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• (1630)

[English]

The Chair (Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.)): Welcome to meeting number three of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person in the room, and no one is remote.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee is meeting for a briefing on the mandate and the priorities of the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture.

It is a true pleasure to welcome the minister, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages. He is accompanied by senior officials. Luckily, they are all named Andrew, except for Isabelle.

We have Andrew Brown, associate deputy minister; and I understand that Mr. Ron Hallman from Parks Canada wasn't feeling well, so Andrew Campbell will be sitting in for him.

Thank you all for being here.

Minister, you have five minutes.

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Chair, I have a point of order. I apologize, Minister. This will only take a moment.

The motion that was moved for this study asked for the minister to be here for two hours. I want to make sure that it is in fact what the minister has agreed to.

The Chair: It is my understanding that the minister is here for one hour.

Minister, over to you for five minutes.

Rachael Thomas: Chair, on a point of order, I would seek clarification, then. The minister did agree to the motion that was sent to him, and it did say two hours. Is that correct?

The Chair: I would not say that the minister agreed to the motion that was sent to him. The minister was invited to come, and he agreed to come for one hour.

Minister, the floor is yours.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation.

I'm very pleased to appear before you for the first time in my new role as Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, conservation and Parks Canada. I'm honoured to have this new title. The Prime Minister entrusted me with an important role, which is to protect and promote what's at the very core of who we are and of what makes us proud.

Last spring, Canadians chose a new government that is ready to defend our country in the face of the geopolitical changes and challenges that lie ahead. Now is the time to come together to face them, to pull together and, above all, to be proud Canadians, proud of our values, our history, our natural treasures, our diversity, our languages and, of course, our favourite Canadian teams.

As we come together to address these challenges, it's essential to protect our identity. We all share a common identity, and my role is to celebrate what unites us and enriches our country, our greatest assets as a nation: our culture, our languages and our natural heritage.

In his mandate letter, the Prime Minister set out our government's priorities for meeting the challenges we face: defending our sovereignty, strengthening our country on the international stage and creating a Canada worthy of our children and grandchildren.

[English]

In this context, the protection of our cultural and natural resources becomes an absolute priority. These pillars of our society are not only who we are but also what unite us, shape our identity, drive our economy and inspire pride and innovation. Indeed, when we invest in Canadian creativity, in our cultural industries, in sharing our stories in the digital age, in showcasing our natural heritage, or in promoting and respecting inclusion and diversity, we are investing in a strong, united and resilient Canadian identity. We are investing in a strong Canada.

To achieve this priority objective, our government has quickly taken action in several areas of activity, including culture. The digital age is profoundly transforming our society, and in the cultural media and information sectors in particular, technology is evolving at an incredible pace.

At the Mondiacult conference, which will be held in Barcelona in a few days, we'll have the opportunity to discuss how emerging technologies are transforming and can support the cultural sector. Indeed, this evolution brings not only challenges but also immense opportunities, both domestically and internationally.

In Canada, we've chosen a balanced approach that fosters innovation while protecting the rights of artists and rights holders. We underscored this last June in the "G7 Leaders' Statement on AI for Prosperity".

[Translation]

The implementation of our historic Online News Act and Online Streaming Act is ongoing, as is our commitment to fighting against disinformation and strengthening local news.

[English]

Ensuring that Canadians have access to local, unbiased and timely life-saving information is essential. That's why we are committed to supporting strong, independent newsrooms across the country, with the strengthening of CBC/Radio-Canada as a key priority. Now, more than ever, we must remain firm in supporting our own creators and promoting Canadian content. We promised Canadians a strong public broadcaster and better access to local news, and that is what we are focusing on.

• (1635)

The Chair: We will go first to Mrs. Thomas for six minutes.

Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

Mr. Travis Dhanraj was employed by the CBC as a news broadcaster. This summer, he launched a human rights complaint against the CBC, alleging that it had created what he called a toxic work environment. He said that he faced discrimination, bullying and harassment as a person of colour. In an email he sent out announcing his new podcast, he stated that it had been the hardest period of his life, and that what happened at CBC really broke him.

Minister, according to the Government of Canada's own website, the CBC is a Crown corporation that operates at arm's length from government, but it is ultimately accountable to Parliament through the responsible minister, which in this case would be you.

Have you reached out to the CEO of the CBC regarding this situation and the toxic work environment that is being accused there?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question.

First, I want to condemn what happened to that Canadian Broadcasting Corporation employee. As a government, we expect all corporations and organizations under federal jurisdiction to create a healthy work environment for everyone.

It obviously isn't the government's role to interfere in the organization's day-to-day affairs and management. Those are the responsibility of the public broadcaster, which also has a board of directors. Our role is to ensure that the public broadcaster plays its role and properly represents Canadian values and culture as a whole, from coast to coast to coast.

• (1640)

[English]

Rachael Thomas: Minister, I understand that your role isn't to get into the nitty-gritty day to day, but this is not the first employee who has come forward with concerns. There have been numerous concerns brought forward with regard to the toxic culture that exists at the CBC. Ultimately, you are responsible for having appointed the CEO, and she does answer to you as the minister. You have the ability to move her out should that be needed.

Have you had a conversation with the CEO with regard to the toxic culture that exists there?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As you probably know, the new CEO took office last December, and I've had the pleasure of meeting her once since our respective arrivals. As I've said, we as a government expect that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation or any Crown corporation or any department will do everything in its power to implement a healthy work environment—

[English]

Rachael Thomas: Minister, I'm sorry, but with all due respect, my time is limited. I'm going to take that as a no. I think it's incredibly shameful that as a minister, you wouldn't take enough interest in the well-being of the employees at the CBC to pick up the phone and have a conversation with the CEO and figure out what the heck is going on there.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: You asked me if I've met with her, and I'm saying I have.

[English]

Rachael Thomas: I'll share my time with my colleague, Kerry Diotte.

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Minister, I heard you say that you believe in the principles of diversity and inclusion. Is that correct?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes, that's correct.

[English]

Kerry Diotte: That's good, because one of the core stated responsibilities of the heritage department is diversity and inclusion. However, Travis Dhanraj said he was used as a token of diversity, and, in his own blunt words—and I will repeat his blunt words—the CBC “didn't get the brown guy that they thought they were going to get.” He said he discovered this when he tried to be inclusive of conservative views on his news show. What steps have you personally taken to address these systemic issues?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I think that we, as parliamentarians, have to be very careful about not using an isolated event or a few isolated events as a basis to generalize practices.

If we look at everything the public broadcaster has done in recent years, whether with radio or television, we see that significant efforts have been made in terms of diversity and inclusion. Is it perfect? No. I don't think anyone is perfect in that area, but there have been significant improvements. That will certainly be part of the conversations I'll have with the new president and CEO of CBC to see how the public broadcaster can continue to improve on this issue.

[English]

Kerry Diotte: This employee also described the CBC as “a workplace...defined by retaliation, exclusion and psychological harm.” That workplace, the CBC, received nearly \$1.4 billion in taxpayers' funds from your department last year.

As the minister responsible for the CBC, are you concerned that your department is funding a workplace that has been described in this way?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Once again, I'm truly sorry for the work experience this person has had, but I refuse to generalize this situation as applying to all the public broadcaster's activities. I know a number of people from diverse backgrounds and minorities who work there and have told me on a number of occasions that there's a very good work environment. However, it's possible that it went very badly for this individual, and I'm sorry about that.

As I was saying, I think it's always possible to do better, and we'll work with the public broadcaster to achieve that.

[English]

Kerry Diotte: Canadian Heritage plans to spend \$281 million on diversity and inclusion in the coming year. Will any of this money go towards ensuring there are diversity and equity in the opinions broadcast on CBC?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I think the government has to be very careful. In Canada, we have a public broadcaster. It isn't a state broadcaster. The government doesn't tell CBC what to say or what not to say, unlike what's done in authoritarian or totalitarian countries. In democracies, whether here, in France, in Germany, or in Australia, where there's the ABC network, the government doesn't intervene in programming or broadcasting. We ensure that the public broadcaster is well managed, that it properly manages public funds and that it's accountable to the government and, ultimately, to Parliament. However, it's out of the question for the government to interfere in the public broadcaster's programming. It's absolutely out of the question.

• (1645)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Royer, you have the floor for six minutes.

Zoe Royer (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.): Thank you, Minister.

Ethnic media outlets play a crucial role in ensuring that Canada's diverse communities see themselves reflected in our media landscape. In Port Moody—Coquitlam we've heard from groups like the Canadian Ethnic Media Association and local outlets such as Parvaz Media and KTV Media, about the need for sustainable funding. What steps is the government taking to support ethnic media organizations so that they can continue serving their communities and contributing to Canada's cultural fabric?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question.

[English]

I think the government is doing a number of things to try to foster these particular Canadian ethnic media producers across the country.

We have the changing narratives fund, the CNF, which is a \$10-million investment over three years to support diverse voices in Canadian media. It's to support diverse communities like indigenous, Black, racialized, ethno-religious minorities and people with disabilities.

We also have the Canada media fund, which supports diverse communities in television, digital media, the screen industry and cinematic production industries. In fact, the CNF is a stream of the CMF; the changing narratives fund is under the Canadian media fund. They prioritize projects that foster development of an inclusive audiovisual sector.

