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Chair

Ms. Marlene Catterall

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• (0915)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.)): Even with a diminished quorum, I am going to call to order this meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on our study of the Canadian feature film industry.

I wish there were more of you here, because this is almost certainly our last meeting. We've been saying that for a while. I really did want to thank you all for your hard work. I think it's been a great committee. People really have a commitment to the issues we've been looking at and have really put their hearts and soul into it.

I hope you've gotten some enjoyment out of it as well. I know I have. It's been a great pleasure working with all of you, and I wanted that on the record before we begin with our witnesses.

[Translation]

Thank you very much to all of you for your good work. For me, this was an extraordinary experience. Thank you.

Mr. Bernier.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier (Director General, Film, Video and Sound Recording, Department of Canadian Heritage): Good morning.

[English]

The Chair: You know the work the committee's been doing. At the beginning we understood the department was also undertaking the five-year review of "From Script to Screen". We hoped our work would be complementary to yours, not duplicating it in any way, but felt that Parliament also had a role to play in how we moved forward with our support for Canadian feature film production and audience development.

We thought for our last meeting it would be a good idea to get an update from you on what has been happening and how you're approaching your review and make sure we're still on parallel complementary tracks.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before beginning, let me introduce my colleague Laura Ruzzier, who is the Director of Evaluation Services for the Department of Canadian Heritage.

I have a very brief presentation for you, which will give you the opportunity to put more questions and will allow us to exchange in a formal way, because all of this is being recorded.

To put things in context, the department launched an evaluation of its feature film policy which was announced in 2000 and which you are now familiar with. I must mention that I have read your interim report and it is a good report. Clearly, the committee has a good grasp of the objectives and issues behind this policy. Quite a few of the 43 questions that you put to industry in appendix B of this report are phrased in such a way that we would probably have chosen the same phrasing word for word. For the sake of complementarity, we will certainly be interested in seeing how the industry and Canadians answer the committee's questions.

The government's policy announced in 2000 was called "From Script to Screen." At the time, there was a commitment to review the performance of this policy before the end of the current fiscal year, which means 2005-06. The department carried out its commitment by making a summary and relatively technical evaluation of the policy.

[English]

An *évaluation sommative* is kind of the mother of all evaluation for policies or programs. So a summary evaluation was launched by the department under the supervision of our corporate services branch. The scope of the evaluation is guided by the Treasury Board's evaluation policy, which requires focus on three issues: relevance, success, and cost-effectiveness.

In terms of relevance, the theme is to look at whether the policy is consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities and see whether it addresses a current need. In terms of success, has the policy accomplished its objectives, and within budget? In terms of cost-effectiveness, are the most appropriate and efficient means being used to achieve the objectives? In the methodology we used, essentially the lines of evidence included review and analysis of program and policy documents, review and analysis of program and industry performance information, and in-depth interviews with about 50 key informants. A request for proposals was posted on MERX seeking contractor bids, and a contract was awarded in February 2005.

Regarding the status of the evaluation, the consultant presented preliminary findings in mid-May and a partial—I insist on this—first draft was received on May 27. The first complete draft is expected July 8 for validation, and a revised draft will be provided to the department about July 29. The report will be tabled, with a management response included, at the October 12 meeting of the department's audit and evaluation committee. It will then be made public and posted on the PCH website.

[Translation]

Now let me continue with the follow-up to this evaluation. Once the department has received the evaluation and once its publication has been authorized by the department's evaluation committee, we expect to use this document to prepare a consultation paper with which we can approach and consult the industry. This should be done around mid-October.

We also intend to organize one or more round tables in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal; we will see what the need is when the time comes. Round tables with industry representatives should be held toward mid-November, and we expect to submit recommendations to the minister by the end of December or beginning of January. This is our timeline for our evaluation.

That is basically what I wanted to share with you this morning. We could go into further detail, if you wish. I am ready to answer your questions.

● (0920)

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Schellenberger.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): I don't have a lot of questions. There's just one thing that has always bothered me since I became part of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, and that is how relevant we are. We have brought in an interim report, yes. Part of that interim report I can remember distinctly. We were in Vancouver on the Thursday and Friday asking questions about whether the CTF and Telefilm should be put together. Lo and behold, the next day there was an announcement made in Banff that these things.... So what were we doing? Were we spinning our wheels? This is something I wonder about.

