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Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): I call this meeting to order. Just before we go to our witnesses, I'm going to talk a little about upcoming business.

First is on the proposed schedule for hearings for our court challenges program. The clerk has received requests from various people. It has kind of been decided that we'll do it on a panel basis. We propose that it be over three days, if we think we need three days. The first hour of the meeting would have three groups and the second hour of the meeting would have three groups. We'd do that two or three times to get through the witnesses.

The names of 32 people were put forward. The clerk and I have kind of decided that each person who sent in a list of names would be allowed to pick out three groups, and then we could do that.

At the same time, I've just been informed there has been a court challenge to the government's court challenge program. I don't know if it's just a civil suit. I would like a little longer to check the rules. If there is a court challenge on our court challenges issue, should we be debating that, or should we be doing that in this forum? I'll take your advice on that.

We're looking at three names for each person, but I'd like people to go back and research it. When we come to the next meeting we can debate whether it's the right thing for this committee to do, since there is a court challenge going on right now.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): I have two concerns here. I would like to find out about the challenge to the challenges. Perhaps we can get some information and meet.

We haven't, as a practice, used a subcommittee, but because there are so many witnesses, I suggest striking a subcommittee, with one member from each party, to look at it. My concern with three each is that some people might have put in twenty; I think I only put in three or four. I'm more interested in having a balance of voices, as opposed to a multiplicity of voices. I'm not very comfortable about us sitting around striking names on and off lists here in a public meeting, because I don't think it's fair to those groups. That's not what we should do.

If we are going to go this route, after we hear back about the court challenges overall, we could talk about it, strike a subcommittee, look at names, and decide whether two days or three days were needed. Then we could bring that back to the group, and if people in

the committee felt somebody had been left out, we could talk about adding at that point.

The Chair: Mr. Kotto.

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): I would just like to say I am in total agreement with Mr. Angus. That is what I wanted to share with you.

• (1540)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Abbott.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Because we have our witnesses here today, I'm sure we'll want to end this session very quickly. But I agree with Mr. Angus that going in camera, particularly for the selection process, is very wise.

Even if it is a civil case, I kind of question whether the committee.... I believe we have parliamentary privilege in committee—maybe the clerk can advise us on that—but totally apart from that, I'm not really sure whether it would add anything or have the probability of detracting from the civil case that may have been filed. I think we need to find that out first before we carry on.

The Chair: Could the clerk and the chair look into this, get any information on it to our members, and talk about it at the next meeting? At the beginning of the next meeting we'll make a decision about where we're going and whether we should strike a subcommittee to do that. It seems as if there's consensus for that.

That part of the business is closed.

Sorry to hold you up, gentlemen.

Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.): May I ask for clarification? Mr. Bélanger has put together some suggestions for witnesses. Pursuant to the first point you made, do you wish to have those submitted in writing now?

The Chair: They were in by Friday. We have Mr. Bélanger's list of seven here.

Mr. Alan Tonks: That's right.

The Chair: We have the lists from Mr. Abbott, Charlie Angus, Mauril Bélanger, Tina Keeper, Maka Kotto, and Francis Scarpalleggia.

Mr. Alan Tonks: I just wanted to make sure they had been received. Thank you.

The Chair: Welcome to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. This is meeting 18. Today we have witnesses from the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel, Garry Anderson, chief executive officer; Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society, David W. Johnson, president; and an individual, Ken Heard.

Welcome, gentlemen. How was your trip?

Mr. Anderson, are you going to lead off the presentation?

Mr. Garry Anderson (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Museum of Rail Travel): Yes, I will. We have some handouts that I would like to have distributed before I start. I've just been advised that they are only in English, but they're primarily pictures. May I have consent to pass them to people around the table?

The Chair: You may.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: On a point of order, I don't want to contradict the decision made, and I'm glad we'll be seeing this, but are witnesses made aware of the necessity to submit materials in both official languages? I wouldn't want other witnesses to bring forward representations they've worked on and find out at the last minute that they missed a key element like that. Are witnesses generally instructed to make submissions in time so we can have them translated?

• (1545)

The Chair: We'll make sure of that. It's always done.

Mr. Garry Anderson: I've prepared a long brief, and I've shortened that. I was told we could hand out visuals. The pictures virtually speak for themselves, and they don't need a lot of translation. It would have been good for me to have been aware that they should have been done that way, but it wasn't that clear.

Thank you members of the committee, and in particular Jim Abbott, for making it possible for me and my colleagues who represent railway heritage and have collections with national content to present to you.

Each of us has a different collection and different stories to tell. Some priorities are therefore different. However, we hope that our input will help establish a new, comprehensive Canadian museums policy that considers the unique challenges for museums—particularly railway museums—with large, fragile artifacts that are stored outdoors.

I have provided handouts that show some of the beautiful interiors of the railcars in Cranbrook and some of the preservation challenges facing them. You can refer to these in detail as I read. You may find the “before and after” photos of restoration particularly interesting.

Since it began in 1976, I have been the chief executive officer of Trains Deluxe, the trade name of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel in Cranbrook, British Columbia. I work with, and I am supported by, an elected board of twelve directors. We all work with the museum development committee of the City of Cranbrook. We also work closely with other associations, such as the British Columbia and Canadian Museums Associations and other related groups.

I would also highlight the role the Canadian Council For Railway Heritage has played over the past fifteen years in education about the special challenges facing this sector. This council has developed a draft evaluation mechanism for historic railway equipment that could be of use in the assessment process for railway heritage outside the federal system. Their brief is an important document in this process as it deals with the railway heritage sector in general, whereas my presentation is very specific.

We often describe Canada as a vast and diverse country, which can also describe the railway heritage of our country. There are many collections, telling many stories, from local to regional to national, and even international levels. It has always therefore surprised me that the 170-year-old railway story does not figure more prominently in the story of Canada. Perhaps the efforts and associated costs of preserving these huge artistic and/or industrial artifacts were beyond the ability of the existing museum community at a time when artifacts were usually small and placed in display cases inside buildings.

Other railway museums share common problems with us. I hope my presentation can shed light beyond our historical experience. However, our unique museum story is about deluxe hotels on wheels. This is a departure from the more usual technical and mechanical emphasis of most railway museums. It also presents unique challenges not usually encountered on the scale that face our museum. These challenges are illustrated on pages 1 to 4 of the visuals and include exceptionally fragile artifacts with national significance—stored outdoors—that are outside our national capital. On pages 5 to 11 there are some examples of the beautiful interiors of the cars that are at risk.

The railcars contain tens of thousands of square feet of extremely fragile, inlaid exotic wood panelling that creates substantial challenges to properly preserve through control of relative humidity, ultraviolet light, dust, and other airborne particles. There is only a thin wall of these original artifacts separating the interiors from the hot summer and cold winter exterior temperatures. Since they are artifacts, insulation cannot normally be added without substantially changing the artifacts themselves. These preservation challenges are further enhanced by the amount of fragile interior textiles, such as upholstery and carpets, and other items, such as leaded, stained, and bevelled glass, railway china, silverware, and glassware.

This type of collection also requires substantial security. Public access to the interiors of the cars can only be done with a museum guide. Due to the small spaces in some cars, there is a limit of ten people per guide, making visitor capacity and the manner in which tours must be done another challenge. The preservation challenges are serious and will continue to grow to become major setbacks if steps are not taken soon to help resolve them.

• (1550)

Resources at many levels are needed to address these challenges, from local to provincial to federal.

The following questions have been asked of me and have been elaborated on in the written brief supplied to you earlier within the ten-page limit. They are: one, national significance; two, acquisition costs; three, restoration costs and ongoing preservation; four, museum operating costs; five, cost recovery; and six, which is numbered eight in your brief, unfortunately, is the federal involvement expected in the preservation of the collections.

In this last section, there are some important quotes from Robert Turner, the now-retired curator of modern history at the Royal British Columbia Museum, from his 1992 report, "The Historical Significance of the Collections at Cranbrook". The study was commissioned by the Royal B.C. Museum and a copy has been provided with our written submission, for the record.