We also have the local journalism initiative, which supports diverse communities in written press, community radio, community television and online news services. It's delivered by a not-for-profit organization to protect the independence of the press, so the government doesn't decide who gets money through that. There's a priority to hire diverse journalistic representation.

The last example I would give is the collective initiatives component of the Canada periodical fund, which supports diverse communities in the magazine and newspaper industries.

Zoe Royer: Thank you very much.

In 2012, in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Amanda Todd, a 15-year-old teenager, tragically lost her life after relentless cyber-bullying and non-consensual distribution of her private images. Her story is a powerful reminder of the devastating consequences of online exploitation.

Today, with the rise of AI-generated deepfakes, women and marginalized groups are being disproportionately targeted. What can our government do to ensure stronger protections and supports for those who are most vulnerable to these evolving forms of online sexual exploitation?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As a father of three girls, my heart goes out to Amanda's family. What happened to her should never happen to anyone.

Online safety is certainly about protecting kids, but it's obviously more than that. We're committing to making it a criminal offence to distribute non-consensual sexual deepfakes and to increasing penalties for the non-consensual distribution of intimate images by strengthening the Criminal Code. In fact, as we're speaking, I believe my colleague Minister Fraser is in the House of Commons speaking to his new bill, Bill C-9.

In terms of platforms, we've made a commitment to combat online harms. I worked on that myself during my first period at Heritage, between 2019 and 2021. Many of my colleagues have continued on that. We tabled a bill in the last Parliament, Bill C-63, that was aimed not only specifically at online harms, but also at modernizing the Criminal Code. We will be introducing measures to address hate speech, terrorist content and the harmful distribution of intimate images.

Zoe Royer: Thank you.

I'll be sharing my time with MP Al Soud.

Thank you.

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, I'd like to touch on Heritage's economic dimension. Mississauga Centre sees it first-hand: Heritage and culture are not just about identity; they're about jobs, investment and growth. I think of the Mississauga Arts Council, for instance, which plays a key role in providing opportunities for emerging artists.

Could you speak to us about the role that heritage and cultural investments play in creating good jobs and strengthening our economy?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes. For obvious reasons, when we think about the heritage sector—the arts and culture sector—we tend to think, for very valid reasons, of its intrinsic cultural and artistic value, but we sometimes tend to forget how important an economic driver it is in Canada.

To give you a few numbers, in 2024, creative industries in Canada provided approximately 670,000 jobs in the country, which contributed \$65 billion to Canada's gross domestic product. I think that, as a sector, it's one of the highest sectors in terms of its contribution to GDP.

Heritage and cultural investments are obviously about preserving our past, but they're also a powerful economic driver and a powerful unity, identity and community well-being driver. In communities like yours, where diversity and creativity thrive, these invest-

ments help create good, sustainable jobs across a wide range of sectors.

Canada is actually globally recognized for its high-quality creative content and industries, which are an engine of economic growth advantage. It used to be that it was Montreal and Toronto, but now we're seeing creative hubs being developed all across the country, from coast to coast to coast really, where foreign investments are coming to Canada to create jobs in the creative sector. That's a good thing for all of us.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for six minutes.

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

Thank you, Minister and all of you who are here today.

We have a lot of questions for you, Minister.

Are you optimistic about culture in light of the next budget on November 4?

Do you have a positive outlook on what's coming?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I think you know me well enough to know that I'm generally an optimist in life. Otherwise, I wouldn't be doing this work.

Martin Champoux: It would be interesting if you could share some of your optimism with the organizations you meet. People in the cultural industry in Quebec are very concerned; I can't speak for the rest of Canada. Creators, broadcasters and festival organizers are all worried because they don't know what's coming. In addition, they can't get answers to questions and requests that have often been around for a long time.

I'm going to ask you a few.

For example, you know that the cultural sector in general, and festival organizers in particular, are asking for certain programs to be made permanent. The building communities through arts and heritage program, or BCAH, and the Canada arts presentation fund are programs that are periodically enhanced. However, organizations have long been asking for predictability. They want to be able to breathe a little and not waste their time constantly lobbying for the budget increases that are necessary to operate festivals and major events.

Can you tell them that this will be settled once and for all and that their budget will be permanent?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question.

I've met with many of the same stakeholders as you have on many occasions. In your question, you specified that the two heritage funds you mentioned have been periodically enhanced. I'm quoting you on that.

We've indeed enhanced those funds a number of times. Let's take the period from 2015 to 2024, for example. The federal budget for arts and culture doubled during that time. For example, there's the Canada Council for the Arts and the various funds from the Department of Heritage. I think that stakeholders in the arts and culture sector know that our government has been there for them. We supported them during the pandemic. We've increased the budget enormously, but I can't guarantee that it will happen again. I'm not the Minister of Finance.

Martin Champoux: No, absolutely, that's precisely why everyone's concerned.

In fact, you even put it in your election platform, as recently as last spring. That platform provided for increased funding for grant-making agencies such as the Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm Canada, the Canada Media Fund, or CMF, and the National Film Board, or NFB.

At some point, people need to hear that that will indeed be in the budget, given that it was in the election platform.

That's a promise, a commitment, right?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We'll all find out what's in the budget on November 4. The commitment is to make investments during the mandate, but not necessarily as early as the first year. Some things may be done in the first year, but there will also be things done in the second and third years.

Again, I think the industry recognizes my efforts and has done so publicly. In fact, I read a letter that really touched me and welcomed me back to the Department of Canadian Heritage, since that's still what it's called.

I think we have a good relationship with the various groups, and I understand why they're making demands.

• (1655)

Martin Champoux: In fact, when there's an election campaign, the thought is that these are commitments. It's been getting harder to breathe for a very long time, and this means it's going to be resolved. That's kind of where—

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Doubling the funding over 10 years is no small thing.

Martin Champoux: Once again, it's good to have increased the funding that previous governments had cut. That's good to do, but what organizations are asking for is really to do it permanently so that they can stop lobbying instead of spending their time organizing events and productions.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I understand that very well.

Martin Champoux: Me too.

You talked about newsrooms and increasing CBC/Radio-Canada's budget to improve news coverage, including in the regions.

We're very much in favour of that. However, it isn't just CBC/Radio-Canada that needs help, but also newsrooms everywhere, and particularly in the regions. Print media newsrooms are already entitled to a tax credit. However, newsrooms for electronic, radio

and television media have been asking for the same tax credit for some time now.

There have been discussions on the matter. You're familiar with this file. Are you able to tell them, then, that it's coming, that a little air will give them some breathing room? These companies, not just the public broadcaster, could then also operate their newsrooms and properly cover the regions of Quebec and Canada.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The role of the public broadcaster is very important, but you're right to say that it's part of a media ecosystem that also includes private broadcasters.

We've implemented a number of measures to help local media stay afloat to serve their communities. The Canadian journalism labour tax credit, the Canada periodical fund, the local journalism initiative—

Martin Champoux: Okay, but do your plans include the tax credit for radio and television broadcaster newsrooms?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: There was the \$100-million deal with Google. We're working to see if there are more things we can do for the media sector, particularly for private broadcasters. As I said earlier, we'll obviously see what's in the budget on November 4.

Martin Champoux: You're unable to tell them that things are looking good, then.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Absolutely. No minister will ever tell you what's going to be in the budget before the budget is tabled. We don't know.

Martin Champoux: Have you read your mandate letter?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Well, yes, it's public.

Martin Champoux: Can you tell us if there are any boxes in that mandate letter that you'll be able to tick this fall?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: My mandate letter is public, as is every minister's.

To borrow your expression, the team and I are working to ensure that we can tick as many boxes as possible as quickly as possible. However, we aren't going to try doing it all in one year. That isn't possible.

We're committed to doing those things during the government's mandate.

Martin Champoux: Do you—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Champoux. Your time is up.

[English]

Mrs. Thomas, it's over to you for five minutes.

Rachael Thomas: There's an organization called Cult MTL. It's a self-proclaimed politically left tabloid that exists online, and the heritage department deems it as "journalism". They've given them a grant to that effect. It was given in 2024-25.

On September 11, the day after Charlie Kirk's assassination, this organization released an article titled "To Hell With Charlie Kirk". The article makes light of his assassination and then ends with the words, "You reap what you sow."

I'm an advocate for free speech, so as much as I find these words disgusting, I'll defend their right to say them. However, what I do find indefensible is the fact that Canadian tax dollars were used in order to propagate this type of material.

Do you believe that's wrong as well?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I checked with the deputy minister, and we honestly weren't aware of that.

I promise to look into that with the people at the department, see what was actually printed in the newspaper and send committee members a timely response on the matter.

[English]

Rachael Thomas: If it's found to be correct—and I do have the article here with me, so I could give it to you here today—would you cut the funding to this organization, or would you continue to support this type of thought that is being put out there?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Hate and the spread of hate have no place in public discourse in Canada. In fact, there are laws about that. As I said earlier, we aren't aware of what was printed in that newspaper, but the department and I will make the necessary checks.

• (1700)

[English]

Rachael Thomas: Unfortunately, there is another example of such actions that have been taken. It's actually Canada's special representative on combatting Islamophobia, who co-founded an organization called the Anti-Hate Network. They've been funded by your department to the tune of almost \$1 million, and a portion of this money was used to hire what they're calling an investigative journalist. What they're asking this person to do is find stories about what they're calling far-right groups and individuals. A part of their definition of those who would fall within this group includes Catholics and people who identify as pro-life. This investigative journalist would go and find stories or write stories and then give them to the mainstream media in order to get the narrative out there further.

