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Chair

The Honourable Rob Moore

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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● (0850)

[*English*]

The Chair (Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC)): We'll get started.

Welcome to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and our study of Canada's 150th anniversary.

Committee members, we have a very distinguished panel with us today with a great deal of experience and expertise on the subject we are studying.

Welcome to all of our witnesses.

We have Mr. Peter Aykroyd with us today. He was the public relations director of the Canadian Centennial Commission from 1963 to 1967. He's held various positions within the federal public service, including Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet for the Privy Council and Associate Deputy Minister for Transport Canada. Also, in 1992, he published the book, *The Anniversary Compulsion: Canada's Centennial Celebrations, A Model Mega-Anniversary.*

Welcome to you, Mr. Aykroyd.

Some of you may know Mr. Aykroyd's son, Mr. Dan Aykroyd, who is here today. I offered him the opportunity to sit at the table, but that would probably only lead to questions that are completely off topic. But welcome to you as well, sir.

We also have Mr. Peter MacLeod, from MASS LBP. In March 2010, MASS LBP partnered with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada to hold the 150!Canada Conference. Public servants, business leaders, academics, and artists assembled at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa to reflect on Canada's 150th anniversary, so it's very relevant to our study today.

We also have Colin Jackson, from imagiNation 150, which is a group of Albertans who are brainstorming ideas on how to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017.

Welcome to our three panellists. You each will be given 10 minutes for opening comments, and then we'll have an opportunity for committee members to ask questions of you.

We will start, then, with Mr. Peter Aykroyd. The floor is yours.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd (Professional Engineer, As an Individual): Is that 10 minutes each or 10 minutes for the three of us?

The Chair: That's 10 minutes each, but we're not too strict on that.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: My son Dan wears the Order of Canada insignia, you'll notice. He also has a doctorate from Carleton University. When you have Danny in a room, you've got a ghostbuster, a blues brother, and a conehead.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: I have just a few general remarks here that are matters of principle rather than detail, but I think they will probably be useful to you. I hope so.

First of all, there was no official history written about 1967, apart from *The Anniversary Compulsion*. I have copies of the book here for anybody who cares to take one. It's still in print. It was the only chronicle of the centennial in 1967 that was written, oddly enough. That's a clue perhaps to the new group who is going to take over the heritage aspect. You had better assign somebody to write the history, because it's assumed it will be lost, as it was in the case of 1967.

There are two basic kinds of circumstance that bring about the knee-jerk reaction to celebrate. A repetitive calendric date is one of them—think birthday when you think of that rubric. The second is a perceived milestone that has particular interest. If it is divisible by five, that makes it important: 2016 is ho-hum; 2018 is too late. It's odd—and I'll leave that mystery with you—why it is divisible by five and why that makes it important. I have not yet satisfied myself about that.

The issue is also not about nationalism now. There's a very fine distinction between nationalism and patriotism. I stand, or sit, challenged on that, but I believe that nationalism has a different connotation. It's really related to comparisons of countries and cultures and their particular attributes and history. Patriotism is something fine or more personal. Just think, “Breathes there the man with soul so dead/Who never to himself hath said/This is my own, my native land!”

So 2017 is the stuff of patriotism: my home, my native land. It's fundamental in planning and thinking about it to make that distinction between nationalism and patriotism. I give it to you as a philosophical matter to consider in your planning.

Following 1967 there was no quantitative or qualitative analysis of what went on. The programs just occurred and that was that. To this day, except for a few MA and PhD theses that exist, there is still no qualitative or quantitative analysis of what happened.

All of the archives of the Centennial Commission—and it was my responsibility to see that this took place—were deposited in the National Archives of Canada. There are eight stacks down the street at the National Archives, right down to the level of the Ottawa River. In those are 100 metres of files. Every scrap of paper we ever had is there.

● (0855)

So there's no dearth of material to really understand what happened in some of these programs and whether they succeeded or not. That's a great bonus to everybody who's planning for Canada 150. The material is all there to be used.

In my own analysis, in the book *The Anniversary Compulsion*, I tried to concentrate on the "how" of the compulsion, and the result is encapsulated in what I call the anniversary axiomatic. I looked at all the programs, refined them down to what they were all about, and then backed up and said, "Okay, now if we want to do this again, what are some rules to follow?" In the anniversary axiomatic are the ten precepts that I come up with for a successful anniversary. I commend them to you, because I believe they have some substance of value.

