The motion that you are referring to, I believe, Ms. Hepfner, is one that was studied at the Ethics committee. It was a very short study and it focused on the privacy issue. It didn't focus so much on the harms; it focused on privacy.

This one would focus specifically on the online harms that are caused to these individuals who have their images or videos uploaded and made available to the public. That being the focus, it does directly fit within the mandate letter of the minister for heritage.

• (1725)

The Chair: Martin.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'm going to take advantage of the offer to propose a friendly amendment to replace the word "méfaits" with the word "torts," which I think is much more in keeping with the definition we want to give in the original version.

I raise another point for Ms. Thomas, who suggests that we hold a minimum of four meetings on this topic. I don't doubt that we can spend a lot of meetings studying this, but I think, really, that if we want to have time in the parliamentary session to slip this study in, I would suggest to Ms. Thomas that we ask for a minimum of two meetings. If we find that we need more, we could make adjustments. It seems to me that with two meetings, we would have a better chance of getting this study on the committee's agenda during this session.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Will you answer that question, please, Ms. Thomas with regard to the proposal by Monsieur Champoux.

I actually didn't quite hear your proposal, Mr. Champoux. Was it to change the French version of "harms"? What would you propose that it say?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: I propose to replace the word "méfaits" with the word "torts." I also propose to replace "a minimum of four meetings" with "a minimum of two meetings."

[English]

The Chair: All right.

Ms. Barron, did you have your hand up before?

I do have an amendment that we may want to vote on quickly. We don't have a lot of time left.

But go ahead, Ms. Barron.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

I will speak quickly. I appreciate being here and coming in to cover for my colleague when this important motion is coming forward. Thank you to Ms. Thomas.

If you would entertain the idea, Ms. Thomas, and through the chair, of course, I wanted to propose a friendly amendment to the motion. It would specifically add a piece of information that the motion propose that the Minister of Heritage and his department be invited to testify to explain the government's delay enforcing online platforms to monitor and remove illegal content.

I want to put this forward as a possible friendly amendment to add a little more specificity specify to the motion.

The Chair: All right.

Thank you, Ms. Barron. That would be a subamendment. We'll have to deal first with Martin's amendment. I don't know if the clerk can read it for me, please.

He's replacing the minimum number of meetings to hold from four meetings to two meetings. Moreover, he would change in the French version the word "harms".

Could you read it, please, clerk?

The Clerk: Yes, Madam Chair.

The amendment of Mr. Champoux is to change in the French version the following.

[*Translation*]

"une étude sur les torts que cause aux enfants" and also further on in the motion, "qu'il examine les cadres juridiques visant à prévenir les torts causés par l'accès en ligne."

Il s'agirait aussi de changer

[*English*]

He also suggests changing a minimum of four meetings" to "minimum of two meetings".

Did you want me to read the entirety of the motion?

Is it okay if I do that in French?

The Chair: It would change four meetings to two in the English version, though, and the French version.

The Clerk: Yes.

I'll just read it out:

[*Translation*]

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the harms caused to children, women, and men by the ease of access to, and online viewing of, illegal sexually explicit material, and the extent to which online access to illegal sexually explicit material contributes to the prevalence of violence against women and girls and sex trafficking in Canada; that the committee hear from organizations, victims, and law enforcement experts; that the committee hold a minimum of two meetings to that end; that the committee consider legal frameworks to prevent the harm caused by online access to illegal sexually explicit material; and that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House.

• (1730)

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. Now I will call the question.

Those in favour of the two amendments by Martin?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Sorry, Madam Chair. I did have my hand up. I was hoping to speak to that amendment.

The Chair: I am sorry. Because your hand had remained up since you first intervened, I didn't know if it was still up or down.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

Madam Chair, I understand Mr. Champoux's suggested amendment. We already do have a number of studies that are on the table and I know those studies obviously take precedence since we have agreed to do them before this one, but I don't see how taking this down to two meetings would make it any more doable. It's still in the queue after the rest that are being prioritized before this one. I do believe this is important subject matter, and to only hold two meetings just doesn't seem sufficient.

I'm very respectfully and very kindly asking for his support in keeping it as four.

The Chair: Martin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: I agree with the spirit of the motion, Ms. Thomas. My concern is that when meetings become available and we add studies, for example, after a bill has been dealt with or because witnesses cannot come forward, we will postpone that study or choose another one because it requires four meetings.

I also think that it is an interesting study and that we should do it. By asking for a minimum of two meetings, we still give ourselves the option of holding four if we find that it is necessary. Believe me, I would be quite willing to add more if we consider that it is appropriate to do so.