In summary, the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel believes that the current museums policy is well out of date and must be revised as soon as possible. One particular program of the old policy—the museum assistance program, or MAP—is mostly unsuitable to our type of museum and its railcar artifact collection. The current MAP emphasis on creating touring, temporary, historical exhibitions does little to help preserve our fragile permanent collections.

Other presenters may have outlined a range of serious museum concerns, but from our point of view, any new Canadian museums policy must put the preservation of collections as the top priority. Multi-year commitments to any program would be a big improvement over the current annual application process. Without greatly improved conservation and the efficiencies of a proper building, our nationally important collection will continue to deteriorate, considering the relatively small population base of Cranbrook, the support, where the museum is situated, how the museum is currently funded, and the expected increases in energy and related conservation costs. This large, outdoor-stored collection of rare and extremely fragile railcars of national significance is not sustainable.

Through a new Canadian museums policy that addresses the above concerns, the federal government can join with the Province of B.C., the City of Cranbrook, and a large support group of corporations, foundations, businesses, individuals, families, organizations, and the museum's own earned revenue to keep this national collection intact and properly preserved for the future.

Thank you, and we hope to participate in the ensuing process to create a new policy to better assist museums to better tell the story of Canada. This, in turn, will provide long-term benefits to the many Canadians and visitors to Canada who attend our museums.

Thank you very much.

Did you get the handouts?

The Chair: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Johnson, do you have a presentation also?

Mr. David W. Johnson (President, Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society): Yes, I do indeed.

Mr. Schellenberger, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for taking the time to closely examine the situation of museums in Canada today and to hopefully do something to improve it.

Thank you also for this opportunity to appear before you and to assist you in your deliberations.

You have heard a lot about the details of the state of railway museums in Canada through the presentations by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association and the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel. I will leave the basic description of the Revelstoke Railway Museum to our submission and to the images that I have now provided.

Pictures speak a thousand words, so there are about 150,000 words.

Suffice it to say, the Revelstoke Railway Museum is a small, first-rate museum located in Revelstoke, B.C., a city of just over 8,000 people on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, with a small six-month operation at Craigellachie, the location of the driving of the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the place where Canada became a de facto country, from sea to sea, on November 7, 1885. Between these two locations, we get to tell this story to about 45,000 people a year, and that has been consistent since the museum was established.

They wonder why we want to do this. First of all, it is because of the nature of the railways and the role they have played and continue to play in Canada.

Because of the nature of this country, Canada is world-class in three areas: extraction of raw materials; communications; and transportation.

As an example of this dominance, CN was named the number one railway in the world by *Trains* magazine.

Canada has a nationally funded aviation collection and museum, yet the museums that preserve and interpret Canadian railway history have had to be developed and funded by the enthusiasts, their communities, and non-profit societies. Canada should really have a world-class system of railway museums.

Railways are the reason Canada exists. The Revelstoke Railway Museum works hard to get this across to the visiting public, both at the museum and at Craigellachie.

In addition, the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway through B.C. prevented the southern portion of the province from becoming part of the United States.

The railways went on to become the largest single employer in Canada up until the 1950s.

As an aside, how many of you know how many provinces entered Confederation with a railway clause as their act of incorporation? Was it one, B.C.? Was it three, five, seven, nine, or all ten? Well, as a matter of fact, it was nine. Only Manitoba entered Confederation without a railway clause in its act of incorporation. It's an extremely important fact to remember.

Railways continue to be the lifeblood of this country. In 2005 they moved approximately 65% of the raw materials and merchandise of this country. Very few Canadians recognize this.

The total tonnage handled was the largest ever in Canadian history and formed one of the economic indicators of the strength of the Canadian economy. This is used by the Bank of Canada.

In addition, there were 63 million passengers on Canadian railways last year. The majority of them were commuters.

It is interesting to note that in fact the cities of Canada developed along street railway, tramway, and commuter rail lines. These routes were in fact largely abandoned in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, but they are now seen as the solution to congestion and pollution in urban and suburban areas of the country.

These railways continue to develop and improve their infrastructure and service to support Canadian commerce. Thus railways are expanding facilities, rights of way, and improving their efficiency.

Older technologies and equipment have been added to the museum's collection as they are retired; otherwise they will be lost forever and we will not be able to tell the complete story of Canadian railways.

I have a few comments on preservation, conservation, and interpretation.

Rolling stock for the collections are largely provided by the railways at little or no cost. If the collections aren't assembled as the artifacts become available, they are then lost forever. They are lost to the scrapper. This is not the situation for an art museum that misses an acquisition or a major work of art; it is still preserved somewhere.

• (1555)

The major artifacts are large, up to 100 feet long, and require significant buildings to be preserved properly. Professionally oriented museums have always striven for this, but they are expensive to build, expensive to operate, and need to expand to provide additional protection for their growing collections. Thus, there is a necessity and a major role for the federal government to support these institutions. Smaller artifacts and archival material require similar or better conditions to ensure their long-term survival. These artifacts are also donated by individuals as well as the railways.

Some railway museums, such as Exporail and Revelstoke Railway Museum, are preparing and hosting travelling exhibits. "Women Railroaders" and "Mail, Rail, and Retail: Connecting Canadians" are examples. This increases the exposure to the public of broader aspects of Canadian history and culture than could otherwise be.

The Revelstoke Railway Museum, Exporail, and the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel are all supported by their communities, and in turn, support their communities.

The Revelstoke Railway Museum has run Railway Days for a number of years, and I am pleased to say it's becoming a signature festival in Revelstoke. For it, the railway museum won the Business Excellence Award for 2006, on Saturday night, at the Chamber of Commerce dinner.

The presence of a railway museum in a community is a major factor in tourism. Forty-one percent of the visitors to Revelstoke visit

one or another of the museums. Half of them come to the railway museum.

Railway museums that are fulfilling their educational mandate are effective locations for the education of students on the topics of Canadian history, Canadian geography, and Canadian technological innovation. The Revelstoke Railway Museum's exhibitions that chronicle the completion of the CPR fit directly into both the elementary and secondary schools' curricula and are used extensively by teachers during school field trips and other learning opportunities.

I'd like to conclude by looking at a few recommendations we would like to make to the committee.

First, we feel that the Government of Canada should substantially increase the funding for upgrading and expanding railway museum facilities that house nationally significant artifacts.

Second, the Government of Canada should provide for the preservation and conservation of railway artifacts of national significance.

Third, we recommend that the Government of Canada provide funds for increasing the capacity of museums to achieve financial stability through funding development officers or fundraisers.

Fourth, such funding should be made available over multiple years to ensure program success.

Our fifth recommendation is that the Government of Canada consider indemnifying artifacts and collections of national significance, as well as directors' liability insurance, to allow the funds presently spent on these items to be redirected to preservation activities.

Sixth, we recommend that the Government of Canada create an easier mechanism of recognizing the value of donated artifacts and property and permit the inclusion of services involved in preparation and delivery of such artifacts in the tax receipt.

Seventh, as much of the expertise in railway and other technology museums lies with volunteers, we recommend that the Government of Canada consider the recognition of volunteer contributions through funding equivalent time at some fixed rate.

Our eighth recommendation is that the Government of Canada consider the possibility of entering into public-private partnerships with railway museums to achieve specific program goals.

Ninth, we recommend that the Government of Canada act expeditiously to provide the funds required to ensure the long-term survival of national historic railway-related artifacts located outside of the national museums and to support public access to these artifacts.

Mr. Chairman, that's my presentation. I'll be happy to answer questions after our third speaker.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Heard.

Mr. Ken Heard (As an Individual): Like the others, I certainly appreciate the opportunity of being here. I might remark that this is the first time I've addressed a parliamentary committee, other than as a public servant.

I'll provide a little background about myself. Mr. Johnson referred to volunteers. My involvement with museums in general and railway museums in particular began when I was a teenager in Montreal fifty years ago, at what has since become Exporail, the Canadian Railway Museum.