I'd like to pay tribute to Peter MacLeod and the institute's public administration for hosting the first conference on the subject in March 2010.

I guess that's all I want to say in terms of general remarks. I'll be happy, of course, to answer your questions later on.

I will just hold up a copy of *The Anniversary Compulsion* and say that I don't need to say any more; it's all in the book.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, sir.

We will now move on to Peter MacLeod.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter MacLeod (Principal, MASS LBP): It's my pleasure to be with you this morning to talk to you about Canada's 150th anniversary.

[*English*]

It's probably one of the more pleasant occasions to come before a parliamentary committee, to talk about something like Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017. It is, of course, a special pleasure to see Peter Aykroyd again, as well as Colin Jackson.

Peter spoke with almost 20 distinguished Canadians at this conference that we held at the National Arts Centre, and there are actually videos available. Everyone from Roch Carrier to Beverly McLachlin to Peter Aykroyd and more are there, reflecting on what they felt was the significance of 1967 and the import of marking our sesquicentennial in a suitable fashion. So I recommend that to you.

I'm here really today to try to relay to you a little bit about what happened at that conference, and to also talk about some of the history surrounding 1967, which is covered so ably in Peter's book, and also in Helen Davies' research. I understand the committee met with Helen last week. I brought along copies of her dissertation.

It was a funny thing. When we were preparing to do some research for our conference, we found her doctoral dissertation in the musty archives of the University of Winnipeg. I assure you, it's a very pleasant thing for any former PhD student to get a phone call out of the blue announcing not only interest in someone's dissertation but a desire to publish it as well. The reason we did that is exactly because, as Peter has explained, there really are too few materials concerning what happened in what was, I think everyone can agree, a landmark year for this country.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the history there, and then catch you up perhaps on some of the initiatives that have begun since the conference.

I'll start with some of the people who were involved. I suspect Helen has covered some of the details concerning the commission that was set up. My interest is really in the sesquicentennial as an exercise in public imagination. That's also what we titled the report that came out of the conference. Of course, thinking about 1967, I get all of this second-hand from my parents and from their friends and neighbours, and it's striking as well that you really have three generations sitting at the table today, each with their own relationship to the centennial and the sesquicentennial. It served as a kind of high-water mark for a lot of public and political energy in this country.

Just think back to the history of the 1960s, a history shared by both Conservative and Liberal governments, of course. We began in 1960 with Diefenbaker's Bill of Rights. In 1961 the wave of technological change was sweeping across the country. The Prime Minister placed the first transatlantic phone call to the Queen. Only a year later, we launched a satellite into space. We were the third country to do so. In 1964 social insurance cards were issued for the first time. In 1965 we had a new flag. Toronto built a new city hall. In 1966 the CBC flicked the switch on colour broadcasting. We got the Canada Pension Plan. We built the Bloor-Danforth line across Toronto. Montreal got the Metro and Canadians got medicare.

But we're not done yet, because in 1967, of course, the centennial year, we had a new anthem, we built a national library, we awarded the first Orders of Canada, we attended one of the world's great fairs, Expo 67 in Montreal, and only 1,000 people came to see the eight acts that made up the first Caribana festival in Toronto.

Of course, the political record continues from there, but it's important to note that it wasn't just a party, that there was, in my reading, a real sense of momentum about Canada becoming a modern, dynamic country that was starting to articulate for itself a different narrative. I'll just get into a little bit about that. As a country, we started and ended the decade in very different places. It was an era of metamorphosis and reinvention. A little of this was because of the centennial; of course, it's not a causal relationship, but what the centennial did was establish a milestone, a goalpost.

● (0900)

It was powerful, because it focused everyone's attention on three key questions: where are we, who are we, and just where are we going? In this way, I think the centennial was a useful device. It had a political effect. It was catalytic, because it gave us a public occasion on which to ask these questions in an open and free way outside of the sort of public crisis that normally spurs these debates about major change.

Instead, the spirit of the centennial allowed us to propose some new ideas about how as a society we could live together—or at least I think this is what two people, Roby Kidd and Freda Waldon, may have had in mind. So if you get the idea that you have to build any statues to people for our sesquicentennial, I think both Roby Kidd and Freda Waldon would be excellent candidates, because they probably did more to shape the spirit of the centennial than anyone else in Canada did, although I'm sure they'd refuse the credit.