As you can imagine, something like this only serves to divide people. It's a grave disservice to the unity of our country and the well-being of our people, and it spurs further polarization. In the beginning, you stated that we need to unite and come together.

When an organization is taking almost \$1 million from your government and using it for this end, do you believe they should continue to be funded?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: As I said, our role, certainly as a government, but also as parliamentarians, is to work to unify people, not divide them.

The department and I will look at what has actually been done by that organization. If what you're saying is true, we'll take the necessary measures.

[English]

Rachael Thomas: Would the necessary steps be to revoke the tax dollars that are going into an organization like this? I mean, Minister, let's be clear. You're collecting tax dollars from people all across the country, with all sorts of beliefs, from all sorts of backgrounds, and those dollars are being used towards an organization that's actually furthering or spurring greater polarization and arguably hate in this country by choosing to pick on certain groups of people.

Minister, is that type of behaviour excusable? Should we continue to use public dollars for that type of conduct?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: In the past, we've withdrawn funding from organizations that weren't acting in accordance with the federal government's values.

We'll look into this specific case, and if it turns out that the organization doesn't deserve to continue receiving funding from the federal government, the funding will be withdrawn.

[English]

Rachael Thomas: Minister, I appreciate that, and I look forward to hearing from you—I hope, on the record—as to your decisions with regard to both of these organizations—Cult MTL and the Anti-Hate Network.

Minister, you did say that you had a welcome meeting with the CEO of the CBC. I'm just curious. To be clear, you did not at all bring up with her the workplace culture at the CBC and the fact that there are significant and numerous complaints with regard to it being toxic in nature. Did that not come up in your meeting with the CEO?

The Chair: I'm sorry, there's no time for that response. You're out of time, Mrs. Thomas. Perhaps you can—

Rachael Thomas: That's because you gave everyone else an additional 20 to 30 seconds.

The Chair: You had an extra 20 to 30 seconds in the first round. Now we're into the second round, and I'm trying to be more cognizant of everybody's time.

We'll go now to Mr. Al Soud.

Fares Al Soud: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you once again, Minister, for being with us today. I know it means a lot to the members of this committee and to the millions of Canadians tuning in on CPAC right now.

Minister, we often hear about the challenges facing Canada. We heard about polarization just a moment ago, but I think Canadian Heritage is in a unique place to bring people together. I know that's something that we share as a belief. I see this daily in Mississauga Centre.

Can you highlight how the department is using culture, sport and commemoration programs to strengthen national pride, unity and reconciliation at a time when Canadians need that most?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you, Mr. Al Soud. I'm going to take the liberty of speaking to you in French, since you speak it very well.

You're absolutely right, the department and the organizations affiliated with it can play a very important role on issues of pride, unity and even reconciliation.

Not many people know this, but the Department of Canadian Heritage is responsible for implementing the Indigenous Languages Act. The Commissioner of Indigenous Languages reports to that department. When I was minister, I passed the legislation to create a national day for truth and reconciliation, which we'll be marking tomorrow.

A number of the department's programs also play a role in these issues, such as the digital citizen contribution program, which funds projects to combat the effects of disinformation on Canadian communities, including diverse and marginalized communities.

Another example is the role played by the National Film Board of Canada and Telefilm Canada, or the very important role played by national museums and historic sites managed by Parks Canada, which help bring our stories to life.

• (1705)

Fares Al Soud: Thank you, Minister.

Since there are about two and a half minutes left, I'll share my time with my colleague Mr. Ntumba.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Thank you, Minister.

What do you think are the main successes of the Canada Strong Pass program?

Are you looking at renewing it or expanding it into next year or into the months ahead?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you very much for your question.

The data we have right now isn't final. We're still compiling it with our partners.

However, Parks Canada has seen a 10% increase in visits so far. National museums have had a 15% average increase in visits, particularly from families with young children. For example, at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, 82% of people who used the Canada Strong Pass were first-time visitors.

The pass program was really an important incentive to discover the richness of Canada. A number of visitors came from outside the province.

Many young people, in particular, also took advantage of the program: 15,000 of them visited the Canadian Museum of History, and 7,000 others visited the Canadian War Museum. At the Canadi-

an Museum of Nature, the number of visitors increased by 19%, and their ages varied between zero and 17.

I was recently with my provincial and territorial minister of culture colleagues in Regina. I can assure you that people from coast to coast applauded our initiative, because the provinces could participate. All but one of the provinces agreed to participate. That meant that provincial museums were also eligible for the program.

There's a strong demand for a similar program next year, so we're going to work with both Canadian Heritage and Parks Canada, as well as all the partners, to try recreating this experience.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Martin Champoux: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Minister, I'd like to come back to the increase in funding for CBC/Radio-Canada. You promised to increase its budget by \$150 million. In concrete terms, what requirements will you attach to that funding increase? There are clear requests. Some of the suggestions made by your predecessor were, frankly, very interesting.

What conditions will you attach to that funding, if any?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question.

Regarding the \$150 million, I'd like to point out that we were very specific in the platform: It's for the first year of the mandate. The team and I are working very hard to deliver on that promise.

I agree with you. The document that Ms. St-Onge presented at the beginning of the year, in March, was very relevant and is guiding my work on the issue.

Martin Champoux: Minister, I only have two and a half minutes. Are there conditions attached to the funding or not?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I was getting to that, Mr. Champoux.

We'll definitely be asking for a number of things. Since it's a public broadcaster, we always have to be careful not to go too far in our requests. However, you can certainly expect to see something, for example, on investments in local news across the country. That request comes up often. We'll be announcing good news on that soon.

Martin Champoux: I'm moving on to another topic.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, has long been working on implementing Bill C-11, another bill we worked on together at the start of our first mandates. That's taking a lot of time, and all the content and culture creators in the country are wondering when it will finally come to fruition and when they'll start to see money from digital companies. I would remind you that those companies are making billions of dollars and offering absolutely nothing in return to help Quebec and Canadian producers through a very difficult transition period.

How can we give those people a little hope?

• (1710)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Obviously, the CRTC is an independent body. We certainly want it to go as smoothly as possible. We did increase Telefilm Canada's funding by \$50 million. That's nothing to sneeze at. We understand that the sector—

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Next, we are over to Mr. Waugh for five minutes.

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Minister, welcome back. You were here in 2019-21, when I was here. There are few of us left on this committee.

Thank you to the staff, Ms. Mondou and the three Andrews who are here today.

Minister, I want to raise again this workplace culture with CBC. I just want to get it on the record, if you don't mind. When you met with the new CEO of CBC, Marie-Philippe Bouchard, you did not raise the workplace culture or the toxic atmosphere at CBC, or did you? Give me a yes or no.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Ms. Bouchard and I talked about a number of things, including the importance of the public broadcaster being aligned with Canadian values, of course, and the values defended by the federal government.

[*English*]

Kevin Waugh: Did you talk at all about the workplace culture that has, all of a sudden, percolated—if you don't mind my using that word—through the CBC recently?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We're going to have to agree to disagree there. It isn't good to generalize from a few isolated cases and say that there's the same atmosphere and the same working conditions for the public broadcaster as a whole, for the thousands of CBC/Radio-Canada employees. I don't share your view.

Where I agree with you is that the public broadcaster—

[*English*]

Kevin Waugh: This was a pretty high-profile case, though. It was on every—

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: It received a lot of media attention, but that doesn't mean that the situation applies to the public broadcaster

as a whole. That's where I disagree with you and your colleague. I don't share that view.

[*English*]

Kevin Waugh: Okay.

Will you share this, Minister? With the CBC, as you all know, the viewership is down, the revenue is down and, in fact, the trust is down. When we had the former CEO here, Ms. Tait, she actually agreed that trust in the CBC is down. On the streaming platform subscriptions, we don't know where they are, but now your leader has promised another \$150 million to CBC. How is this possible?

I'll tell you what it has done in western Canada. CKSA-DT Lloydminster has served that community for 60 years. Stingray shut the station down because CBC's there now. It's the same with CHAT-TV in Medicine Hat. After 70 years in that community, television is gone—70 years in Medicine Hat...gone.

While you say that the public broadcaster is this and that, I want you to know that the public broadcaster has crept in and destroyed private media in this country. I gave you two examples here: 60 and 70 years. What are your thoughts on that? How is this reasonable?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: We discussed this earlier with your colleague Mr. Champoux.

The traditional media sector, in Canada and almost everywhere else in the world, is going through a very difficult time with the arrival of online platforms and advertising budgets that have moved, for example, from local newspapers and local radio and television to the web giants.

Once again, I have reservations about looking at a global problem and saying that it's CBC's fault. For my part, I receive requests from people across the country who want to benefit from CBC in their community. I've heard it right across the country.

[*English*]

Kevin Waugh: All right. You say that, and then they hide the numbers for Gem. There was an ATIP on CBC this summer, asking how many subscriptions there were to Gem. They said that they couldn't tell that to anyone because it wouldn't be fair to their competitors. Crave, which is owned by Bell Media, actually has 3.8 million subscribers in this country, yet for CBC Gem, they can't share it. There are free subscriptions, and then there are the paid ones at \$5.99 a month, I think.