I joined the public service in June 1962 and retired in February 1994, but my professional involvement in museums began in 1970, when I became part of the arts and culture branch of the Department of the Secretary of State, and in 1970 and 1971, I was one of the four people who put together the original national museum policy, under the direction of André Fortier, who at that time was assistant under secretary of state.

Then, finally, from March 1976 till my retirement, I was employed by the National Museums of Canada in a senior staff position, undertaking a wide variety of assignments regarding such things as friends organizations, volunteers, tax issues, copyright funding, governance, and many others.

I submitted a brief to the committee on October 1.

[Translation]

I understand there is a French version of this brief and it has been circulated. Fine.

[English]

I'd like to refer briefly to two points I made in that particular brief, and that is all. They are two that have bothered me for years. One is the lack of good statistical analysis of museums, obviously to serve as a basis for policy development and application of any policy, particularly with regard to funding from the federal level. The second point is how best to administer any enhanced federal financial assistance and other assistance to museums, if it ever happens in time.

On the first point, since the mid-1980s Statistics Canada, every two years, has been collecting information about heritage institutions: financing, volunteers, employment, visits, and so on and so forth. Up until the time of the 1992-93 collection, these results had been published by Statistics Canada in paper form, and the breakdowns had been done in several different ways, and included one by what I call museum sector. They're listed on the last page of my brief. There are eleven altogether, running from art, human history, multidisciplinary, and so on, including transport. Since then, they have published only aggregate figures for the entire heritage institution community, broken down financially but not by museum sector. Statistics Canada will furnish, of course, other analyses and other breakdowns for a price now, because they're on a partial cost-recovery basis.

In the exercise that the Department of Canadian Heritage did in 2005, leading up to the possibility of a new museum policy, they did finance from Statistics Canada an analysis broken down by budget size: museums with budgets under \$100,000; between \$100,000 and \$1 million; and above \$1 million. What they specifically were

looking for was what had happened to attendance figures. In the ten-year period from 1991 to 2002-03, the aggregate attendance at museums with annual budgets larger than \$1 million fell by 40%. Museums with budgets under \$100,000 largely held their own, with a drop of only 8%. For museums in this range of between \$100,000 and \$1 million, the fall was 19%. So the obvious question is, "Why? Why did this happen?" The answer is that we don't know all that much about it.

However, anecdotal evidence does suggest that for attendance drops, if indeed there have been any, there is some variation by museum sector. But at the moment, we don't have the information to tell us this or not to tell us this. Certainly I would like to know. It was something that, if I were administering a grants program, I would want to know as well.

I took the last year for which some sector numbers were available—I'm already over five minutes—which was 1992-93. In that particular year, taking an average for the entire country, 80% of museum revenues were unearned; i.e., they came from one or another level of government, donations, and so on. However, for transport museums in that year, only 52% of the income of those museums was unearned. And I think this phenomenon was mentioned by Steve Cheasley when the CRHA appeared here.

• (1605)

Another interesting note here is that when you look at unearned income per visit for art museums in this particular year, 1992-93, it was \$23.62, while for transport museums it was \$4.70. Now these numbers, especially since they're fifteen-plus years old, raise far more questions than they answer. But these are the kinds of things I would like know about, especially now since after retirement I was given a post-retirement honorary position as a research associate at the museum studies program at the University of Toronto. What have the trends been since then, and just where is the museum community going?

So one of the things I've recommended is that the Department of Canadian Heritage sponsor the analysis by Statistics Canada to try to give some insight into where different parts of the museum community are going.

Since I'm already up to seven minutes, what I'm going to do is cut short the second one to say that in my own experience, if there's going to be a major increase and upgrade in federal financial assistance to museums, it should be administered by an arm's-length organization. Interestingly enough, in 1987, when the National Museums of Canada was being dismembered, the predecessor of this committee recommended that the museum assistance program be administered by an arm's-length agency.

Thank you.

• (1610)

The Chair: Great. Thank you very much.

Who would like the first question?

Mr. Scarpaleggia.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Thank you all for being here today.

Quite frankly, I find it a national shame that we don't have a national rail museum in Canada, especially given the fundamental importance of the railway in creating Canada in the first place.

Mr. Johnson, I thought your quiz was very apropos. I didn't know that nine provinces had a railway clause—all provinces except Manitoba.

I think it's also a national shame that part of our heritage is rotting away—how we shall I say—under the elements.

First, regarding this point about the museum assistance program, Mr. Heard, it seems to me that railway museums in Canada should be outside of the scope of MAP in a way, because the National Art Gallery is outside of the scope of MAP, as far as I understand, and so is the Canadian Aviation Museum.

In some ways, you're being too modest in your demands. You shouldn't be saying, oh, please, give us a few hundreds of thousands of dollars here and there every now and then through MAP. I think we should have some dedicated funding for a national railway museum infrastructure in Canada.

But going back to MAP, Mr. Heard, you mentioned that you think funding should be administered by an arm's-length body like the Canada Council, which is a point Mr. Abbott more or less raised in debate in the House earlier this week, although he said his idea was more about items and gifts donated by Canadians to museums. Why do you think we need an arm's-length body like the Canada Council?

I understand why the Canada Council has to be at arm's length; it's the same reason the CBC has to be at arm's length. These fields of art are often dealing with cutting-edge ideas that can be controversial and challenge political orthodoxies, and we don't want the government meddling and influencing their decisions one way or another. But when we talk about rail museums, we're not talking about the most radical form of cultural expression. We're talking about managing—and I don't mean this in an inelegant way—a park of heritage assets. So why do you think we need an independent body to make those decisions?

Mr. Ken Heard: When I made that comment, I wasn't specifically referring to railway museums. The reason I think—I'm not alone on this—museums should have the same kind of arm's-length relationship that the visual arts and the performing arts have is that museums can be very controversial. Art galleries and fine art museums have frequently been controversial with respect to some of their purchases.

Some of the things a natural science museum could do on climate change might not necessarily please the government of the day. There's another issue. Even for transport museums, and railway museums in particular, given the fact that the world is running out of gas, there's a free-choice educational role there. Railway museums could say, basically, that it is not going to be possible to drive cars to do everything by way of transport forever. It's for the same reason; it's to protect them from that. And that's my main reason for doing that.

There's also another one in that the way Canadian Heritage is presently organized, the actual grant analysis is done at the regional level by regional grants officers who are doing it for a whole plethora of grant programs run by Canadian Heritage, and they don't

have the same sort of hands-on feel for any particular one of them, because they just don't have time to do that.

Certainly one of the things that could be said for the National Museums of Canada before it was restructured, despite all the perceived imperfections of that organization, was that at least the board started its approach to assistance to the other museums in the country, besides the four nationals, by defining their needs, rather than the program needs of a government department. And that's what the Canada Council does. Certainly, my own experience is that that's quite important.

• (1615)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Thank you, Mr. Heard.

That's it for me at the moment.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Kotto.

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like you to thank you for coming here this afternoon. In order to add to our record, I will ask you a few quick questions, because we do not have much time.

Mr. Heard, we have gone through your brief, and we found it quite relevant. It contains excellent suggestions.

When you talk about putting the MAP under an arm's length agency, does that exclude the risk that this agency might lose its funding some day, when governments change, just like it happened to Telefilm Canada and the Canada Council, for example.

Mr. Ken Heard: It could always happen. Decisions concerning the allocation of government funds to various agencies belong to Parliament and, by extension, to the government. There is always a risk, but are there other possibilities or—

Mr. Maka Kotto: Fine. My second question is for Mr. Anderson and Mr. Johnson.

You said the MAP is ill-suited to the kind of museum you manage. In that case, what other programs did you try to use up to date? Did you get any adequate results?

[English]

Mr. Garry Anderson: The MAP program is inappropriate because of the sense of scale. The amount of the resources needed for something of the size we're dealing with normally isn't associated with most museums. Therefore, there has to be some new recognition of the challenges facing these very large outdoor historic artifact museums.