Again, last year we brought in a report on copyright. One thing in that report was a request for a reply from the ministry by last November. Of course we went into an election last summer, so I guess everybody in the department must have been out campaigning or something, because there was no reply there.

One thing that was in the report that I know I stood up for was notice and take-down. There's no consultation, no dialogue back and forth from the ministry to this committee, but rather, lo and behold, it comes out notice-to-notice. Are we just the front people to go out and talk? We talk to a lot of witnesses. You've said you're going to have some round tables. We've spent a lot of money going and listening, and we feel that when our report comes in there might be some dialogue. It's one thing to put in a report and get an answer back. I thought that was the start of dialogue, but I guess maybe that's just how it works in the world I come from. It doesn't happen down here.

So this is my big question: how relevant is this committee?

The Chair: Gary, I would say that's a question for the minister, not for Monsieur Bernier. But let me rephrase the question to make it an appropriate question. He might want to comment on how he sees our work matching or meshing with the work the department's doing right now on the review.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: I don't mind if the question is changed so it's palatable, but my question is how relevant this committee is when it comes to some of these decisions.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I'll leave the relevance of the committee to the minister. All I can say is parliamentary committee reports are taken very seriously by departments. We took the Lincoln report and the second response in that report very seriously, and we're going to be taking the report on the review of the feature film industry or the feature film policy as seriously as the previous reports. We plan to have the government prepare a response within the established process.

In terms of complementarity of the two processes, we will be very interested in seeing what.... Sorry. As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, many of the 43 questions that are in your interim report are questions we would have been asking ourselves if we had only been alone on the ice. Those questions are the right questions to ask. We might have chosen different words, but the essence of the questions you're asking is the same as what the department would have put out there.

As I said, we're going to be consulting toward mid-October. Hopefully we're going to have the benefit of your work by then. You seem to have established September 13 or 15 for a reply on those questions. So your report is going to be integrated, without question, into the work we're doing.

● (0925)

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Will there be any dialogue back and forth between the ministry and this committee, or once our report goes in, it's just like we're sitting around the round table and ours is a document that's submitted much the same as the other 30, 40, or 50 stakeholders that you have said are very important to this? Will we just be one of those 50 stakeholders?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The big difference between a report from a parliamentary committee and a response to consultation documents from an individual or an association is that the government is bound to provide the committee—the House, in fact—with a response to your report. So this is how we're going to be handling this.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: What you're saying is that you look at the report and you send back that you think it's a good report, and that's it. We don't have any dialogue after that. You'll take out of that report what you think is right or what you think would be good. But without any dialogue, once we've sent in the report, there's no way of us changing your mind on anything else if there's nothing in that report you like.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: When we receive a report, we have 120 calendar days to prepare a government response. This is really fast-tracked. My understanding is that once you've tabled your report, the government responds within 120 days.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: That's it.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: And that's it.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: I've had enough.

The Chair: I want to comment on what Gary has just said, though. The fact that the bureaucracy and we, Parliament, are looking at the same issues from a slightly different perspective is an important new departure, because when we talk about the democratic deficit, one of the problems is that everybody in the world gets consulted except the elected representatives of the people you're consulting generally.

I know this is a political issue, so I won't ask you to respond, but I think one of the things we're hoping to do is break down some of that. Understand that we're all here for the same purpose. Our vehicle of connection obviously should be your minister, but I think Gary has raised the essence of the role of Parliament and the role of the public service and the ministry. In fact, we might want to look at whether we want to find a way of sitting down with the minister and her officials and discussing our report before they respond.

We've produced a report in less than 120 days with people who have all kinds of other responsibilities. I don't think 120 days to respond to the report is really fast-tracking it.

Anyway, we're at the nub of something here where if we can break some barriers down, we can see things working differently and better around here.

Monsieur Lemay.

• (0930)

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Bernier, I am trying to understand this.

I've been familiar with the administration of the Department of Canadian Heritage for the past 20 years. It has to do with sports. To be sure that things are still the same, let me ask you a few questions.

I gather that you have implemented a policy called "From Script to Screen". At the same time, you agreed to carry out an evaluation of this policy when the program winds up, which will be at the end of the 2005-06 fiscal year.

Is my understanding correct so far?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The evaluation will not be done at the end of the program, because the program will not wind up at the end of March.

Mr. Marc Lemay: You have just given me great reassurance. This is what I wanted to understand. So, this is a program of the department that can carry on, but during the mandate, it must be evaluated in order to...