Is it fair that the public broadcaster is hiding when someone says, "We'd like to know how much money is put into Gem or how many viewers there are"? It might be, Minister, that Gem is useless and should have been torched a long time ago.

When they're covering up.... As a former broadcaster, when I hear them say that they can't tell us, then I know there are red flags with the corporation. I know that for sure.

In Ontario, I will just tell you that 0.35% of the streaming market participated in CBC Gem. That's not even 1% of the province of Ontario. That tells me there is little or no participation on Gem in this country, whether it's free or by subscription.

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Waugh. That's your time.

We'll move over to Mr. Myles for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

David Myles (Fredericton—Oromocto, Lib.): Thank you very much for being here, Minister.

I'd like to ask you a question about something I'm interested in.

Thanks to digital services, artists have access to international or global markets. However, this presents challenges at the same time, especially in terms of support for regional music and cultures. Regional music is extremely important to Canadian culture; I'm thinking of country music from Alberta, music from Cape Breton Island and Acadian music from my home in New Brunswick.

How could the government support regional music and cultures in this globalized market?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Myles, given your decades of experience as a musician who plays all across the country, in English and French, you probably know more about the subject than we do.

I see two parts to your question.

The first is how our government supports Canada's local and regional arts and culture industries, and the second is how the government supports Canadian arts in the global market.

The first part of the answer is obviously thanks to the Canada arts presentation fund. The sum of \$31 billion has been allocated to help and support professional organizations that present arts festivals or concert series. We support organizations such as TOHU, the Festival TransAmériques, the Festival cinéma du monde de Sherbrooke and the Vancouver Fringe Festival.

There are also support programs for news and local culture, through which \$150 million was provided to the CBC to enhance local news reporting and Canadian storytelling and to combat disinformation.

The second part of the answer is that we support Canadian creators who promote our culture at home and abroad by increasing funding to the Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board of Canada and the Canada Media Fund. There is also what is called creative export Canada, a flagship export-oriented program that falls under the department. It has two components: the export-ready stream and the export development stream for new start-up exporters looking to expand their network internationally. It's a very popular program.

[*English*]

David Myles: Another question I have is about small venues. We talk a lot about our big theatres in Canada, which are beautiful—Winspear, the National Arts Centre, Dalhousie's Arts Centre. In fact, I think the member and I were talking about this last week. No one shows up in those venues unless most of them have toured

across the country and our small venues, whether it be performance spaces, creative spaces, bars or cafés.

I'm wondering whether there is a way for us to support the small venues for the next generation of talent—emerging artists—to build their skills, in the same way we have hockey rinks across the country that help people become professionals. We won't have people at the NAC unless we find ways to support them as emerging artists. I wonder whether there are ways the government can support that.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: There are two things that come to mind. The first one is the Canada arts presentation fund and the second one is the Canada cultural spaces fund. The second one is for upgrades, renovation, equipment and planning. This tends to be for smaller projects all across the country. We're not talking about big, \$100-million projects but smaller projects in communities.

Let me give you a couple of quick examples: \$2.8 million invested to the Canada cultural spaces fund in New Brunswick for upgrades to museums and theatres; \$750,000 to the Highland Arts Theatre in Nova Scotia for accessibility, sound, lighting and livestream equipment; \$1 million provided to Where Edmonton Community Artists Network Society to purchase Harcourt House, which is an artist-run centre that I had the pleasure of visiting—it's not completely finished—when I was in Edmonton recently. These are some of the examples of how we're trying to support smaller venues across the country.

• (1720)

David Myles: That's great. I think it is really important. I want to go back to the first question. I know we were talking about export, but I'm wondering about streaming in particular. I know it's a tricky subject, but I think that one thing streaming presents us with is that it really gives us access to international markets.

Again, I want to go back to this: Are there ways that we can support our streaming? I don't mean support our streaming services per se, but in what ways do Bill C-11 and some of the bills and work that have been done in the past try to adjust, let's say, to address minority language, minority communities, discoverability and those kinds of things?

The Chair: Unfortunately, there's no time to answer that question, Minister. I'm not sure whether you have a hard stop at 5:30 or if you can give us a couple of extra minutes so we can get in a third round.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I can stay a couple of extra minutes.

The Chair: All right.

Next we have Monsieur G n reux.

[Translation]

You have the floor for five minutes.

Bernard G n reux (C te-du-Sud—Rivi re-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—T miscouata, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, thank you very much for being here.

A rumour that has been circulating for about a week and a half that two former ministers were about to leave the government, and a current minister is waiting until October 19 to leave. That would be you.

In the other two cases, the rumour has turned out to be true, since one of the ministers will be appointed to New York and the other to the Netherlands.

Are you planning to leave after October 19?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't know if you're a Star Trek fan, Mr. G n reux, but I am. In one of the series, there is a species called the Ferengi, who have a book that is kind of like their bible. The book contains rules. One of them specifically applies to rumours, and it says:

[English]

“Hear all; trust nothing.”

[Translation]

I'm very happy where I am and I intend to stay here.

Bernard G n reux: That's good. I'm very happy to hear that.

Today, the F d ration des communaut s francophones et acadienne, or FCFA, has openly and quite vehemently complained about the fact that the Official Languages Act still hasn't been fully implemented 28 months after it was passed and that some parts of it haven't yet been put in place.

Do you have an answer to give them?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes, absolutely.

I have met with members of the FCFA on a number of occasions, and some members of my team meet with them on a monthly basis.

In the next few weeks, we will publish at least two of the three regulations to implement the modernization of the Official Languages Act. The third one will follow shortly afterwards, but two of them are about to be introduced.

Bernard G n reux: They're also concerned about funding, since the Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Mr. Champagne, has asked you to reduce your overall budgets by 32.5% over the next three years.

Have you determined which budgets you are going to cut?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I believe the number is 15% over three years. Obviously, there are various ways of doing it. Earlier, I was talking about the Canada Media Fund, Telefilm Canada and others. When these institutions were created, Telefilm Canada funded films because people went to see them in theatres. The Canada Media

Fund funded television because people were watching at home. Now everyone watches movies and TV shows on this device or a slightly larger one.

Do we need two or three structures to fund something? Should we not group everything together? That way, we could fund films, series and television within the same structure.

The department needs to think about this. It's not a bad thing to step back from time to time and ask if there is a way to be more efficient. Once again, as I told your colleague Mr. Champoux, we made historic investments by providing \$4 billion over the course of the 2015 to 2024 mandate. That remains a priority for us and certainly for the Prime Minister as well.

Bernard G n reux: Over nine years, you doubled the budget of these organizations and now you plan to take 15% away from them, knowing full well the effect of inflation and so on.

We sometimes get the feeling that the Liberal Party doesn't consider official languages to be important, while the country's francophone minority communities are working extremely hard to maintain their vitality. Honestly, I don't know how you would be able to justify a budget cut for these people. I saw how resilient they are in my 10 years on the official languages committee, and I'm glad we're here talking about it. I really believe that they need to be able to count on sustainable funding, because they are in a risky situation.

My question is this: Do you think it's appropriate to cut the budget of francophone minority communities? Can you promise me today that, in the next budget, there will be no cuts to the budgets for these communities?

• (1725)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Let me reassure you. If you look at what we've accomplished in recent years in the area of official languages, you'll see that we've modernized the Official Languages Act, recognized the decline of French in Quebec and provided \$4 billion to support minority communities and \$750 million a year toward French classes in Quebec, year after year.

As I told your colleague Mr. Champoux, I'm not the Minister of Finance. Therefore, I can't give any guarantees as to what measures will or will not be in the next budget.

You mentioned 15% cuts for everyone. What I can tell you, however, is that the streamlining exercise is not a wall-to-wall parametric exercise that applies to everyone. We are thinking about this and holding discussions with the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board to, once again, look for ways to improve efficiency where possible. We agree that, at the end of the day, what we want is for Canadians to get more for their money.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. G n reux.

Mr. Al Soud, you have the floor for five minutes.

Fares Al Soud: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, Minister. As you well know, I was born in Montreal. I've lived there most of my life, so I'm quite familiar with the importance of the cultural and creative industry in Quebec.

Mr. Myles has already talked a bit about it, but this industry is just as important elsewhere in the world as it is in Canada. When Canadian stories travel abroad through film, music and literature, they show the world who we are while developing industries here at home.

Can you give us some examples of how federal funding has enabled Canadian stories to reach new audiences, both at home and abroad?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you for your question.

I spoke about this a little earlier with your colleague Mr. Myles. Canadian Heritage and Global Affairs Canada are working together on the creative export strategy. We provide financing and advice to companies, and we organize missions. For example, 95 export projects have been funded, at a value of \$44 million, reaching 25 international markets.

In addition, there is a very strong international interest in indigenous languages and cultures. I saw that when I was at TIFF a few weeks ago. We now have the Indigenous Screen Office, set up to support indigenous creators so that we can see their stories on our screens. The office has done exceptional work. There's an appetite, certainly here in Canada but also internationally, for this kind of initiative and these kinds of cultural stories.

Fares Al Soud: Thank you.