I haven't come across any programs yet that deal with this in a really meaningful way. The problem I think is that railway museums, nautical museums, aeronautical museums perhaps too, have never really made their presence known or their special reasons known to the general museum community. And that's changing. We are starting to become better understood, say, within the provincial and federal Canadian museums associations. That will have a bearing I think on how new programs are done.

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto: Do you get any support at the municipal and provincial levels?

[English]

Mr. Garry Anderson: Yes, we have municipal support for operations and we have provincial support. About 15% provincial, 30% municipal....

• (1620)

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto: With which level of government do you feel you get along better? Which level of government does help you most in your museum experience?

[English]

Mr. Garry Anderson: Well, the municipal government, obviously at this point in time, because we are located in Cranbrook...even though we tell a national story for the most part. We do get a fair amount of support, but it's a city of 20,000 people. The province would give more if there were programs for that, but again, it's a question of scale.

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto: Fine. My main question is on proximity, and it does tie in with your suggestion.

Do you not think we need to explore the possibility to hand the supervision of culture and particularly the museums to provincial governments? They are closer to your communities and are more in touch with your day to day situation. Ottawa is far away and did not do much for museums for the last 25 years.

[English]

Mr. Garry Anderson: We're not asking the federal government to assume ownership or do everything; we're asking to be a partner with the other levels, because we have many stories. We tell partly a local story, partly a provincial story, but most of it is a national story of the great national travel patterns in these trains that were designed to run across the country. So I would have to say no, there is room for federal development.

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto: Fine. I would like to hear Mr. Heard's comments on this.

Mr. Ken Heard: I wrote just about the same thing in my brief. Financing should be on a shared basis. That is generally the case in visual arts and performing arts throughout Canada. We recommend the same thing for museums.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Fine.

Like my colleague Mr. Abbott suggested, would it not be more practical to have the provinces take care of their own museums? Ottawa could transfer its jurisdictions with, I might add, the budgets that go with them. That is the question.

For you, would it not be better than the present structure, which has been problematic for 25 years?

Mr. Ken Heard: The answer to that question might be found in the reasons why the federal government did not do much for museums during that period of time. We can always take the case of

performing arts, where many innovations and performances have gone a bit over the edge.

If, some way or other, a province does not support a given performance or event, and a government of another stripe at another level still believes it is important to promote it, it could always be done.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Fine. Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Heard, I'm very interested in your recommendation about needing an arm's-length agency. One of the issues that has developed over the cuts to the MAP program is that many people have been speaking about major problems we seem to be seeing in terms of the inflexibility of the bureaucracy at Canadian Heritage in terms of meeting the needs of museums, the fact that it seems, on average, that about 25% of that budget was being rolled back into Treasury and not put into programs.

I'm looking to see from you how you would see an arm's-length agency set up. Would it be similar to the Canada Council? Would it have peer juries? And from your experience, in terms of money that's being spent overseeing the project in Ottawa right now, would there be greater money available, then, to actually put into the field?

Mr. Ken Heard: It is interesting in this connection. Certainly in 1987, when this whole issue came up with the restructuring of the National Museums of Canada, the issue came up as to whether or not it would be better as an arm's-length agency or in the hands of a government department under the control of a minister. At that time, the Canadian Museums Association certainly supported putting it under the control of a government department, because they felt that was the only way they were going to get the money they would like to get. In the past 25 years, exactly the opposite has happened. Except for the dip or the cuts that took place in the middle nineties, the budget of the Canada Council has been increased considerably, while the budget for the museums has seen exactly the opposite.

This also speaks to Mr. Kotto's question. When it comes to giving the money, if you have a strong board like the one the Canada Council had, with people like Mavor Moore and Maureen Forrester chairing it, people who spoke up for the arts, they were in effect the advocates for the arts at the federal level. We don't have that for museums. We had it to some degree when the National Museums of Canada still existed. So going on the historical evidence, that's one of the reasons why I think that should happen.

The Canada Council is a very good model. From my own experience in government, it's one of the most forthright institutions in government in getting the information on its website. All the members of the peer group juries are there, as are the grants given, and so on and so forth. There is all sorts of statistical information. It's all there. They have a very good reputation. They can move fast. They're in a better position....

One of the things about grants to any kind of a cultural institution is that there is always some kind of a risk. If a theatre company is putting on a season of plays and one of them bombs, they may lose their shirt on that one, but there is nothing you can do about that. But the money wasn't misspent. Rather, they took a risk that didn't work. Certainly in the arts, in my estimation, people need to have the right to make the odd mistake.

There is the insulation of the arm's-length agency. It's not the minister who makes the decision to give a certain amount of money to a certain organization to do a certain thing. It is this council. It's the political master's job to find out globally what money should be given to what agency, but when it comes to grants, I fervently believe it's up to the arts organizations and the museums to decide who gets how much, in accordance with the needs of the field, with what museums need, first of all.

For valid reasons, with things like Young Canada Works and the student employment grant programs and so on—that's the one you were referring to—about one-quarter of it lapsed because of the administrative inertia in getting the—

• (1625)

Mr. Charlie Angus: No, I was talking about MAP.

Mr. Ken Heard: What has happened to MAP?

Mr. Charlie Angus: It was in MAP that we've had millions going back every year.

Mr. Ken Heard: Millions?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes.

Mr. Ken Heard: Well, that I wasn't aware of.

Mr. Charlie Angus: What I'm hearing from museums is that there are incredible time delays between the time they finally get the programming dollars agreed to and signed off and when they finally see it. By then, most of the projects are done and they've run out of time. There seem to be major delays within the Department of Heritage in delivering dollars.

If a model like the Canada Council existed when the budget rolled over and the allotment was given and then the juried programs went out, people would have some sense of when and how to apply for the money, and flexibility in making sure the money actually got out there. That doesn't seem to exist within Heritage now.

Mr. Ken Heard: One of the problems with a government department, of course, is that any funds unspent at the end of the year lapse. That's not the case with an organization like the Canada Council. They have that flexibility if there is some delay. They can accommodate it.

For one thing, they like to rotate the program officers in the Canada Council among the field. The theatre officers have some theatre experience, and so on. They're much more closely aware of what goes on, how a theatre works, and what the problems are, like cashflow problems, for instance.

And the museums have had difficulty with this issue, certainly in Young Canada Works. These things are for summer students. If the museums don't get the grants until the end of July, and if they don't have the cash resources to pay the students, on the assumption that

they'll get the grant—which is not guaranteed—most of them just don't do it. They wait.

• (1630)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Johnson wanted to intervene.

Mr. David W. Johnson: Mr. Chairman, on this issue, there are other funding agencies or other ways of funding that might also be considered. For instance, the government established the green municipal funds and gave the capital grant, in very large amount—a total of \$550 million—to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. They very effectively administer this by establishing the criteria, by setting up the juries, by evaluating the submissions, by awarding the money and monitoring it, and by then receiving and evaluating the reports. So there is another way of possibly doing it.

Another one might be to look at the Canada Fund for Innovation, which funds major capital expenses at universities and research institutes across the country. We should really be open in the approach taken, but at arm's length. Either that way or looking at public-private partnerships with the non-profit organizations involved, either directly with the railway museums or with museum associations, might be another way of going.

So there are a number of options, and there are a whole bunch of other questions that you people have, so I suggest that we move on.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Fast.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to return the discussion to railroad museums.

I was intrigued a little bit by a comment made by Mr. Scarpaleggia earlier. He suggested it is a national shame that we don't have a national railroad museum, and also a shame that there is rolling stock that's deteriorating. I would gently chide the member by reminding him that for the last thirteen years, he and his government had an opportunity to address that situation. Very little of significance was actually done.

With respect to a national railroad museum, I'd like to direct a question to both Mr. Anderson and Mr. Johnson.

Are each one of your particular societies a member of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association? Are you part of that organization?