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: You are right.

Mr. Marc Lemay: ...set it on the right path...

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: You are right.

Mr. Marc Lemay: ...if we note any deviation to the left or to the right...

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: ...or if the planning is flawed.

Mr. Marc Lemay: The three criteria you will use in this evaluation are relevance, success and efficiency.

Am I right?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Marc Lemay: This looks a lot like sport.

[English]

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: They're relevance, success, and cost-effectiveness.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Here is my question. If the program did not stand up to the three criteria of relevance, success and efficiency, what could we do? We are working on the future of the movie industry. We are a bit ahead of you, if I understand what you are doing. You are evaluating and studying how a film gets from script to screen. Thus, we will be doing something that will complement what you are already doing, if I understand.

Like Mr. Schellenberger, I believe that the committee should be among the 50 entities that will be consulted. If we do not get a copy of your evaluation report, how will we guide our work? Should I pass it on to you so that you can pass it on to the minister? We would like to be among the 50 consulted entities. We must avoid redundancy in our work. This is my first comment.

I have a second question for you. Could this incur delays for the 2005-06 budget for those who have applied for funds pursuant to the "Script to Screen" policy? Is this relevant, or irrelevant?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The policy will continue as long as it is not changed. The policy is still operational for those who have ideas for films in 2006-07 or 2007-08. As for improvements, a policy should always be adjusted to the left or to the right, and the adjustments will come once we finish the entire process. There will be no pause or down time in the implementation of the "Script to Screen" policy. Improving this policy can only be envisaged by using the committee's report, our evaluation as well as the consultations carried on by the department.

Mr. Marc Lemay: You mentioned an external consultant. Has he been appointed?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Who is it?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It is Groupe Nordicité.

Mr. Marc Lemay: And who is that?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Peter Lyman.

Mr. Marc Lemay: All right.

The evaluation criteria have been defined, and those are the people who will carry out the evaluation.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Marc Lemay: How much time do they have to produce their report?

Ms. Laura Ruzzier (Director, Evaluation Services, Corporate Review Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage): They have about three months.

• (0935)

Mr. Marc Lemay: Beginning with the month of May?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: They have about three months starting with February.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Do you mean February 2005?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Thus, they should have tabled it by now, unless my months are not the same as yours. But if my understanding is correct, it has not been done yet.

Ms. Laura Ruzzier: Yes, we have a draft.

[English]

We have a draft of the report, an incomplete draft, to date. We are expecting a revised draft for next week. So they have tabled a report with us in the department, not with the program, with the corporate review branch. Our responsibility is to ensure the completeness of the report, to ensure value for money, essentially, and to ensure that the standards of the Treasury Board are met in addressing the questions we have asked the consultant to explore.

So we have a draft of the report, a revised draft. The first complete draft will be available to us next week and it will be provided to the program for validation—a fact—with a final report coming on July 29.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: All right.

If I understand, the report will be tabled before cabinet, the minister or the senior officials of the department, by the end of July.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It will be tabled at the department.

Mr. Marc Lemay: When will it be published? As a matter of fact, I should first ask you whether it will be published.

[English]

Ms. Laura Ruzzier: Yes. The report will be tabled with the audit evaluation committee in September. This is due process in all departments, including our department at Canadian Heritage. The management response, an official response, will have been prepared by the program and it will be tabled, along with the report, for approval, and within 90 days the report will be posted to our website. It will be made public, made available to Treasury Board, consistent with internal policy.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Are the round tables you talked about just a possibility?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It is a possible project.

We will go by the evaluation, and, if need be, by your report. Now, it was announced that a report would be tabled around June 23rd. We understand the delays, we have them too. However, I have no control over the time when your report will be tabled.

Mr. Marc Lemay: I am interested in the round tables. We wanted to meet representatives like Ms. Robert, who could explain to us from A to Z and everything in between, all the phases one must go through to fund a film, be it a co-production or some other kind of film. We wanted to organize some kind of round table around this.

Are we thinking of the same thing?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: No. The round tables we thought of would bring together representatives of the various professional associations that you met. If some association decided to delegate

Denise Robert, it could do so. Basically, our objective would be to hold a round table around the evaluation, and determine our weaknesses in marketing, scripting etc. At this round table we would consider our proposals, the propositions of the committee, and ask the participants what they think of them.

Should we submit possibilities or should we listen to what they will have to say about these issues?