[*English*]

Mississauga is very fortunate to have Celebration Square, which has become a true cultural hub. On any given weekend, thousands—and I mean thousands—of people gather to celebrate food, music and traditions from every corner of the world. It was only two weeks ago that I attended Philippine Festival. It was partially funded by Canadian Heritage. I was very proud to let them know.

Could you speak to us about the different ways that Canadian Heritage is supporting multicultural, community-driven celebrations and ensuring that they continue to thrive across the country?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Thank you so much.

We have a number of different initiatives in place to support these particular festivals. There will be \$65 million in federal funding infused into the cultural sector this year alone, including \$15 million to help festival and art presenters reach audiences across the country and around the world.

Every year, the Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage program supports 700 events in 435 communities across the country, including events organized for indigenous cultural celebrations and 2SLGBTQIA+ events. The major festivals initiative is \$23 million over three years. That started in 2024-25 for the TIFF, to attract leading filmmakers and actors from around the world. There was \$15 million for the Shaw Festival Theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario. The list goes on.

I think you see that we are very involved. This is something that is very important for communities across the country—communities like yours in Mississauga Centre.

• (1730)

Fares Al Soud: I have one more minute. That's fantastic.

Minister, Ms. Royer asked the question earlier about local media. Obviously, we all know within the broader context that it's a topic that's brought up to us as members of Parliament fairly frequently.

Could you reiterate the importance of local media and ethnic media within our individual communities in terms of getting some of the more community-related achievements out there?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Yes, the initiative for local journalism has certainly been a very popular program. I hear about it all across the country, whenever I meet people in communities.

One thing we are doing is asking, are there things that we can do or improve, or are there other things we can do? We know that the media sector is going through a rough time. Obviously we want to support our public broadcaster, but private broadcasters also play an important role in our communities. We have initiatives for them as well.

Whether there are other things we can do is certainly one thing that's very front and centre in our conversations in preparation for the budget and in terms of what we can do as a department.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Martin Champoux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, is English an endangered language in Quebec?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Is that a trick question, Mr. Champoux?

Martin Champoux: Call it what you will, but it still requires a fairly honest answer from you.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: The answer to your question is no. Obviously, anglophone communities are a minority in Quebec, since there are more francophones than anglophones.

Martin Champoux: We understand that, but does it justify anglophone groups receiving the support that should be reserved for minority official languages that need promoting and protecting? Do you think it makes sense to spend so much money to protect English in Quebec rather than supporting, as Mr. Généreux mentioned earlier, organizations like the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, or FCFA? They are concerned about the implementation of the new Official Languages Act and afraid that the funding for linguistic communities will melt away like snow in the sun.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I don't share your point of view on funding. I have said it before and I will say it again: We have made historic investments in minority language communities in Canada. I think there's an issue of fairness. As I said, the anglophone community is a minority community in Quebec, even though it is not in the rest of Canada.

Martin Champoux: I have a great deal of respect for the anglophone community in Quebec, I assure you, but it is not endangered or in jeopardy. It's doing quite well.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: There are issues for this community, just as there are for francophone communities outside Quebec, although they are not the same.

• (1735)

Martin Champoux: In one minute, I wanted to bring you back to the cultural sector, because these are issues that concern me a great deal. This week, the subcommittee adopted a motion to study the effects of artificial intelligence on the cultural sector. I'm sure you're well aware of all these impacts and the danger that AI poses to our cultural industries.

What do you and your government intend to put in place? Do you intend to legislate on this specific issue in the very short term?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: I'm very interested in that. In fact, the last book I published before entering politics dealt with the issue of artificial intelligence.

There are certainly areas of concern when it comes to artificial intelligence, but, as we hear from creators, there are also opportunities. As a government, we are trying to see how we can maximize the benefits of AI for the entire population, particularly for creators, and how we can minimize its adverse effects. These are discussions I have, as the minister responsible for Canadian Heritage, with my colleague Minister Solomon, who is the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, and with Minister Joly. The three of us are working together to find the right balance.

Martin Champoux: Thank you, Minister.

Madam Chair, thank you for allowing those extra seconds for the minister to answer an important question. I really appreciate it.

The Chair: You're welcome.

Thank you, Minister.

[English]

Thank you for being so quick to respond to this committee's invitation and for giving us all of the time you had available. We really appreciate your time.

We're going to suspend for about five minutes so we can switch over and give you a chance to leave the room. Then, we have the rest of our time with some of your officials to answer further questions.

Thank you.

• (1735)

(Pause)

• (1740)

The Chair: There are just a couple of housekeeping things before we get back into questioning.

We have our artificial intelligence study. We've asked members to submit witnesses by the end of today. However, many members did not give us complete information for the witnesses. I know lots of us are new and the process is a little different. I'm wondering if everybody is in agreement that we give members until tomorrow morning, since we're sitting late tonight, to submit the final list of witnesses for the AI study. Is everybody okay with that, that we have until tomorrow morning for our witness list for the AI study? Okay.

Secondly, the clerk has let me know that we have no CRTC confirmation yet for our meeting on October 1. We are still waiting to hear back to see whether the chair of the CRTC will be available next week.

Mr. Champoux.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux: We anticipated that this could happen, Madam Chair. We agree that, if the chair of the CRTC cannot be here as planned on October 1, we can begin the study on artificial intelligence. Is it too short notice to invite witnesses to appear?

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Clerk.

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Jean-François Pagé): It will depend on when I receive the names of the witnesses. Since Tuesday is a holiday, we have one day less and it may be tight.

• (1745)

Martin Champoux: Madam Chair, I propose that we discuss it now, or that we set aside five minutes at the end of the meeting to discuss committee business, including planned business. We also need to determine how long we will keep Wednesday's meeting open for the artificial intelligence study if Ms. Eatrises is not available.

The Chair: You're suggesting that we take five minutes at the end of this meeting to discuss it. Is that correct?

Martin Champoux: Yes, if that's okay with everyone, so we can at least get this done. That way, we'll know what to expect.

[English]

The Chair: Okay.

[Translation]

That's done.

[English]

We're ready for questions.

I have Mr. Waugh first for the Conservatives, for six minutes.

Kevin Waugh: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't think I've seen seven officials, ever. I've been on this committee for 10 years. I don't think I've seen seven officials from the department in front of me.

Does anyone know the Gem numbers?

Isabelle Mondou (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): We don't, and it could be a good question for the CEO. I think you have called her before this committee. Maybe that's a good question for her when she appears.

Kevin Waugh: Yes. Does the Heritage department think it's important to know?

Isabelle Mondou: It's hard for me to pronounce on, because it's under the Access to Information Act, and they have applied the legislation, so it will be me again, guessing the application of another act by another organization. I think asking her directly would be the best course.

Kevin Waugh: We hear of a possible 15% reduction. I say "possible" because I've been around the House for 10-plus years now, and they say one thing and do another. But 15%.... Have they looked at your budgets?

Ms. Mondou, in fact you were just in Regina. You know my interest in the RCMP museum, and the department has said, "We'll give you \$12 million over the four years, to 2030." Is that still on the table?

Isabelle Mondou: I had the pleasure of meeting the chair of the board. She is coming the week of October 6, I think, and we'll meet again. There was in the FES 2024 some money for the museum, not for this fiscal year but for the next fiscal year, so we have a bit of money from the FES 2024. That is for the museum, but obviously, this is something for which the bigger decisions are not made by the department. They're made by the Minister of Finance.

Kevin Waugh: Yes. I think you can appreciate the angst. They have done their budgets, and they want to be a national museum. We have so many here in the Ottawa region and maybe in Halifax, Winnipeg, and now the RCMP museum in Regina, but they would like to know if the fall economic statement from last year, which said, I'll give you in the next four years \$3 million each....

What would you say if they're watching now and they're coming in October? They've had discussions around the table, and they want to know if that funding is there or not.

Isabelle Mondou: I will say the same thing that I said to the chair. You are absolutely right: They have done an amazing job

over the last couple of years to really bring new consultation, and they have done deep work to bring that solid foundation to the museum. I will also say that, ultimately, those decisions on Monday will be up to the Minister of Finance, therefore I can hope for it, but I cannot tell you for sure.

Kevin Waugh: You're saying that what was, I think, linked as a great possibility of \$12 million to 2030 isn't guaranteed any more. Is that right? Is that what I'm hearing from you?

Isabelle Mondou: We had a change of government between the 2024 FES and this government. It's a different government, so they obviously have to decide if they are still comfortable with the decision of the previous government.

Kevin Waugh: It's the same government, just with a different leader.

Isabelle Mondou: Yes, but it's still, in law, a different government.

Kevin Waugh: That's disheartening, though, if you don't mind me saying it, because when it was promised, the wheels were put into motion, and they're feeling a little angst.

I did meet with them. You were in the city. They should be on their tippy-toes right now, because there doesn't appear to be any commitment, even though the public safety minister wants 1,000 more RCMP officers seven steps away from the museum. You're not really committing any money now to the museum that I see—the \$12 million. Is that true?

• (1750)

Isabelle Mondou: The organization also met with the minister and discussed exactly what you have raised, so the minister has heard them.

Kevin Waugh: The minister talked about the "Canada Strong" pass a bit when he was here, because it was a pretty good program. You provided free or discounted admission to national parks, historic sites and our museums this summer, and even some train travel. Is the government subsidizing the lost revenue for these groups that I've just mentioned?