This is what I propose to you, once again, very respectfully. I think that a minimum of two meetings gives us a better chance of being able to do this study in the current situation.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Anthony.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Briefly, in the hope of trying to achieve consensus on this quite quickly, Monsieur Champoux is absolutely right that the word "méfais" should be replaced by "torts", because "méfais" is not the right match to the English version. I think Rachael noted that it is okay with her.

To accept this isn't much, because we're saying it would be a minimum of two meetings. We could go to four. We could go to whatever number, and hopefully we could agree and move on. I'll support the amendment.

I'd also just mention that I don't think the NDP amendment ties in to this motion, and I would ask Ms. Barron to maybe reconsider it.

In any case, thanks so much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Thomas, we don't have a lot of time. I would like us to finish this today before we adjourn.

Mr. Champoux, would you accept...?

Look, I'm going to call the vote on Mr. Champoux's amendment. All right?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Chair, could I ask for clarification?

The Chair: No, Ms. Barron. Please wait one minute. We're just counting the votes.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We have very little time, Ms. Barron, and Mr. Housefather was making....

Can I hear your subamendment to the amended motion, please?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Thank you, Chair.

As somebody who is filling in for another member right now, I definitely don't want to get us off track.

It was to make the motion more specific. The amendment that I was suggesting states that the motion should say precisely "and that the Minister of Heritage and his department be invited to testify as part of this study."

The Chair: You're asking for the minister to appear for this two-meeting study. Is that right?

• (1735)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Yes, I want to make it more specific to see if we can have the minister respond to the specifics that were stated in that subamendment.

The Chair: That does not seem to change the intent of the motion, so I will accept it.

I notice that Lisa has her hand up. Let's do this, because we have to leave this place soon.

Lisa is first, then Anthony, and Ms. Thomas if she wants to weigh in very quickly.

Ms. Lisa Hefner: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would say that I agree with my colleague Mr. Housefather that the motion would change the intent of the motion. If the intent of this motion is to study online harms, it has nothing to do with how quickly anything has been implemented in the heritage department.

That's my two cents. I think it does change the intent of the motion.

The Chair: Go ahead, Anthony.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thanks so much, Hedy.

I just want to echo that. The motion that Ms. Thomas put forward is a neutral motion. It basically says we're studying one component

of what would be online harms, which relates to the exploitation of children, and illegal.... That doesn't relate to when a bill would or would not be tabled, which is much broader than the scope of this motion.

I think it would be a receivable amendment if you said we want to invite the Minister of Heritage to testify, on the motion, but not the way it was worded.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I think it creates a non-neutral motion, and I don't support it.

If it just wanted the minister to testify, that would be one thing, but the way it was worded, no.

The Chair: I thought she was asking for the minister to testify and nothing more. I guess I was mistaken.

Ms. Barron, I think we should call the question, if no one has anything to say.

Those in favour of Ms. Barron's subamendment—

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Chair—

The Chair: I'm sorry. Who is this?

Mr. Chris Bittle: It's Chris from the floor.

The Chair: Sorry, Chris. Go ahead.

Mr. Chris Bittle: I'd like to echo what Anthony has contributed on this point.

I know that the honourable member is new—as she was introduced—but to my understanding, having been on one or two committee studies over my few years, the minister typically gets invited. I don't really understand the nature of this subamendment except to ratchet up the tension in this committee. It doesn't achieve the objectives. The committee is going to invite the minister, whether the subamendment is here; I think we have several motions on the floor where the minister is coming to appear anyway. He will eventually get a frequent flyer card at this motion...so I really don't understand the intention of this except the little dig at the end.

Again, the committee is always welcome to invite the minister. It's something that we can always keep doing.

Madam Chair, I see that Ms. Barron's hand is up. My hand will go right back up—for real; I can't put up my virtual hand.

Let Ms. Barron speak and I'll respond.

The Chair: I will let Ms. Barron speak, as the chair.

Ms. Barron, I think you're getting the gist that asking for the minister to attend is something this committee does anyway. We nearly always say, "Can the minister come and tell us what he thinks?" If you intended to change, as Mr. Housefather is suggesting, the whole intent of the motion, I could not allow it to even be voted on, because it would be out of order.

Do you want to clarify very quickly? We have only six minutes.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Yes. Thank you, Chair. I will speak very quickly.

I appreciate the comments made. I take those suggestions very much to heart here. The intention is to have the minister attend—more specifically, to be invited to testify as part of this study. The ultimate intention was for that.

The Chair: That's what I thought your intention was.

Can I now call the question, please?

Those in favour of—

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes?

Mr. Michael Coteau: Can you just tell us what we're actually voting on? Is it the amendment, or have you ruled it out of order?