In the case of Roby, many of you may be familiar with his son, Bruce Kidd, who was for many years dean of athletics at U of T and was an Olympic athlete. His father was the first Canadian to get a PhD in adult education. He was what you might call a proto-social entrepreneur.

Freda Waldon ran the Hamilton Public Library. She was also the head of the Canadian Library Association and saw first-hand the transformative power of literacy and education.

Kidd and Waldon each understood the value of what today we might call lifelong, self-directed learning. And this is the connection I'd really like to make for the committee today: the centennial as an opportunity for learning. As soon as you talk about learning or pedagogy, of course, immediately you start thinking, well, that doesn't sound like so much fun; that doesn't sound like a great party. But in fact it was the spark, I would argue, that made the centennial as memorable as in fact it was.

They shared the belief that a good society is one that encourages curiosity, self-discovery, and improvement, and together they were among the first people to recognize the opportunity that a Canadian centennial might contain. I believe that in doing so they helped to set the stage for what would follow.

Ten years before the centennial, in 1957, they organized a conference that drew together 32 different organizations, like the YMCAs and community foundations, teachers groups, and librarians. A year later they met again, and soon they would create the Canadian Centenary Council. It was a voluntary organization the purpose of which was to get people thinking about 1967 and to press the government to get moving. Because it wasn't government that led the way to 1967; it really was citizens like Roby and Freda. They managed to embed this idea that the centennial didn't belong to the government; it belonged to Canadians, and it would be up to Canadians to decide just how they intended to celebrate. Encouraging curiosity, self-discovery, and improvement was what they hoped the centennial would help to do. They envisioned a centennial that would be about the excitement of learning. It would be about learning about yourself, your neighbours, and your country, and you could do this without ever taking out a textbook.

What's so extraordinary is that when Canadians by the millions took up this invitation, exceeding the expectations of anyone in Ottawa, and they staged thousands of community events and initiatives, they began to see for themselves that despite their differences from one region to the next, what they shared was this desire to learn and to celebrate.

For Canadians in 1967, it didn't matter if your way of celebrating was to build a UFO pad in St. Paul, Alberta—just in case—or to stage a bathtub race in Nanaimo, B.C., to launch a Caribbean festival in Toronto, or to host a historic re-enactment in P.E.I. The point was the people were taking charge. They were spontaneously, joyously rip, mixing and burning their own centennials clear across the country. And the government encouraged them in some very interesting ways.

I've submitted to each of you colour copies that I direct your attention to. In the 1960s one of the more notorious publications was a book by Abbie Hoffman, provocatively called *Steal This Book*.

● (0905)

The federal government, I suspect with Mr. Aykroyd's assistance, placed an advertisement in major publications that looks like this. The top line of it reads:

> Take this Centennial Symbol
>
> Put it on a banner, use it on your products, and in your advertising, engrave it on your stationery, paint it on your vehicles, wear it on your lapel, display it on your cartons...stick it on your pay envelopes, stencil it on your coffee cups. Carry it. Fly it. But above all
>
> Use it.

There was a coupon that you would send into Ottawa and they would send you back photo-ready artwork. I like to joke, just try that with the Olympic rings. This is before open source. This is a government trusting the citizenry to make use of a federal symbol that would visually create some constancy, some consistency, across all of these different initiatives.

We weren't particularly fussed about what you were doing. We were concerned that you were doing it, and we wanted to figure out a subtle but important way to create some connective tissue across these initiatives.

I talked a lot about the importance of Roby and Freda and the emphasis on learning. But when you think about it, what were some of the major events? It was the Canadian train that travelled from one end of the country to the other that launched a new museology, that created opportunities for another generation of curators and theatre directors to stage their own history of the country. If you went to Expo, it was called Man and His World, which may seem, for obvious reasons, a little dated, but it really was about learning. It was about man and technology, man and nature, man and society, and learning about the ways in which our world was changing. I put it to you that in the course of the past 40-odd years, society, of course, has changed dramatically, and we need to think as much again about where we are and who we are and where we want to go.