Isabelle Mondou: The pass program was basically cost-neutral for the organizations that participated, and they are going to be indemnified for the costs of offering those services for free.

Kevin Waugh: If I go to a national park where I usually pay, and I don't pay because it was free, how are they going to even their budgets out?

Isabelle Mondou: My colleague would be happy to take that one.

Andrew Campbell (Senior Vice-President, Operations, Parks Canada Agency): Thank you very much.

We kept track of those who came into national parks and national historic sites for free, and we will be compensated for the value of those individuals who came into national parks and national historic sites over the two-month period of the “Canada Strong” pass.

Kevin Waugh: What would the number be?

Andrew Campbell: Right now we're at about a 10% or 11% increase over our previous year, in 2024-25. Once we get our final numbers, we'll present them to the Treasury Board, and we expect to be remunerated for that lost revenue.

Kevin Waugh: Could you provide your answers in writing to the committee? We probably won't see as many of you here, but we would like to know the numbers and the dollar value over the two months. Are you going to compensate? We would like to know this.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Waugh. You're out of time, but I will leave that request with the analysts.

Kevin Waugh: Good. Thank you.

The Chair: Next we have Mr. Al Soud for six minutes.

Fares Al Soud: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you all for being here. Indeed, seven officials is interesting and impressive.

This committee is about to launch a study on artificial intelligence. Its impact on creative industries is something that we're going to be studying and considering above all else. As we begin this work, I'd like to hear your perspectives on how we can seize the opportunities of AI while protecting our artists and cultural workers.

Has the department commissioned or gathered estimates on the economic impact of AI on Canadian Heritage and on Canada's cultural industries? I'd be very curious to hear from you on that.

Isabelle Mondou: I will start by saying that we have been gathering people and discussing this issue for a couple of months, if not a year now. There was a consultation with the cultural sector that we conducted with our colleagues at the Department of Industry to better understand exactly what you mentioned: What's the impact? What are people feeling? What are the opportunities? That consultation took place.

There was also a survey online, and just last week I had the pleasure of chairing two round tables with all the unions for the cultural sector from English Canada and all the unions from Quebec. They talked to us about what they think is important and what needs to be done from a regulatory point of view but also in terms of training and international concerns, etc. We're gathering very good information on that.

In addition, we signed an MOU with Mila, which is the institute in Montreal; you know them. We have also conducted some round tables there to understand better. Three weeks ago, I was at TIFF and participated in a round table with the sector. The questions we're asking are very specific, and we're asking what we can do practically to help.

Fares Al Soud: That's fantastic. Thank you for that very comprehensive answer.

[*Translation*]

As I mentioned earlier, I was born in Montreal. I spent most of my life there from childhood. I don't want to say that I'm much younger, but I'm still young. I saw the immediate impact of local media on culture in Montreal. However, it is clear that local media is not as strong across the country as it is in Montreal. Of course, that includes the rural regions of Quebec.

What can be done to avoid media deserts in places like Mississauga, where I now live?

[*English*]

Isabelle Mondou: Thank you for the question.

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

A program was designed specifically for that, the local journalism initiative. Its purpose is to provide funding to journalists, specifically by paying the salaries of journalists who live in a total or near-total news desert. The program was set up in 2019, and it works extremely well. It really makes it possible to hire journalists in small communities. This can involve newspapers with only one or two journalists, who can really develop their abilities there. Some of them have even decided to share the resource to support each other. It's a very helpful measure.

In addition, the passage of Bill C-18 made it possible to reach an agreement with Google, which invested \$100 million. Newspapers that meet the criteria can receive up to \$13,000 per journalist working for their organization. Some local newspapers have obviously benefited from this measure.

[*English*]

Fares Al Soud: How many outlets currently benefit from the local journalism initiative, and how many of those serve ethnic or multilingual communities?

Isabelle Mondou: It's 700.

[*Translation*]

I don't know if my colleague wants to add anything.

Joëlle Montminy (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): In the past year, 404 organizations received funding. In terms of news organizations, that represents 700 journalist positions.

[*English*]

Fares Al Soud: On a different, separate and more serious note, our country is grappling with rising anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Could you speak to the programs the Department of Heritage has to support community-based initiatives addressing this trend? Would you be able to share how many funded projects are currently under way?

Andrew Brown (Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): I think you've characterized the situation across the country really accurately in terms of some of the sorts of divisions we're seeing. We're really trying to tackle challenges that are facing communities through a number of different programs.

First and foremost are really the programs that are under the multiculturalism and anti-racism banner. We've had a number of calls in the last year and have been able to fund community organizations across the country in terms of programming that is aimed to bring people together and combat hate and tackle anti-racism. We also launched a separate program earlier this year, the national Holocaust remembrance program, particularly targeted at anti-Semitism. In that regard we've been working with and providing funding to a number of Jewish organizations.

To do so, we actually worked with a special envoy on Holocaust remembrance and combatting anti-Semitism to identify Jewish organizations across the country that would have the capacity to carry out these projects.

Fares Al Soud: That's fantastic.

Very quickly, the minister highlighted that we've seen incredible rates of journalistic representation pertaining to diversity across our country. Would you say that this element of diversity across the country, from a cultural standpoint, leads to differentiation in terms of perspective from a journalistic standpoint?

Isabelle Mondou: I think that's why we created the narrative fund, because there was a feeling that there was not enough representation in the media, in cinema, etc. That's exactly the goal of that program—to hear different voices and have more people getting the chance to be in the newspaper or in other media, and therefore make these stories even richer.

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for six minutes.

Martin Champoux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Like my colleagues, I'm impressed to see seven departmental officials here at the same time. What I find even more impressive is the number of people around the table named Andrew. There's a lack of diversity.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Martin Champoux: That said, it makes our job a little easier. We won't get anyone's name wrong, at least not the gentlemen's.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here and taking the time to answer our questions.

I'm going to start by asking a question about parks. I think Andrew is going to answer me.

Now that Parks Canada has introduced free entry, have you measured the impact it has had on other regional tourism businesses?

For example, have you had any claims from companies that, like other parks, charge admission fees and that may have suffered losses?

If so, have you provided compensation to the tourism businesses that might have suffered losses because of the free entry you offered?

Andrew Campbell: When we discussed this with members of the tourism industry, they said that, in general, they had profited. They didn't all say that, but the vast majority of businesses next to parks and historic sites felt that way.

Others, some of whose products are linked to Parks Canada, thought they would incur losses, but all across the country they profited, because Canadian Heritage offered museums virtually the same thing as Parks Canada offered.

• (1800)

Martin Champoux: Some cultural or tourism businesses, although perhaps not many, have suffered losses. We don't expect the federal government to be a competitor in this industry. Mind you, I'm not criticizing the free entry at all; I think a lot of people benefited from it and it was a great idea. However, do you intend to hear the claims of the companies that have suffered losses directly as a result of this unexpected competition? Is the department open to that?

Andrew Campbell: We are always open to having these discussions, but we only have the power to deal with the situation of businesses that are in a national park or that have a business relationship with Parks Canada. We're not in a position to solve any problems beyond that.

Martin Champoux: Thank you.

Ms. Mondou, I would like to return to the issue of Google and the \$100 million that is being used to support the information industry and news media.

Is that working well? Once the committee has reviewed the regulations and they have been implemented by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, are news companies benefiting from them? Are there any negative or constructive comments for the future regarding this amount that will be paid annually?

Isabelle Mondou: During the first year, we had to choose an organization to manage the distribution of funds. Of course, there were some hiccups at the beginning and all sorts of questions arose, as people had different interpretations of who was considered a journalist. So we had to make a few adjustments in the first few months, which I think is perfectly normal. However, at present, the people we talk to tell us that things are going very well and that this has helped to resolve issues that had remained unresolved during implementation. What we are hearing now is that things are going rather well.

Martin Champoux: The committee plans to meet with Ms. Eatrises in the coming weeks, but I have a question, out of curiosity, since we are talking about the CRTC.

The CRTC has a lot of work to do, particularly as a result of this committee's work, and more specifically the study of bills C-11 and C-18. There are probably other regulations that need to be reviewed, particularly those governing the broadcasting sector. I know that the CRTC has been overwhelmed in recent years.

Is the CRTC's slow pace in achieving results hindering the work of the Department of Canadian Heritage? Is it preventing you from moving forward with initiatives that could help the sector?

Isabelle Mondou: Under the policy established by Bill C-11, the minister had asked the CRTC to issue decisions within two years. Obviously, since the CRTC is an independent body, the minister cannot compel it to do so. The CRTC will not meet the two-year deadline, but it is moving much faster than it has in the past. A lot of important work will be done during this period.

You can ask the chair of the CRTC, but as you know, hearings are currently under way. Decisions will be made following the hearings held in the spring. For a quasi-judicial tribunal, the CRTC is therefore moving very quickly.

Martin Champoux: This was discussed earlier, but I would like to quickly ask you one last question about the directive from the Minister of Finance and National Revenue to reduce spending by 15% across all departments.

Has the minister asked you to look at where you can achieve savings? If so, should people, organizations and cultural businesses that rely on Canadian Heritage grants be concerned at this time?

Isabelle Mondou: All departments have been subject to a 15% budget reduction, with the exception of three departments and agencies, namely the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canada Border Services Agency and the Department of National Defence, which are subject to a slightly lower percentage. We must therefore all comply with this exercise.