The round table concept allows us to bring together producers, distributors, broadcasters, theatre operators, creative artists, which is an advantage. It makes for a good exchange because of the different points of view. If a distributor says that he will not invest in marketing a film unless he has it in hand, the producer could answer that he should nonetheless participate earlier. There is an exchange, which is what round tables are about.

I have not been to all of your meetings, but these round tables will be multilateral and not bilateral.

● (0940)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): My questions may be along the same lines as those of Mr. Schellenberger. I realize, as the chair mentioned, that the questions may be more appropriate to the minister. However, I think there are some issues that maybe can be clarified.

While we've been going through our committee hearings and deliberations and have identified several issues and concerns, there have also been some changes—you could call them departmental changes as well—in that period of time. Unfortunately, we find out through the media or through witnesses when these changes take place. One of them has been the advisory committee. There was an advisory film committee that was abolished, and some of the witnesses raised concerns as to why we had in fact done that.

There's another issue that came forward not too long ago, but right now my mind fails me as to what the issue is.

So there's been a series of departmental.... I presume they were changes done by the department. Yet, as I said, we found out about these changes through the media, which is of some concern. Also, in some ways, it doesn't seem to complement what we're doing, and sometimes may be in conflict with what we're doing.

I would wonder why your department is looking at making such changes while we're going to this review.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: On the issue of the advisory group, first, it was a ministerial advisory group created in 2000-01 at the beginning of the roll-out of the policy. The mandate of that group was fairly precise; I have letters of mandate that were sent to the three co-chairs, and essentially it was to advise Telefilm with respect to the feature film fund, which Telefilm was in charge of administering.

Over the years the advisory group proved to be somehow dysfunctional. It was not providing the best results. People were appointed by the ministers, yet they were to provide advice to Telefilm, so there was a triangle there that was difficult to manage. The ministerial decision was to abolish the committee as it existed, with a clear understanding that Telefilm Canada would be improving its consultation processes and that Telefilm would be somehow recreating a group that reported not to the minister but to Telefilm. Consultation will still take place on the feature film fund, which Telefilm is in charge of administering, and the department will be consulting the industry as need be and as we've been doing for many years.

There's a tradition in the department to consult with this industry, and we're going to maintain that. The round tables I've just mentioned are one way of consulting the industry. It is less formal in terms of membership and appointments—and there were people resigning—so it's lighter to administer and it has proven efficient in the past.

When we developed this policy, we had created a kind of advisory group that reported to the Feature Film Advisory Committee. This was a temporary committee that provided a report to the department that helped us come up with “From Script to Screen”.

I don't want the committee to have the impression that we've stopped consulting or that the industry has been taken by surprise with this announcement. In terms of informing the committee, I take note of your comment that the communication on that could have been better.

• (0945)

Mr. Mario Silva: Thank you.

One of the issues that's been raised as well by several witnesses has been the fact that in the decision-making that takes place there aren't a lot of their peers, people who have the particular history and skills and are able to evaluate the different applications that are put forward. How do we go about making sure we can in fact have a system where there are going to be a lot more people who come from that industry, who are their peers, and who are able to evaluate and figure out whether they in fact qualify or not?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: This is a very good question, and you're right in saying that the process so far for choosing one project over another has not involved peer review. Telefilm makes those decisions. However, there is one program—and you talk about it in your report—which is the screenwriting program that has sort of a peer review evaluation.

In terms of entirely changing the process, I would defer that question to Telefilm, as they are responsible for operationalizing the policy and for the choice of investments. When the policy was announced in 2000, an envelope system was created whereby Telefilm would not be looking at each script that Denise Robert, for example, would want to produce. So there was more flexibility for the producer, and Telefilm was not commenting, not having a reading committee looking at the project. So they said, more or less, here's your envelope, do whatever you want with it; don't goof around with your decisions today if you want to have an envelope next year.

So there's a mix: in terms of the tax credit, it's an automatic program, no questions asked; in terms of labour expenditures, here's your tax credit.

Mr. Mario Silva: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Can your chair take a couple of minutes, Gary, or would you like to go first? You go first.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Yes.

The Chair: Then I'll only have to ask questions.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Okay.

My comment is just something that I would like written into the record. I think we've said some things here this morning, and we don't have a quorum here. That's fine. That's good. But I just want everyone to remember around here that there were one or two meetings called off, and there are more people here than there were then. It was an inquiry, and that's what we've done here this morning. I think we are a good working group. I love this committee, and we work well together. We have to remember that. But right here this morning we have a chair and three people, and we've carried on business. I just want that read into the record.