The Chair: No, no. Ms. Barron has removed it, because she intended it to ask the minister to appear. What she's suggesting is that we add it in the motion that we ask the minister to appear. That's really what we're voting on.

Mr. Michael Coteau: So the motion currently is the original.... I mean, what we're voting on is the amendment just to bring the minister here, with the original motion.

• (1740)

The Chair: Not the original, Mr. Coteau—

Mr. Michael Coteau: Well, it's the motion as amended, right?

The Chair: Yes. It's the motion as amended—to add that we ask the minister to appear.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you.

The Chair: That is what Ms. Barron is suggesting.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Chair, may I?

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: I'm sorry. If you could confer with the clerk, I don't think that's quite true. We're not voting on the motion as amended. We are only voting on the amendment.

The Chair: We are voting on the subamendment, which is going to amend the amended motion—or the motion as amended by Mr. Champoux's amendments.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: My understanding is that—

The Chair: It's no longer the original motion. It has been amended by Mr. Champoux, an amendment that everyone agreed with, so it's now an amended motion, and we are adding a subamendment to the amended motion to ask the minister to appear. That's exactly what it is, technically.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Chair, I'm sorry. I just don't think you've clarified this. Perhaps you could ask the clerk to specify what we're voting on just so everyone knows precisely what it is.

The Chair: Yes, Ms. Thomas.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

The Chair: Go ahead, Clerk.

The Clerk: Ms. Barron, just before I respond to Ms. Thomas, can I get where in the motion you would like that inserted, please?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Yes, thank you. It would be at the end of the motion, specifying that the Minister of Heritage and his department be invited to testify as part of this study.

The Clerk: Sorry, is that the exact wording? I'm just making sure I have this right.

After “reporting to the House”, you want to also include “and that the Minister and his department be invited to testify as part of this study”?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Yes, it reads: “and that that the Minister of Heritage and his department be invited to testify as part of this study.”

The Clerk: Thank you very much.

I'm just going to add that, and then I'll come to you, Ms. Thomas. Thank you very much.

This is Ms. Barron's amendment to your motion, which has been amended. The question would be on the amendment of Ms. Barron, however the committee wants to decide that.

The Chair: I will call the question for the committee to vote on this amendment to the amended motion that we agreed on.

We will please call the vote. Those in favour of the amendment to the amended motion? Those in favour? I see no hands up. Those opposed? I don't know. Am I muted or something?

Those in favour of Ms. Barron's amendment as read out by the clerk. Those in favour, can I see your hands? I see no hands—

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Can you see my hand?

The Chair: —except for Ms. Barron's hand.

Those opposed? May I see your hands? We're having people abstaining.

The Clerk: There are four hands in the room.

The Chair: Yes, I don't know who is in the room, but there are four hands in the room.

(Amendment negatived)

The Chair: The motion does not carry, Ms. Barron. I'm very sorry.

Thank you very much.

Now we have Ms. Thomas' motion that's been amended by Mr. Champoux, and that is now the motion that we're carrying forward. That's been agreed on by everyone. I think I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Wait, shouldn't we officially have a vote on this, Madam Chair? I don't think—

The Chair: On what?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: On Ms. Thomas' motion as amended so that we—

The Chair: It's amended. I thought we did that. I thought we already did that.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: No, Madam Chair, I think we need to have a vote to accept the motion now that it's been amended.

The Chair: As amended, okay, all right. Somebody is going to have to read it because the amendments came in in different parts.

Will the clerk please read it?

The Clerk: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It reads as follows: That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the harms caused to children, women, and men by the ease of access to, and online viewing of, illegal sexually explicit material, and the extent to which online access to illegal sexually explicit material contributes to the prevalence of violence against women and girls and sex trafficking in Canada; that the committee hear from organizations, victims, and law enforcement experts; that the committee hold a minimum of two meetings to that end; that the committee consider legal frameworks to prevent the harm caused by online access to illegal sexually explicit material; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that the Minister of Heritage and his department be invited to testify as part of the study.

• (1745)

The Chair: No, that is not it—

The Clerk: Oh excuse me, I'm so sorry. I apologize, you're right. That was not adopted.

The Chair: It ends at “House”. I thought we already voted on this, but I may be very mistaken.

I'll call the vote again. Those in favour of the amended motion as per Mr. Champoux's amendment, please raise your hand.

The Clerk: There are five hands in the room.

The Chair: I cannot see the room, clerk.

The Clerk: There are five hands in the room.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: The motion carries. Thank you very much.

May I entertain a motion to adjourn?

Mr. Michael Coteau: I'll introduce a motion to adjourn.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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