Mr. David W. Johnson: The Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society, through the Selkirk division of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association, is a member. In fact, we lease one of our major exhibits through the CRHA, through the division, yes.

Mr. Garry Anderson: We are a member of the Canadian Council for Railway Heritage. Because we don't lease equipment, the relationship with the Canadian Railway Historical Association is different. Therefore, there is that aspect of the CRHA—of leasing equipment—that makes these agreements necessary.

Mr. Ed Fast: The CRHA appeared before us recently and suggested what you're suggesting: that there be some sort of national recognition. In fact, they suggested that their particular facility, which I believe was Exporail, should be declared a national museum, as are a number of others here in Ottawa, for example. Of course, their funding requests were significant. They were talking about \$4 million, when their current total budget is less than \$1 million.

I'd be interested to hear your comments on, first of all, whether you support their request to become the national railroad museum. Secondly, are you suggesting that railroad museums across Canada should receive not only some level of capital funding but also operational funding?

Mr. Garry Anderson: I'll take that first.

There has been a lot of discussion about a national railway museum. Many organizations such as ours have significant parts of our collection that tell a national story, and we would want to be part of what you might call a satellite of these important collections. Perhaps a major facility like Exporail could be designated the national centre for this collection, with a satellite of some other important collections linked to it.

I think the federal government has a very important role in providing part of the capital assistance for improvements to museums—not necessarily new museums but certainly improvements to those collections that tell a national story—while working with provincial and federal agencies, yes.

The operational aspect is a much more difficult question. When you break operations down into conservation, which is a particular part of a museum's operations, that is over and above what most people ever have to do, because they're conserving artifacts that return to the earth if they're not looked after. Therefore, the environmental controls, the relative humidity, and security are all extraordinary costs that we put in our budget as conservation costs, which are different from operations and different from capital.

• (1635)

Mr. Ed Fast: Mr. Johnson, go ahead, please.

Mr. David W. Johnson: Thank you.

I think you have to understand—and I'm sure you heard on the 6th of October when Exporail was here—that the CRHA was around at the time the railways were going through major changes, and they were able to assemble what was truly an outstanding collection of representative railway and tramway rolling stock, and they have continued to do so. They have a large proportion of significant railway artifacts in their collection. They were able to pick and choose, literally, which class of steam locomotive they wanted to preserve.

They certainly have a significant portion of any national collection. They are also willing and able, and have demonstrated this, to disperse this collection to a certain extent across the country—they have pieces from Salem and Hillsborough Railroad in New Brunswick through to Prince George and Revelstoke in B.C.—to somewhere they can be assured that the artifacts are going to be properly cared for and preserved in conditions that are as good as or better than those in which they would have been able to look after them themselves. We have a location that happened, by circum-

stance, to have a wide-ranging collection assembled at the time these were becoming available.

Other institutions across the country have done an excellent job in assembling specific elements of the national railway historical collection, to tell the stories in their particular locales. Therefore, I think the federal government has a role to play both in supporting the local or regional locations where the national story is being told in railway museums and in supporting Exporail.

As far as funding goes, I would say that, yes, you could support both very easily. I believe you heard something in the range of \$75 million, coming from the Canadian Museums Association, as a starting point for appropriate funding by the federal government for the museums in Canada. If 5% of that went to the railway museums, I think you would be making a significant contribution, on an annual basis, to improving and preserving railway heritage in Canada. We might be able to get some of the collections properly housed and properly displayed and properly interpreted for the public.

Mr. Ed Fast: Has your organization ever received MAP funding?

Mr. David W. Johnson: No, we haven't received that kind of funding specifically. We have received civic funding and funding through some federal grant programs for specific projects, which were generally youth employment programs and things like this.

Revelstoke is rather unique in the railway museum field I think in that much of our revenue is self-generated. We run excellent gift shops in both Revelstoke and at Craigellachie, which, significantly, last year produced something like \$80,000 of our net operating funds from the gift shops. We receive gate receipts and grants like that. That's how we survive. However, doing that means we do not have the resources we should to put into the preservation and conservation of the collection. We're more interested in the public program inside.

Mr. Ed Fast: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Scarpaleggia, go ahead, please.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'll give my time over to my colleagues.

I just want to respond, very briefly, though, to the point Mr. Fast made, by saying that my comment at the beginning, that it's a national shame that we don't have a national rail museum in Canada, was a totally non-partisan comment. This is a long-standing problem. If there's blame, it can be spread across many governments of many different stripes. I just think that now we have the opportunity to do something about it. If the Conservative government wants to do something about it, then more power to it on this scale. It was a completely non-partisan comment.

• (1640)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Thank you. I want to thank our guests today. Thank you for coming and sharing that.

I come from the opposite end of the country, where we have a lovely railway museum, in St. John's, Newfoundland. We don't have a railway any more, but we certainly do have a rich culture of it. It goes back to the stories of the Newfie Bullet, which actually existed. It was a very slow train; that's why they called it the Newfie Bullet. That's true. I'm sure you've heard of it.

In our communities across the province, we have a lot of railway cars, whether they are luxury cars or transport cars or snowplows, and they exist here, there, and everywhere, and there seems to be no organization to them. They seem to be madly off in all directions, that sort of thing.

In your experience with this stuff, what is out there that we haven't restored yet at this point? Maybe you can translate this into percentage terms. We've got a general idea of what has been done. I'm not asking for specific numbers, but it would be great if you had them.

Mr. Garry Anderson: To give you an example of how one-sided it was becoming, let me give you a little study I did about fifteen years ago. I'll go on to say what the Canadian Council for Railway Heritage is trying to do about this.

In 1990 or 1991, 52% of everything preserved was the cabooses, and there was a very high percentage of locomotives. If aliens landed on earth and we were all taken out, they would look at what we were preserving in railway museums and think there were only locomotives and cabooses, nothing in between.

That was a pretty important note to make. The Canadian Council took it up and said, we've got to better define our story of what the railways have done in the country. So they are looking at ways to urge various groups, museums, to look at their collections policies to make sure they don't duplicate each other all the time and that they have a distinct story to tell. It has rationalized some collections, not all, giving them a better point of view on what to concentrate on, so you don't find the same story every sixty miles or five hundred kilometres. That's starting to happen.

Mr. David W. Johnson: I would just like to reinforce that. When you're looking at the story equipment is telling, when you're looking at the reasons for preserving it, the cabooses preserved in Sicamous or the steam locomotive preserved in the park in Halifax may or may not be part of the national story, and that has to be determined. Looking at the reasons for the preservation, the relationship to its surroundings, and the technological innovations involved in that piece help tell a story, and when this analysis is done you will find a significant number of the individual artifacts tell a local or a regional story.

When you look at larger collections, you will find elements within those. In some cases, a significant percentage of the collections tell a national story or a very large regional interprovincial story, and the federal government has a role to play in supporting these.

I have no objection to cabooses in parks or snowplows in parks because they help relate to the local history, and the local community should be willing to support and maintain this equipment.

Mr. Scott Simms: One of the stories to be told is that it was a great uniting factor, at least for our province at the time. This dates before we were in Confederation and before we had things like the CBC, that cross-culture of ideas. We had a train that carried whoever wanted to go to St. John's from anywhere on the island, and the camaraderie that was created and the connections created because of that is the story.... So I like your analogy of the alien who finds a caboose and a locomotive and yet not much in between.

Let me relate it now to government funding. How short are we when it comes to funding the restoration of these cars?

• (1645)

Mr. Garry Anderson: The Canadian Museum of Rail Travel has used job creation programs because of the scale of the....

Mr. Scott Simms: Sorry, but I don't have much time. What I'm getting at is that in our province, and I'm sure in many others, these are one-off contributions similar to job creation projects, economic development that gets one infusion of cash, but never gets that year-over-year contribution. Is that in essence what we need more of—core funding?

Mr. Garry Anderson: Those programs are not made for museum restoration. You use unemployed people whom you train. They do the job under supervision. In eight months they're no longer eligible; a new group comes in.