Madam Chair, I leave it up to you to finish things.

The Chair: I have a couple of specific questions. One of the things I always find interesting is that committees do these things on a shoestring, and departments do these things with quite a big bank account. So I'm wondering what the cost of your review is. Let me give you a couple of specific questions, and you may want to get back to us on them.

Who are the stakeholders you've been consulting? What are the questions? What are the terms of reference of the consultant?

Those are specific, but you've thrown a lot at us here in terms of what's happening next. Could you also give us, on paper, an outline of what you think the schedule is? Because as I hear it, this review isn't going to be complete before an election is called. There is great likelihood of your report actually getting presented just around the time the Gomery inquiry is going to report, and it seems to me that with all the resources of a department, this could and should be moving along a little more quickly. That's my response today.

The committee also may hold some round tables in the fall, based on what we get in from people over the summer. I think the department might want to sit in on those round tables, but, again, I don't want us simply doing something that you're going to be doing a few months later. How can we ensure that our work is in fact being of assistance to your work without duplicating it?

• (0950)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: We'll certainly share with you the specific information you've asked for.

We will also be conducting, over the next couple of weeks, a public opinion survey on Canadian feature films, and we'll share the results with you as well when it is completed.

We are also going to be conducting a gender-based analysis of the various positions in the feature film industry. We're just about to sign the contract for that work.

In terms of coordinating our initiatives in the department with the committee's initiatives, we could certainly undertake to talk more closely. Maybe we could have—I don't know if this is reasonable—weekly meetings or phone calls with the clerk so.... We could have updates weekly from now on until the election, or whenever, so we know what you're thinking, what you're doing, and you know what we're doing and what we're thinking, and wherever we can work together we'll work together.

We'll be pleased to participate at your round table, but you can see, there is a natural distance—

The Chair: I understand. We're maybe breaking new ground here.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes, but we're pleased to be your partners in that.

The Chair: I want to clarify something. When I first heard about the review—I can't remember, but I think you presented this to the committee earlier—it was supposed to be in two stages. One was that you were hoping to present some results in Banff. Was that the public opinion survey part of it, or what was that supposed to be? Then what was the second part? Is that the public opinion poll? I very clearly remember those two stages.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: What we had planned to have before Banff was this "mother of all evaluations". It's taking some time. There are natural delays that have been experienced over its life.

What we were supposed to provide before Banff is what we're going to have on July 29. The public opinion survey is complementary to this. We want to know what Canadians know and think about Canadian feature films. We had public opinion surveys when we built the policy in 2000, and we could maybe see some trends or how things have evolved in the perception of Canadians towards their cinematography.

• (0955)

The Chair: One thing we found a bit of a problem is not being able to find data on how Canadians see films. We know what the box office revenues are, and that tells the numbers approximately. Are you going to be looking at how many watch films on video, DVD, and pay-per-view channels?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: We could leave you with copies of the questions of the survey. In it, if I'm not mistaken, there is the question, where have you seen those films? Where do you consume your films?

You are right. I'm not familiar with the fishing or mining industries, but the statistics in this industry are a nightmare, and the difficulty is to base public policies on statistics that might not reflect the real reality. One statistic I find a little intriguing myself is the number of Canadian feature films that are produced every year. The profile in our data show that there are roughly 65 or 70 or 75 Canadian feature films produced every year. Where are they?

It has to do with the way this is tracked. A producer applies to CAVCO and identifies the genre of the film and says it is a feature film for theatrical release. We don't know if it has been released. We know in the universe of Telefilm that it's been released, but the whole universe is very difficult to track, and the performance of it is even more difficult.

The Chair: That leads me to my next question. You may not be able to answer it right now, but given that Ms. Oda isn't here, I will ask the question I know she would be asking.

You talk about the three factors you're using to evaluate. Maybe you can give us some answers on the relevance to whom and to what. I presume that these are part of your terms of reference. And what measurements are you using to evaluate success and to evaluate effectiveness, efficiency?

Ms. Laura Ruzzier: We will provide those details to you with our terms of reference and the accompanying documentation.

The Chair: Thank you.

Finally, Mr. Bernier, you referred to a report. Was that a report from the advisory council?