This advertisement here, “What is Centennial?”, is a fabulous government advertisement, I hope you'll agree. I won't read it all. It says at the end:

> It's a time to reflect on past achievements; of our growth into a modern, dynamic country; and to look ahead to a future of prosperity and greatness.

You have to love the confidence of the 1960s, too. They did modernism well.

"What are you planning for Centennial?" It's not saying here's a schedule of events that you should come to, but what are you going to do to make this a major occasion?

This is the last advertisement I want to show you and then I'll start to wrap-up, mindful of the time. This was the final advertisement the government took out, which really commemorated what they had accomplished, so it's covered in memorabilia. Again, I'll only read out the last paragraph. It's very striking because I think any other country in the world would have put it a little differently. It doesn't say that in 1967 we celebrated ourselves as a nation; it says:

> In 1967, we've learned a lot about ourselves as a nation. Let's not stop now! Let's enjoy this new knowledge of ourselves. And make every year to come one of excitement and discovery. We'll just call it 1968 "Centennial Plus One" and keep on going!

For me, this isn't an exercise in Canadian boosterism. It's not an exercise in nostalgia. I think the work that was done around the centennial is really instructive because I think the ethos of it is actually as relevant today as it was then.

How do we use 2017 as an opportunity to challenge Canadians to think a little bit more deeply about the kind of society we want to live in and about how this country has changed? Our first 100 years was defined by geography, but I think since 1967 geography has given way to demography. By the time we reach 2017, one-third of this country will have been born abroad. It's time we take this opportunity to have a good conversation about who we are and where we're going.

I'm mindful of the time.

● (0910)

The Chair: It's been 12 minutes, but....

Mr. Peter MacLeod: That's very gracious. I'll leave it there and maybe in questions I can pick up about the conference and some of the things that are happening in the country already.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. MacLeod.

Now, finally, Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Colin Jackson (Chair, imagiNation 150 (Calgary)): Thank you so very much.

We in Calgary wish to influence the spirit of 2017 by example, by giving gifts to Canada. What we are is a group of people who are completely unauthorized by anybody other than ourselves. A couple of us are retired and are able to give two or three days a week. There are others who are still in business and give less time but still significantly. We've raised some money. We have an office courtesy of the chamber of commerce. We have a part-time staff. We have glowing relationships and the beginning of what we think will be examples—both good and unsuccessful—for the rest of the country should people wish to build off them. We also, as I said, want to give gifts.

The framing we're proposing, at least for ourselves—and we hope it will be picked up in some version nationally for 2017—is that it's Canada's birthday. We will all be there. What gifts are we bringing? What does the nation need? It's our opportunity to offer leadership from wherever we are, whoever we are, to the nation. That means there will be all kinds of projects and all kinds of perspectives and points of view. But that's what we hope to influence, that spirit.

I think it's self-evident that we as human beings care about that which we help create. We had an unfortunate example of the reverse, to my mind, at least, in Alberta's centenary a few years ago. That anniversary was very much top down. The province, the provincial government, essentially threw a party and invited the citizens. It was flat. It was small. It was not generative. It's really not remembered.

I should just pause for a second and say that's the only example I know of Alberta ever getting it wrong in public policy. I thought I'd allow at least a moment of humility.

So having learned from being tangentially involved in that centenary, I and others are even more convinced that this needs to be something that activates citizens broadly and activates what might be unrealized leadership in the country. I can come back to that.

So we have this small organization. We have growing relationships, and I'll give you some examples of some of those relationships. We want to understand better as a city where we've come from since 1967, where we are now, and where we aspire to go. We intend to do that not simply by phone surveys but through conversation, through living research. The University of Calgary is working with us to undertake that. We have a website that really at the moment is very rudimentary. It allows people to post their wish for Canada, but it isn't iterative. It doesn't do what the website will eventually do, which is to be an aggregator, where people can post what they're doing, connect with somebody doing something similar elsewhere in the nation, be encouraged, and learn from each other.

To get to that next level of website, we're in close conversation with one of the major newspaper chains, the deal being that they're prepared—and they are so far—to do this as a gift, not as a proprietary project of their own but rather it's their gift to Canada. That's in the spirit of what we're speaking to.