We're constantly training people for something they won't continue. It's very hard on museums to take unskilled people who don't really know what they're supposed to do. That's been a major problem.

We've gained, but we've had a lot of work to do that.

Mr. Scott Simms: That's a very good point. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Malo.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Welcome to our guests. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Chair, comments by Mr. Johnson and Mr. Anderson are in full agreement with those made by people from the Musée ferroviaire de Delson/Saint-Constant.

The need to get funds to be able to conserve these large artifacts has been confirmed in their comments.

I thank our guests today for confirming these main elements of our analysis of the policy on museums.

They dealt earlier more specifically on their funding needs. But I think if we can agree on the vision we want to present to museums, or our vision of a policy on museums, the discussion should not continue here, but with the finance minister or the finance standing committee. They are the ones who will have to provide the funds to implement this vision or policy on museums. Obviously, this committee should provide this policy, but the Canadian heritage minister will have to promote it.

I would like our witnesses to comment, if they care to. I could even let Mr. Heard take the floor, since he did not have enough time to speak about all he wanted to deal with today.

[English]

Mr. David W. Johnson: Mr. Malo, in terms of having the debate at the Treasury Board, I'm sure that has to come. From your point of view, I'm sure the committee, if it chooses to do so, will recommend to Treasury Board that additional funding is needed.

There are specific steps that you could push the Treasury Board towards, for instance, to help with this funding and these decisions. Some of them were included in the recommendations in my report.

For instance, curators can currently identify artifacts and cover the rationale for tax receipts up to \$1,000. This hasn't been adjusted in a significant number of years, and inflation alone might take that value to \$10,000. Institutions need to be relieved of the responsibility of having to get third-party arm's-length appraisals for a significant number of artifacts that are donated.

That's one concrete way you could work with the Treasury Board to make a change to allow this to happen and to make things easier.

Similarly, I mentioned that it would be helpful to have the preparation and movement of the artifacts to the railway museums recognized within that tax receipt. I think this would be very helpful for all of the institutions. I think it could be expanded to other museums as well.

For instance, I think proof of fair market value for donated artifacts could be based on evidence that is even supplied by the railway companies. In our case, we're getting a donation of a particular locomotive, and its class happens to be an SD40. The railways sold hundreds of these in the recent past. Why wouldn't proof of value of sale be sufficient to justify that, rather than the institutions having to bring in a person to do an arm's-length appraisal?

There are ways to help work with the Treasury Board. Some recommendations for funding have already gone to Treasury Board, through the pan-Canadian funding practice in communities, from the Canadian Council on Social Development. Many recommendations in this report would correspond with the kinds of things that we're saying would make things better.

Are there any others?

• (1650)

Mr. Ken Heard: I don't think I have too much to add to that.

In connection with fair market value and evaluations, one of the difficulties that not only railway museums but technology museums in general have had is that the Canadian Cultural Property Secretariat and the Cultural Property Export Review Board don't have expertise in technology.

That's another one of the recommendations in my brief. I think that particular problem needs to be rectified.

If a streetcar is in good condition, its value could approach \$1 million. We're now talking about artifacts, technological artifacts, that are at least fifty years old. It's not only works of art that are now getting into these sky-high numbers.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Malo: Mr. Chair, I would like to make one last comment to clarify what I think.

Mr. Johnson, the finance standing committee is having its prebudget consultations at this time. I urge you to send your recommendations to the clerk and chair of that committee.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Warkentin.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to each of the witnesses for coming today. I appreciate your insight and your testimony today.

When you think of the things a person can collect in life, trains may not be the obvious answer for many people. When I think of it, if I had brought home a train, my wife would have looked at me strangely and said, "Well, what are you going to do with this?" I certainly see where the passion for it can come from.

I think of myself as a bit of a handyman. Maybe someday I'll have to come and volunteer and spend some time there stripping paint or something, but it certainly looks like a wonderful process.

I come from a different type of construction background, but I understand the issue that once you've built something, you have to be able to maintain it, and if you do it right, maybe there's a chance that maintenance will last or it won't have to be ongoing in the same way. I'm just wondering, in terms of the financial maintenance.... Obviously, these older structures need to be maintained, and there's an ongoing cost once they've been restored. I'm wondering if your museum has ever looked at a tie-in endowment fund to these types of structures. I know there are many museums that have been looking into it, but of course the cost seems inhibitive sometimes. I'm wondering if you can tell me about your experiences looking into endowment funds, or the possibility of those, to help with the preservation and the long-term maintenance of these units.

Mr. David W. Johnson: We have, and in fact one of the strategic objectives and management plans for the Revelstoke Railway Museum is establishing this endowment. There is already a Revelstoke Community Foundation in place, which will manage that, and they manage funds for many organizations in Revelstoke. As such, we don't need the expertise ourselves to look after and manage the funds; we need to do the fundraising and we need to spend the results of that—we hope.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: What type of figure are you aiming to reach, and what would an annual return be on that? Do you know what those numbers look like?

Mr. David W. Johnson: This is difficult for us to say at the present time, because also part of the strategic management plan is the expansion of the museum. We have to judge our fundraising efforts in terms of both the capital campaign and the endowment. The two may be linked, but that still has to be resolved.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: We have talked to a number of different museums, the two railway museums, and to the groups that have come before our committee, and we have spoken to some local volunteers and to people who are involved in our local museums. It seems to me the issue of ongoing funding is becoming a big issue. The federal government, in the past, has been involved in funding these one-time types of projects, and they've also been involved in the travelling exhibitions. The concern has been raised, it seems, that maybe the ongoing funding needs to be addressed. I'm wondering if it would be your view that help with an endowment fund or contribution from the federal government to an endowment fund would be one way of addressing the long-term funds that are going to be required to maintain the museums in the country.

• (1655)

Mr. Garry Anderson: That might be something that would be worthwhile in the longer term. However, right now some of the major conservation concerns are ones we have to look at before our artifacts deteriorate to the point where it would take a much larger amount of money to bring them back or where they disappear. In Cranbrook's case, we've been doing quite well in terms of developing our operating earned revenue, and that's making a major difference as we complete some of our business units, such as the tour ticket sales, the new gift shop, the rentals of the Royal Alexandra Hall. That will obviously support our core funding, but it's the large capital expenditure that we're faced with to reduce our long-term operating and conservation costs by the amounts of energy we're going to take if these cars aren't covered, in our case, for instance.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: You talk about the necessity to tell a story if we're going to possibly look at a national strategy to preserve our railway heritage. I'm just curious. Of course, you talked about the necessity to identify the artifacts that are necessary to tell the story. Has anybody done a consultation as to how big the story would get? How many dollars are we looking at in terms of acquiring the necessary items to tell the story? How many facilities would we be looking at? The only reason I'm asking is this. How far do we have to go before we know what the overall project would look like, and then from that, how would we derive how much it would cost to maintain that?

Mr. Garry Anderson: I think a lot of the collections already exist and are being partially funded by other interests—the municipalities, maybe the province—other sorts of support. However, I think an assessment of the state of the railway museum heritage in Canada would be a very good idea. That has to be done at the federal level, to coordinate it all. I don't know what the amount of money would be. It'll depend on the terms of reference that make items of national interest versus regional or local or provincial interest. That would come out of an assessment.

Rest assured, though, a lot of these are already being partly supported.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I'm not looking for that, if it hasn't been done. I'm just curious as to whether any association has been involved in trying to identify what would be necessary to build the national story and what criteria would be used to identify what the national story is all about.

Mr. Garry Anderson: In my brief, I mentioned that the Canadian Council for Rail Heritage was looking at a draft evaluation mechanism for historic railway equipment, and this is based on what a lot of conservators and architectural historians are doing for buildings. They've adapted this. It's being done by Jim Cullen, a former senior management person with the California State Railroad Museum, and Hal Kalman of Commonwealth Historic Resource, and they do go into a number of questions that they ask, in many ways.