I think that's something that as a committee we might like to—

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: This report?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The short answer to your question is no. But the work of this advisory council led to the creation of the Canadian feature film advisory group.

I haven't read this in a while, but I think it might have been a recommendation of this report to oversee the operationalization of this new policy. People were very nervous about both sides: the injection of \$50 million of new money and a major shift in the way this policy had been delivered so far. Performance indicators, an objective, 5% of box office—this was fairly new, and there was a feeling that an advisory group on the guidelines of the Canada Feature Film Fund might be a good idea, and this is what Madam Copps created in 2000.

The Chair: Okay, thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Are there any more questions?

Mr. Lemay.

Mr. Marc Lemay: This is interesting, but I have a brief comment. If you want to bring so many experts together in an advisory committee, it will take you at least three months just to allow each member to adjust his agenda. This is impossible.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: This is exactly why I mentioned the fact that the committee had become rather dysfunctional.

Mr. Marc Lemay: This cannot possibly work.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Thank you for your comment.

Mr. Marc Lemay: This has been done in sports. There is no use in calling together experts from all over the place, they cannot adjust their schedules. That is why it does not work.

Let me speak about funds. The budgets for the “Script to Screen” policy were adopted, if I am not wrong, until 2005-06. Am I wrong?

• (1000)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The vast majority of the funds—I think that it amounts to around 85 or \$90 million—are part of the Telefilm Canada base A.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Till when is this funding guaranteed?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: This is permanent.

Mr. Marc Lemay: All right.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: This is why I told you that the policy would not be terminated. This is not like the Canadian Television Fund.

Mr. Marc Lemay: All right. The difference is that from “From Script to Screen” is a permanent policy.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes, but there is an exception, whereby the Canadian Television Fund is anchored to the Canada Feature Film Fund. A sum of \$15 million from the Canadian Television Fund feeds the \$100 million budget of the “Script to Screen” policy. Now, these \$15 million dollars depend on the decisions made with regard to the Canadian Television Fund. However, the minister announced in Banff that the funding of the Canadian Television Fund would be continued for another year. The objective is to make sure that the long-term funding of the fund will be processed within the framework of the 2006 fiscal year.

Mr. Marc Lemay: This is clear. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

Madam Bulte, did you have a good vote upstairs?

Hon. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Yes, on gun control. But they did have coffee up there.

The Chair: And we got it late.

Do you have any comments, Sam, or any questions? No?

Anything more from other members of the committee?

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Bernier.

[English]

I'm just going to ask, because our analyst feels that the regional advisory report might be very helpful to the committee, if you could provide us with at least one copy that we can photocopy. And if you've got a stack of them sitting somewhere, that will save us photocopying.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: No, no, it's okay, we have copies of it. In fact, it's on the website.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate your time this morning.

Now, committee members, do we have any other business?

Yes, Mr. Schellenberger?

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Madam Chair, what is the agenda for the next meeting?

The Chair: There isn't going to be a next meeting if I have anything to do with it. And I am sorry, I had hoped to maybe find some time and put together at least a tentative schedule for the fall, but we just haven't been able to do that.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Can I ask a question? Yesterday, when the chief government whip rose on a number of motions to allow committees to travel, there were quite a few committees that got the right to travel, and not only to travel but to travel abroad. Why were we cut out of that?

The Chair: I don't know. I didn't hear that.

• (1005)

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: It was every committee except ours. And I thought again, what does that say about the priorities of this committee? That was my concern.

The Chair: Sam, perhaps I can tell you what's been going on at liaison committee for a number of months now. Committees have had requests to travel. There hasn't been the budget to fund them. We did come in at the very end here. These committees have all had their requests in for some time. They had all been told by the budget committee to go back and cut their budgets because what they were asking for, in total, was over a million dollars more than was already there.

So these are requests that go back two, three, or four months that have just been approved because they've gone back, they've cut their budgets back, and they've brought it to within what the committee had available.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: When could we ask? The next quarter's at the end of June, right?

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: No, this goes until September or October, I think, or in there. So then it's the next quarter.

Mr. Marc Lemay: We're going to be in action.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: The big thing is, I have to say that I tried, but I knew I was—

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Gary, I'm sure you did. I can see that. That was not meant for you. I was just watching, and I thought, well, why is heritage always at the bottom of the priorities? That was my first reaction at that time. It didn't have anything to do with you.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Well, I knew we were sunk before I ever started.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: All right. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I adjourn this meeting.

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