There are all kinds of small projects being talked about. This one actually is not in Calgary, but I was in conversation two days ago with a high school teacher from Quebec, and he was observing that the students coming in now will be graduating in 2017. He is dead keen on how he can, with his colleagues, put together an ark for those students, so that when they graduate in 2017 there's something special about their connection to the sesquicentennial, to Canada, something particular about how they are engaged. Again, it's very early. It's unclear yet what that will be, but it's that thinking, that here's an opportunity.

I was speaking about other forms of leadership. Again, when I speak to these different organizations or individuals, I'm in no way committing them. We're in conversations and its very early days. But the Canadian chambers of commerce and the chambers of commerce in the various locales can step forward to offer a leadership role—ours in Calgary already is—in thinking through what kind of community, municipality, city, province, or country we wish to have. Do well for the chamber by doing good for others.

● (0915)

There are various faith communities. I'm in conversation with Cardus and with some Ismaili associations, and there are many others, too, that have networks across the country that have a care for who will be coming from a faith perspective and could be offering greater leadership.

There are all the organizations that are perhaps renewing themselves, one example being 4-H, and their early conversation —again I'm not committing them but simply to note it—was that perhaps they could organize the nation's biggest student exchange: all the grade 9s in the country going and living somewhere else. Or perhaps we can actively be tourism commissions to mediate the biggest home exchange—not home invasion—in the country. For younger people, perhaps it could be a couch sort of thing. But it's to really put out in 2017 a plan to visit some part of the nation you've never been to before, and to do so according to your means. There are all kinds of possible alliances.

I believe the federal government can play a number of useful roles. One of them is as an information source, as an accumulator of ideas and opportunities. Another one is to facilitate the CRA regulations so that if chapters of imagiNation 150, or whatever their formation might be, pop up in different cities, they can get to a place where they offer tax receipts more quickly. That can be a very sticky process.

I'm sure there will be thousands of projects that are most appropriate for some kind of public money. In our case, we do not want it, and we don't want it for a couple of reasons. One of them is because we really believe in the notion that this is an opportunity to animate citizens outside of government, not in opposition but outside of government. Part of it is that we hope to reframe some of the political conversation we have now, not toward what is government going to do for me, and will you fix my pothole or repair my tax bill, but rather that we as citizens more frequently ask the question, what can we, Madam Mayor, Mr. MP, do to facilitate you being the best public policy maker that's possible for all of us? In other words, trying to turn that conversation from government as a service to government as ours. If we're going to be part of that advocacy, then we shouldn't be recipients of public money. But there are all kinds of projects, from war memorials to field houses, to concert halls, to student exchanges, that would be very appropriate for consideration in that regard.

Other networks that I think we might be able to activate are the Orders of Canada. We've had conversations with a number of Order of Canada recipients, and I think they will all tell you that of course they're deeply honoured to be recognized, but nothing is ever asked of them once they've been recognized. This may be a very appropriate way of engaging recipients of the Order of Canada.

I've had some conversations with past Governors General and with current Lieutenant Governors, and there are roles that could be played there in their unique position within our structures of government.

There's much more, but I thought that would be at least a beginning.

Thank you so much for inviting me here. It's a pleasure to be with you.

Thank you.

● (0920)

The Chair: Thank you to our panel, Mr. Aykroyd, Mr. MacLeod, and Mr. Jackson. They were very informative presentations.

At this point we move to our question and answer round. Each member who asks a question in the first round is allowed seven minutes, and that's seven minutes for the question and answer exchange. Then we move our way around the table.

We're starting off with Mr. Brown.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

The more I hear about 2017, the more excited I get. I was a grade 2 student in Toronto in 1967 and I vaguely remember it as an exciting time. I was too young to really appreciate what was happening at the time, but I'm delighted that we have our witnesses here today, especially you, Mr. Aykroyd, who was so intimately involved in those 1967 celebrations. I'm looking forward to reading your book.

Mr. Aykroyd, I think we really want to take advantage of having you here today. Maybe you can give us a little snippet of some of the highlights that you remember, and hopefully all of us will read your book so that we committee members can benefit from your experience.

I'll turn it over to you, and maybe you can tell us a little bit about the highlights you remember that we will read about in your book.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: You've opened up the whole field by opening the gate, and I can't swing back and forth on the gate; I have to get into the field, and it's too big a field. I don't know that I can answer your question that satisfactorily.