I will leave this in our package for you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Angus, do you have any more questions?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes. I want, for the record, to change the tone of the discussion a little bit.

You gentlemen are in the business of preserving big artifacts. I was in the business of preserving even bigger artifacts—mining headframes in the pioneer community of Cobalt—and we had a hell of a job. We had two levels of government that would say to us again and again, “Prove the value.” They saw these pieces as massive structures of junk. In fact, we had to fight with the government to stop them from bulldozing what we saw as artifacts.

Then lo and behold, a provincial television show voted Cobalt the most historic town in Ontario, and suddenly we had bureaucrats running in saying, “Oh my God, how do we save your heritage?” Well, we had lost most of it by that point. But we still had some worth saving. Finally, the federal government came to the table saying that this is a nationally historic site—after, of course, we had lost a lot of our artifacts.

I'm telling this story because the argument we always had to use was not so much that these were nationally significant sites that were being bulldozed, but that this was an economic engine. I don't think that in the discussion on museums we hear very often about the pivotal role museums play, especially in the regions.

So I'd like to ask you, in your experience, when economic development plans are being discussed, when economic development strategies are being discussed, when tourism strategies are being put forward, are the museums somewhere out there doing their own thing, or are you a pivotal part of what a lot of agencies and businesses are looking for in order to attract people and economic dollars to your region?

• (1700)

Mr. Ken Heard: One bee in my bonnet is the fact that technology and technology transfer in the economic history of the country has been underrated, and there are all sorts of examples of the things you were talking about. Railways are just one part of that particular story. There are mining, forestry, some of these major industries. They don't have a heritage value in the mindset of far too many people. When you go to a place like the U.K., you see all sorts of artifacts from the industrial age being preserved, but we're not doing that here. My own view is that we need to work on that point.

Mr. David W. Johnson: Just to continue on that, yes, the museums are aware of their importance to the community in terms of economic development. In my brief I mentioned job creation and the numbers of people employed. Statistics Canada figures show that culture in Canada constitutes something approaching 7% of the GNP, or GDP—whichever they use. So in fact, this is a major factor.

The Revelstoke Railway Museum, for instance, is identified in the Revelstoke cultural strategy as being one of the major factors that bring and keep people in Revelstoke, and as such, is worthy of support. We do draw upon that and we do make the point that it is a real, positive contribution to the community. And that goes for other railway museums too.

Mr. Garry Anderson: Likewise in Cranbrook. We're involved in the tourism development sector, the economic sector, which is part of that. We're involved in the educational sector with the college because of programs they do where they use our facilities. It's really a growth thing for us. We have to educate people as to what we really do.

Translating that into the dollars necessary to do the capital improvements we need to conserve the collections for the future is a very big task in a town of 20,000 people. We also have one smaller problem, and that has been, over the years, because we aren't just a local museum, people often don't identify with the national story. We have a local component; we have a provincial-regional component. So we're trying to balance all these things and keep people informed as to how we fit in that community.

A museum like ours, a collection, would normally be here in Ottawa with all of these long trains, and compared, but they're not; they're in a smaller community that's trying to see where they identify with it and how much they should be paying versus how much the province or the nation should be paying for these.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Again, I wanted it on the record, because I know when I was a director on our chamber of commerce, when we were doing development strategies...what were we asking people to come to? Every town in northern Ontario has clean air, and every town in northern Ontario has bush, and every town in northern Ontario has a lake, but only this town had a railway museum, only this town had a war museum, only this town had a mining museum, and in Kirkland Lake now we have a hockey heritage museum. And that seemed to be almost the entire basis of our tourism strategy. So we were working at the chamber level with our museums.

Again, I'd like to give you an opportunity if you want to hammer home the point, because I think it needs to be hammered home. It's not just the lack of research dollars, it's not just the fact that artifacts are disappearing, but these are central parts, especially to a regional economy, of any tourism strategy. Is this not the case?

• (1705)

Mr. David W. Johnson: It's absolutely the case. Museums that are integrated into their communities take advantage of this and make that contribution to their communities.

Mr. Garry Anderson: Railways have a particular attachment to the Canadian identity, and people love to see what are in these railway museums or whatever story they tell.

One other aspect I can mention that is part of the development of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel is the whole area of railway excursions. We happen to be on a rail line and the trains come right into the museum, so our experience is amplified in many ways, like Revelstoke. Not all railway museums have those connections, but what's going to be a very big important part of future business development are these trains that come right in, real trains, and then people visit the historic collections and then maybe have a dinner or something in the Royal Alexandra Hall—we can accommodate 200 to 300 people. So suddenly the volume is on our side, and being able to have large capacity for short-term or long-term visitors is really an important part of it. There are other museums that do the same.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Keeper, I apologize. I put Charlie ahead of you. I got a little out of line here, so I'll give you—

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): Do I get extra minutes?

The Chair: I'll give you an extra minute.

Ms. Tina Keeper: I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the gentlemen for being here today. It's been a fascinating presentation—absolutely fascinating. I know very little about railway museums, but I am really captivated by the aspect of the railway museums that you speak about in terms of the designation of the railway cars or stock as artifacts. Mr. Heard mentioned the worth of some of the artifacts is very substantial and can be substantial.

I'd like to ask you, in terms of the historical association, we've talked about the national story, but is there a process in which you, as an association, in terms of how this national story is unfolding...how you look at what the acquisitions will be, what are the primary acquisitions, and how do you prioritize how you're going to do this work, which is very challenging in terms of the cost?

Mr. David W. Johnson: In response, yes, there's a very specific process we're going through. Each institution that is at a truly professional level has its mandate clearly defined. Within that mandate, it tells exactly the story it's going to tell. We're telling the story of the Canadian Pacific Railway in its fight through the mountains, in its ability to move goods through the mountains, and the completion of the railway across Canada—that sort of storyline.

Garry in Cranbrook, for instance, is telling the story of luxury passenger rail travel, and he's doing a great job down there.

Exporail is looking at a broader aspect of the railways of Canada, and as I say, they were there at the time the railways were deaccessioning, to use the museum term, or scrapping, to use the railway term, the significant pieces as they changed from steam to diesel and from diesel to second- and third-generation diesel.

Have a clear mandate; have a clear policy on collections. You identify those items that fit within the collections policy and reflect the mandate. Then you look at whether you're going to be able to actually house and care for the artifact on the one hand. On the other hand, you say, are we getting near the end of that particular kind of artifact and if we don't take it now there will be no more? That's one way.

Another way to look at an artifact is if it's of particular technological significance. Exporail just received the first Green Goat prototype. I don't know if you've heard of the Green Goat. It's a Canadian Railpower Technologies Corp. development that uses a small diesel generator set to charge batteries, and it then uses the power from the batteries to power the traction motors to move the locomotive and the cars. This technology is much less polluting and much more fuel efficient. So here's a substantial increase in both pollution reduction and efficiency. The prototype is only one. Do you preserve it or not? They were able to do so. This sort of argument goes back and forth within the museum, within the institution, with the railways all the time.

So, yes, we are aware and have policies, which I think Garry can confirm.

• (1710)

Mr. Garry Anderson: I want to point out quickly that the policies we have deal with these great transcontinental hotels on wheels, which are not being made any more, and they're quite different. So our collections policy, as far as the sets of trains is concerned...the 1929 Trans-Canada Limited is complete. The 1936 Chinook is all there. This 1907 Soo-Spokane Train Deluxe is almost all there. And then there are the royal cars and cars of state. So our collection is almost completed. Now there is the whole question of what parts of those cars we're missing that we need.

We're into the whole sphere of the art of the railway, not the technology. The technology is there, but we concentrate on the design arts of these cars—the textiles, the china, and the silver—and on everything that adds to a story about what these trains meant to this country and all of the objects that now go into them: the paperwork, the documentation, the promotions, the advertising, and so on. The recreation of original carpets and fabrics is very costly when you want to bring them back to the way they were.