That being said, we are reviewing not only programs, but also jobs in the public service. This exercise affects our programs and the way we operate, and is aimed at achieving efficiency.

• (1805)

Martin Champoux: So programs are not excluded.

Isabelle Mondou: Programs are not excluded.

Martin Champoux: You will also have to look at programs.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Champoux. That concludes your speaking time.

[English]

Next we go to Mrs. Thomas for five minutes.

Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

My question is this: When it comes to the formation of the budget, obviously the finance minister is the one who completes that process and brings it all together, but I would imagine it's up to each department to put forward requests in terms of how they would like their funding allocated.

Am I correct in that?

Isabelle Mondou: You are absolutely correct.

Rachael Thomas: The heritage department, then, has put forward to the finance minister its priorities and where it would like its allocation of dollars put.

Isabelle Mondou: That's correct.

We always have to do it within certain instructions. The Minister of Finance gives instructions about what he expects, so we have to respect that. Sometimes they limit the number of demands or they limit the way we should be doing it.

Yes, the minister presents his request to the Minister of Finance.

Rachael Thomas: Are you able to confirm with us today the status of that request for the RCMP Heritage Centre?

Was it requested that it would continue to be funded to the full amount that it currently is?

Isabelle Mondou: Unfortunately, I'm not able to do that for one reason: It's a cabinet confidence. The conversation that happened around the budget is like a conversation at cabinet. It is a cabinet confidence, so I'm not in a position to reveal what the minister proposed.

Rachael Thomas: Okay. You're not able to talk about any of the priorities that were set, in terms of how many are allocated for this budget?

Isabelle Mondou: I can talk about the priority of government, but I cannot attach it to what was specifically requested for the budget exercise.

Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

One of the changes that has happened, of course, is that the minister's title has changed. Now it includes Canadian culture. I would imagine, then, that the department should have a definition of that, so that it knows the end it's working toward or the goal that it's looking to achieve.

What is the working definition of "Canadian culture" in the department?

Isabelle Mondou: It's interesting. I probably won't get it perfectly right from memory, but our departmental report defines our mandate, and it includes culture and it also includes diversity and inclusion. It also includes heritage, official language and sport. All of these things are defined in our mandate. A better definition than what I can give is actually in our departmental report.

Rachael Thomas: The phrase "Canadian culture" is defined, then, for the department?

Isabelle Mondou: It's defined in terms of what our mandate is to support culture, but it's not a definition like you will find, for example, for the purpose of taxation, where you give some money to some organization because it produces certain kinds of content. It's different from that.

It's defined more in terms of mandate, like supporting culture, industry and things like that.

Rachael Thomas: Can that definition be made public? Can it be shared with this committee?

Isabelle Mondou: Absolutely. The departmental report describes what the department's role is in supporting the culture.

Rachael Thomas: Do you mind sending that to us, just so that we can take a look at that?

Isabelle Mondou: I don't mind at all.

Rachael Thomas: Thank you.

With regard to online harms legislation, that was introduced by this government in the last Parliament. It came up just a bit earlier. The minister has said that he feels it's important. He has said that it's coming. I think there are a lot of people who are anxiously waiting for it.

When is it coming? What is the time frame we're looking at?

Isabelle Mondou: That would have been a very good question for the minister, because it's more in his bailiwick than in mine.

Rachael Thomas: Okay. The department doesn't know.

Isabelle Mondou: The department always stands ready to serve when the government wants to table something, but the decision as to when to table things is the prerogative of the government.

Rachael Thomas: Has the department been asked to work on this at all?

Isabelle Mondou: We haven't stopped thinking about it, because we know that people care about that. We receive letters almost every day asking us to do something, whether it's for children or deepfakes and all of that.

It's part of our mandate to always work on that and reflect on it. The final decision as to what it will look like and when it will look like that is the prerogative of the minister.

Rachael Thomas: What I'm curious about is what steps have been taken to start developing a framework for this legislation.

Isabelle Mondou: We already had Bill C-63, as you mentioned. That's already a framework that was based, as you will recall because you were here, on a lot of consultation, an advisory committee and all of that. We have that.

Obviously, the war doesn't stand still, so we continue to look at what other countries.... Deepfake was not so much of an issue when we started to look at the bill originally. Today, Minister Solomon gave a speech in Montreal. He said that this is one of the issues that the government wants to address.

As I say, we keep updating it as we go along, if I can say that.

• (1810)

Rachael Thomas: Okay, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Next, we have Mr. Ntumba for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I am glad to see that there are six people here for us; that way we will have more answers.

I would like to return to the point raised by my colleague Ms. Hepfner. As AI-generated content becomes more prevalent, how is Heritage Canada ensuring that Canadian artists and cultural workers, particularly those from under-represented minorities, are protected from the erasure of their culture and cultural appropriation?

Isabelle Mondou: That's a very good question. The minister will be discussing this topic next week at MONDIACULT. It is a global challenge. In fact, it is a challenge for all cultures that are seeing themselves somewhat amalgamated in this new emergence of artificial intelligence.

So there are several things being looked at. For example, UNESCO has guidelines for strengthening the presence of diverse cultures. This is based on the 2005 convention, which sought to recognize the diversity of voices. With this new element of artificial intelligence, we are working with UNESCO to see what can be done at the international level to strengthen that presence.

Obviously, here too, we have the same questions and challenges. As I mentioned, discussions with the various stakeholders will help us find the best course of action, whether regulatory, financial or other. It will probably be a combination of several measures.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Thank you very much.

My other point concerns the Online News Act and local media. What measures is the department taking to support local and ethnic media, prevent regions from becoming media deserts, and combat the spread of misinformation as traditional media declines and newsrooms close in the regions, particularly in Quebec?

Isabelle Mondou: My answer to your question about ethnic media will be in two parts.

Earlier, I mentioned the existence of a local journalism program that is independent of government. This program is offered to media associations. One of these associations deals specifically with ethnic media. It therefore ensures that local ethnic newspapers can participate in this program.

In addition, when the legislation resulting from Bill C-18 was passed, after being reviewed by this committee, there were very specific criteria. The agreement had to cover not only major newspapers, but also minority official language newspapers, newspapers promoting diversity and indigenous newspapers. What is interesting is that the money donated by Google could be given to all kinds of media, not just our major media outlets in large cities.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: I would now like to talk about Parks Canada.

I would like to know how Parks Canada balances the visitor experience with environmental sustainability and climate adaptation in national parks.

Andrew Campbell: I didn't quite understand your question.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Would you like me to repeat it?

Andrew Campbell: Yes, please.

• (1815)

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: I asked how Parks Canada balances the visitor experience with environmental sustainability and climate adaptation in national parks.

Andrew Campbell: Thank you.

Interpreters in national parks and national historic sites—where history is the focus—are responsible for providing visitors with a meaningful experience.

With regard to climate change and other environmental issues, it is important to note that interpreters, through interpretation programs, reach 25 million Canadians a year in national parks.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Madam Chair, do I have any time left?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds left.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: In general, what are your comments on the Canada Strong Pass? How did it go? Was it a success?

Isabelle Mondou: At the federal-provincial meeting, we learned that some museums had seen their attendance increase by more than 40% and that this was a clientele they had never seen before. This is very interesting because it means that these people may return to our institutions. Our colleagues from all provinces, since virtually all provinces participated in this meeting, were pleasantly surprised by the very positive results of this program.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Mondou.

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Martin Champoux: Ms. Mondou, earlier you mentioned Bill C-63, which you are using as a basis for your work in preparation for the future. Do you take into account the reports adopted by the committees? Bill C-63 has not been passed, but studies were conducted in committee during the 44th Parliament, and the reports were recently adopted. One of these reports dealt with the harmful effects of sexually explicit material online.

Do you take committee reports into account, or do you know just as much?

Isabelle Mondou: We take all reports into account, including those from this committee. We also take private members' bills into account. There are two, one from a senator and one from a Conservative MP. We look at all of this because all parliamentary work is extremely relevant to our work.

Martin Champoux: I am glad to hear that, Ms. Mondou, because some witnesses came before us to share some extremely difficult experiences, and that seriously deserved to be taken into ac-

count, even though the study had not yet been officially adopted at that time. Thank you for clarifying that. It's very interesting.

I would now like to talk about sports. We haven't talked about it much, but there has been a lot of turmoil in the world of sport in recent years. There is a lot of talk about providing a safe environment for young people to develop in sports.

Can you tell me a little about the progress that has been made since this last made headlines, for the wrong reasons as we know, and we discussed it?

Isabelle Mondou: A commission was established to make recommendations on the future of sports, and it published its interim report two or three weeks ago. It consulted with a wide range of people in the sports community to refine its recommendations, which are very ambitious. The Secretary of State for Sport said that the government would be following this very closely.

In the meantime, other things have been done. You may recall that a team was set up to conduct more in-depth follow-ups on issues arising in certain organizations, such as Hockey Canada, Canada Soccer and so on. This team conducted these follow-ups and put plans in place with the organizations, often based on recommendations from an external expert on the health of the organizations. The previous minister, Minister Qualtrough, also required organizations to have a slightly different code of conduct and governance, with certain provisions that are now required in order to obtain funding.

Finally, there is an independent body that reviews complaints from people who have unfortunately been victims of abuse in the system. This organization was transferred to another organization and relaunched in April, and the person managing the program comes from a trauma-informed background. So this is someone who has that kind of experience. It's still early days, but it seems to be working.

Martin Champoux: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

Mr. G n reux, you have the floor for five minutes.

Bernard G n reux: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Mondou, I would like to clarify something. The analysts always prepare a document for us before meetings where we hear from witnesses. I would like to thank them for their excellent work. From what I understand, program spending reductions will be 7.5% in 2026–2027, 10% in 2027–2028 and 15% in 2028–2029, for a total of 32.5%. However, earlier, the minister said it was 15%.

I just want you to confirm that it is indeed a 15% reduction and not a 32% reduction that the government or Mr. Champagne has requested for all departments for the next three years.

Isabelle Mondou: In fact, that is exactly right: 7.5% for the first year, 10% for the second and 15% for the third. After that, the 15% reduction will be maintained for all new departmental budgets. The budget cuts are therefore less significant in the first year and will gradually increase to a maximum rate of 15%.

● (1820)

Bernard Généreux: Agreed.

The minister also spoke about efficiency measures, mentioning Telefilm Canada and another organization that I unfortunately cannot remember.

Isabelle Mondou: It's the Canada Media Fund, or CMF.

Bernard Généreux: I imagine, then, that in your analysis of the budgets, you are considering the possibility of restructuring programs or checking for duplication or triplication of items in order to optimize your department's overall spending. Personally, I think that is an excellent thing to do.

I say this because I have been wondering about something. Since they learned that I sit on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, some organizations in my constituency have contacted me to ask why their allocated budget has already been reduced.

Have you already begun reviewing the programs and conducting an analysis?

Have you overhauled the program in recent years? Have you looked at the money paid to festivals, among other things?

Even though the Minister of Finance and National Revenue has asked for a further 15% reduction in spending, have you already been working on this for some time?

Isabelle Mondou: Madam Chair, that's a good question.

I'll say two things.

First of all—and this will answer Mr. Myles's question—we are always reviewing our programs. For example, there are new things. Earlier, my colleague reminded me that during the pandemic, we subsidized small venues that were closing down.

After that, we realized that this was really helping the sector, which is why we carried out a pilot project, FACTOR, in which money is paid out, in order to find out whether this or that could be a more effective avenue. So I would say that we are always trying to refine our work, and that we have learned things during and after the pandemic, to mention only that.

In addition—and this may also answer part of your question—with regard to efficiency measures, we are in the process of modernizing our programs within the department to make them more accessible to our organizations, but also to streamline and speed up the process for us.

One of the challenges for our organizations is that our application processes are cumbersome. They take time and require resources. So we are really making an effort in that regard right now. For example, the Canada Strong Pass program was proposed in a very simple way in just a few weeks. People only had to fill out a one-page form.

We are also trying to improve the customer experience for people who submit applications, so that they don't have to spend their time filling out really complex forms.

Bernard Généreux: You should give your tips to the Quebec government for SAAQelic.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Bernard Généreux: Let's assume that our budget is \$2 billion and that we want to reduce it by 15% over three years. If my calculations are correct, that would be about \$300 million less out of \$2 billion.

Ms. Côté, you do the math. I hope mine is correct.

I said \$2 billion, but it could have been another figure. I didn't check the data provided to see if it was accurate—

Isabelle Mondou: That's very good. It's \$1.9 billion.

Bernard Généreux: You see, it's not so bad after all.

So we're talking about a potential reduction of \$300 million over three years. That amount means you will inevitably make savings.

Earlier, the minister said that today, people watch everything on an iPad, they no longer watch television, and so on.

There are probably no representatives from Telefilm Canada or other film-related organizations in the room today. However, to return to the minister's remark, this would mean that there are artisans, artists or organizations that may have to start worrying and think that the use or consumption of their products is different today, which would result in a reduction in their potential federal budget. Have I understood correctly?

Isabelle Mondou: Thank you for your question.

The review of our audiovisual organizations mentioned by the minister was conducted as part of the study on broadcasting and telecommunications legislation, which resulted in the Yale Report. Some of you may remember it.

This study involved a fairly in-depth consultation process, which led to the modernization of broadcasting legislation, including a proposal to overhaul the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The third component was really a reorganization of our audiovisual sectors to reflect the new reality. For example, when someone produces a work, regardless of what it is, they may not even know whether it will take the form of a film, a series or a number of episodes, for example. They then have to knock on several doors.

The Yale report already recommended—

● (1825)

Bernard Généreux: When was this report released?

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Génereux, but your speaking time is up. I already let you go a little over time because I realized it was a very important response.

The next person to speak will be Ms. Royer, who will have five minutes.

[English]

Zoe Royer: Thank you so much. It's so great to see so many of you here.

Partnership with indigenous peoples is central to reconciliation. In Port Moody, we have the beautiful Burrard Inlet visionary, Coast Salish artist Tasha Faye Evans, who brought forward a project called "In the Presence of Ancestors". It features, over time, five house posts that will surround the Burrard Inlet, just off the Shoreline Trail. Tasha has been working in concert with other Coast Salish artists and the Port Moody Ecological Society.

Can you highlight how the Department of Canadian Heritage is supporting indigenous-led efforts to preserve and share languages, traditions and cultural heritage across Canada?

Isabelle Mondou: There are many programs. I will start with the one the minister referred to.

Since the adoption of the Indigenous Languages Act, we have a program. Under this program, we have really put the onus back on to first nations, Inuit and Métis to decide how they want that money to be spent. It's really now at the stage of their knowing better than we do, so we work with a committee, and they're the ones who make recommendations on the program. It's about preserving language. It's amazing. Some languages were almost disappearing, and some are coming back because of the efforts the communities are making to bring them back.

There is a cultural side. As you say, these things are very inter-linked. We see them separately; they see them as completely inter-linked.

For most of our programs—I will name the ones that the minister discussed—we have indigenous communities that apply. Whether it's for the arts, music or a museum, all of our programs are totally open to support. With music, for example, there are even envelopes specific to indigenous creators. The department has done a lot of work to make these programs as accessible as possible and to make sure that there are also envelopes for artists, musicians and all the talent in the indigenous community.

I also want to mention repatriation. It's important for indigenous communities to bring back or at least to decide what they want to do with objects that come from their communities, and the museum program also supports some of those efforts.

I will say that it's a multi-faceted approach. Obviously, we still have a lot of work to do, but I'm proud of the fact that we have developed quite a large tool kit for indigenous people.

Zoe Royer: I really appreciate that.

This project is very important to the community. There are eight nations whose lands Port Moody is on: the Kwikwetlem, Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish, Katzie, Kwantlen, Qayqayt and

Stó:lō peoples. The inlet is of cultural significance, so it's very important that we work in partnership.

I have a second question.

You're likely familiar with the iconic Science World in Vancouver, beautiful British Columbia. It is the second-most photographed building in North America, second only to the Statue of Liberty.

Science World has been making a lot of impressive progress under the green and inclusive community buildings program. They had an extensive roof repair. They actually had a leaking roof—that dome. They had new HVAC solar panels and insulation upgrades, reducing energy use by over 40% and cutting greenhouse gas emissions by more than 66 tonnes annually. However, the revitalization project does not cover the extraordinary geodesic dome theatre—their essential systems, such as sound, projection and seating—which will require an additional \$10 million to \$12 million.

Given the importance of Science World as both a cultural and an educational hub, could you speak to possible funding streams whereby major heritage and cultural facilities like this can access the funding that they need to complete the work?

Isabelle Mondou: There are two ways to do that.

We have a program on infrastructure. The minister mentioned a bit about the repair of equipment, but it also can be used for construction. It's a relatively small program for a whole country, so what we often do is work with our colleagues at the Department of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. We try to make sure that infrastructure and cultural organizations also apply to the bigger infrastructure programs, so that they can have access, sometimes, to a bit more money—as you mentioned, \$10 million or more. It's a combination, I would say, of the Department of Canadian Heritage for the ones that are more mid-sized, and, for the big ones, it could be the infrastructure department.

● (1830)

Zoe Royer: This is really—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Royer. You are out of time.

We are out of time for this committee.

I really want to thank you all for the number and the quality of our department witnesses today. We really appreciate your time and your insight.

[Translation]

Mr. Champoux, we don't really have time to discuss this, but I have spoken with the clerk. We will try to contact the chair of the CRTC again to request that she appear before the committee, as the committee really wants to see her next week.

Martin Champoux: If possible, I would like to receive an update as soon as our clerk has any news so that we know where we stand, as this requires some preparation on both sides.

This would be beneficial for everyone, as it would allow us to do our work properly, given that we will not be sitting for two days at the beginning of next week due to the long weekend.

The Chair: Absolutely. We will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

Mr. Généreux, you have the floor.

Bernard Généreux: I would like to point out to everyone that no one has eaten tonight. We have our committee meetings from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

I suggest that, when we are here until 6:30 p.m., we have cheese, grapes, crackers, in short, something. This will save us from having to prepare a full dinner that we will not eat. Personally, I am able to wait to have dinner until after the committee meeting.

The Chair: I realized that too, and I agree.

Everyone seems to agree on that.

My thanks to all of you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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