We do have a very clear policy. If you want to find out how to do a very clear policy, stay at it long enough and make sure you don't deviate. That's how we've done it, and more museums are doing this. So there's less duplication and more refinement of resources.

Ms. Tina Keeper: It's truly a preservation of our history or heritage.

I would like to ask one more question.

Mr. Johnson, you mentioned that you have an archive collection as well. Can I ask you, or either of you, about the archives you have and what kind of effort it takes to assist those archives?

Mr. David W. Johnson: Archives are a particular challenge for railway museums, and a lot of the archival material is also large. For instance, some of the drawings that either go into the construction of the locomotives, railway cars, buildings, and railway structures, which are like bridges, or the profile of the railway across the country, are very large documents. They're very expensive to reproduce, microfilm, or whatever way we wish to preserve them.

The objective is to try to collect and preserve that information before it is lost—because again, a dumpster is the usual enemy of this sort of documentation—and then document it in such a way that it can be made available to the public through CHIN or through whichever other way is appropriate. Some of them we're not going to

put on CHIN; they're simply too large. We'll keep them on CDs and make them available to people when needed.

Garry.

Mr. Garry Anderson: The archives, in our case, are both an archives and a reference library, and they support the collection and give all the details that the cars and the artifacts won't tell themselves. It's substantial. It's not necessarily large, but it is voluminous. Again, it's another thing we have to do. As well as preserving these large objects, there are the papers and the photographs. Yes, it's a big job.

Ms. Tina Keeper: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much for the answer.

Mr. Abbott.

Mr. Jim Abbott: For the benefit of the other members of the committee, I'd just like to walk through the pictures. Garry has referred a couple of times to the Royal Alexandra. Basically, what happened was there was the veneer, the inside of a coffee shop, although you'd never believe it was a coffee shop. It's absolutely elegant, and if you go to the web page, when you don't have anything better to do, press the button, and you'll get an idea from the pictures of the inside of this very large room, which easily sits—not sits for dinner—two to three hundred people. It's absolutely elegant, and it was a building that was created from... Was it the Fort Garry Hotel?

Mr. Garry Anderson: It was the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg. It was a Canadian Pacific hotel. They called it their grand café, which was the European Dining Room, which was different from their formal dining room. That's the railway hotel part of our collection that I haven't gone into because I'm concentrating on—

• (1715)

Mr. Jim Abbott: As a commercial, I would say, and to give Garry full marks, he had this built, and then he basically put all the veneer in. There was some recreation of just a very few missing parts. Basically, it was just a brand new hardwood floor that had to be created.

Mr. Garry Anderson: It's almost identical to the Rideau Street Convent Chapel that's recreated inside the National Gallery. It's the same size and—

Mr. Jim Abbott: I'd really recommend that you take a look at its web page.

I want to ask a question. When you restore a car, approximately how much a year are you looking at in terms of cost? I'll come back to that.

I just want to quickly walk through the pictures, both of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel and the railway museum, and I'll ask our witnesses some questions.

If you take a look at page 1, you can see the buildup of snow on the outside. On page 2 of the pictures from the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel you see the challenge with the weathering on the outer shell. The page 3 pictures are basically before the work. If you flip over to page 5, you start to get an idea of the work that my friend Mr. Warkentin was talking about, actually stripping the paint and the unbelievable art work that is underneath.

Now take a look at page 6. That is exactly the way it is. As Garry mentioned, in many instances they had to recreate the carpet and the upholstery, and they had to refinish the furniture. You get an idea of the before and after from those pictures.

Carry on to page 7. If you take a look in the upper left-hand corner and then the lower right-hand corner, you see the difference between what was then and what is now. These are absolutely unbelievable works of art. I'd recommend that you come to Cranbrook any time. This is really unbelievable stuff.

Take a look as well at page 9, where you have the Curzon car that was a lakeside cabin. You can imagine what the inside of the Curzon looked like. Take a look at what was actually underneath all of the paint.

I'll go through Mr. Johnson's pictures in just a second. But my question to Mr. Anderson is that without doing anything more, to maintain the heat and the protection from the weather on an ongoing basis, approximately how much does it cost per car?

Before you answer that, I'll also ask Mr. Johnson a question. On page 2 of Mr. Johnson's pictures, if you identify the yellow caboose in the three main pictures on that page, you get an idea of what relates to what. My question for Mr. Johnson is whether it would be desirable to put those cars into some kind of a shelter, and if so, would you not also be looking at the possibility of additional cars? What approximately is the cost for just your fundamental maintenance?

Finally, I presume your financial documents are public information, so would you make them available to the committee? If we're talking dollars and cents, what are we talking about in terms of dollars and cents for this? What does it actually cost now that we have the picture of what you're about?

Those are my questions, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Garry Anderson: In Cranbrook's case, obviously if we had a building, the price per car, just for the heating and air conditioning would plummet, because the outside temperatures around the car would be modified greatly. A big capital expenditure would pay for those increases in hydro and/or gas over time.

It's about \$2,500 to \$3,000 per car now. We keep adding cars, because we need to preserve them. That doesn't take into account the costs of any staff, because we don't have any conservators; we don't even have a maintenance person at the moment. I have to do that myself. Whether we have job creation program people or not, it's up to me.

That sounds like a small amount, but when you take this into account for every car, you can see where it's heading. We've got to get these under control. They can't be separated or you've reduced the sets of cars to individual cars. We have our work cut out for us.

I brought the documents I have for the museums budget with me, so I have them all there for you.

• (1720)

Mr. David W. Johnson: At Revelstoke, the utilities for the building, which houses just two of the artifacts, run in the range of

\$16,000 a year. Given the price of gas and so on, it's only going to go up.

As for the outside equipment, if you're going to maintain metal equipment to any standard of display, you're going to be painting it at least once every five years. Something simple like a caboose, which is straightforward in its lettering style and paint scheme, would probably cost \$8,000 to \$10,000. On some equipment, there is a considerable amount of woodwork that has to be restored. This raises costs. Painting a full-size locomotive will run about \$35,000. Woodwork on a car that needs a lot of expensive metalwork replaced can run even more. This is not preservation or restoration. This is maintenance—what has to be done just to keep it from falling apart.

I have financial statements from last year that I can leave with the committee.

Mr. Jim Abbott: In British Columbia, I see that there is a listing of seventeen locations devoted to railways. Could you provide this committee with an idea of how we would sort through them? What criteria should the national government adopt to choose between those seventeen locations? How do we choose between the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel in Cranbrook, the Revelstoke Railway Museum, or the Kaatza Station Museum in Lake Cowichan? How do we do that?

Mr. Garry Anderson: I don't think we're saying to choose one over another. We're saying you need to put a process in place to determine what has national significance and what doesn't. There are some beginning drafts of how this might be approached. I think it's something that will take time, if you want to do it well.

Mr. David W. Johnson: Agreed.

The Chair: I have to tell you, echoing Ms. Keeper's words, how much I have enjoyed this meeting. I thought B.C. was the only province that had a railroad policy when it joined Canada. Thanks for letting me know that there were nine.

As the chair, I'm just going to sneak in a couple of comments. I'm very intrigued. I'm a collector with a couple of old cars. I know what it costs to restore an automobile, and I have a great amount of respect for how much it costs to keep these things relevant. I have mine in pretty good condition—they're heated and everything.

As you've explained, you don't all have one lounge car, a caboose, and one engine. Your expertise is in these special cars that are gems, and you've had to find them and restore them. I think it's great when it comes to rail, because it takes a certain expertise to do some of these things.

In my former life I was a painter. I was interior decorating—finishing and refinishing wood. I know the hard work it takes, the hours you have to spend. You can't just go at it with a hammer and chisel to get that paint off. It's got to be done in a delicate way. The way some of these things are finished is spectacular. I can imagine the cost, because I used to have to price these things myself.

I thank you again for the great presentations today. I only hope we can do something to preserve our railroad history. Mr. Heard, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Johnson, I hope that we as a committee can take your comments under advisement.

The meeting is adjourned.

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