I had something, however, that I didn't say in my opening remarks that maybe you don't even touch.... Mr. Speaker, members of Parliament were not involved in the proceedings of the centennial very much, except that we had these little pins on cards, which we gave out to people. We printed them by the millions, and you heard about them in this ad.

Judy LaMarsh was the minister responsible for the Centennial Commission, and she said that the best conduit for giving things out to the public was via the members of Parliament. Imagine. We bureaucrats didn't even stop to think about that, to realize how fundamental that is, and of course that was the answer. So by the millions we brought the boxes up to the House of Commons here and they all disappeared. They ended up in constituencies all over Canada. Distributed by whom? By the members of Parliament.

That's just a little fact, I suppose you'd say, to encourage you to be involved from the beginning.

Mr. Gordon Brown: In terms of setting up a potential commission, because you were obviously intimately involved in that, is that something the government should consider doing? I know it's only 2011 right now and most Canadians are not focused on 2017 yet, but I think it's our responsibility, and that's why this committee is undertaking this study, to look ahead. Maybe you can tell us whether you think setting up a commission might be a good idea, and what it might do.

And to Mr. MacLeod, you talked a little bit about some things that are already going on. Maybe you can tell us some things that are happening already.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: Why don't I just say a little bit of it?

I would say yes, the government should set up a commission, and in short order, too. If you take the centennial as a significant precedent, the commission was created in 1962. As you know, if we want to build anything of any significance, that requires planning. The time it takes these days to get an environmental assessment, to get all the contracts lined up...it takes several years to build anything. Even though it does seem to most Canadians as though we're still a ways away from 2017, in fact in planning terms it's practically tomorrow, so we do need to get moving.

I understand the importance of commemorating the jubilee and the War of 1812, and there are some other milestones, and these are getting maybe a little backed up in the system, but let's not miss this opportunity by playing out the clock on it.

To that end, I think the provinces have each begun their own conversations internally about what they can do to mark the sesquicentennial. Most significantly, it's P.E.I. that is first out of the gate. I should commend to you the work of David MacKenzie, who was recently appointed the CEO of P.E.I. 2014. Why 2014? Well, of course, it was when the Fathers of Confederation met in P.E.I., and P.E.I.'s big theme is the idea of the great dream: we had a great dream on that island then and it led to Canada. So they're going to spend 2014 celebrating that meeting, and in time will be helping Canadians to create an on-ramp to 2017.

They're going to have two conferences: one in December for Islanders to have a big think about what needs to happen, and then they're going to invite prominent Canadians—leading organizations from coast to coast—to the Island, probably in February or March of next year, for another big think about what the country should do to mark the occasion. So you can look to the Island for some leadership on this issue.

● (0925)

Mr. Gordon Brown: I speak about this often because only three out of ten provinces in Canada require a student to have a history course to graduate from high school. From my recollections of 1967, it was a real opportunity to focus on our history.

How might we work on helping to educate Canadians? Obviously the celebrations surrounding the War of 1812 next year and over the next couple of years provide a great opportunity. How might we use 2017 and Canada 150 to really celebrate our history? And in terms of the process we're going through now, how may we involve Canadians in that consultation process?

Mr. Peter MacLeod: I think it's two things. It's about looking back, and it's also about looking forward. We should use 2017 as a pivot point to look in both directions at the same time. I take your point that young Canadians probably don't know enough about the history of the country.

Because of constitutional concerns, it's not in the federal government's remit to be able to change history instruction at the provincial level. Governments at all levels since the sixties have gotten out of the public learning business. It's not just in our schools, of course, that states seek to educate their citizens. I've already pointed to Expo as one instance where there was a large pedagogic program at work. Even funny things like Ontario Place, which opened in the seventies, wasn't built as a music venue and a water slide. It was built as a place to celebrate advances in Ontario's society, so that you could go and see new technologies and learn more about the province.

A big conversation needs to happen amongst all of the obvious groups, whether it's the librarians, the educators, or the Canadian Museums Association. We need to bring them together and challenge them to make it a priority for Canadians to know more about their country. It's a priority for us that Canadians are thinking ahead. Tell us what you have. What would be the most creative, persuasive, compelling opportunities, if we were given five years to make a real go at this thing? I don't think there would be any shortage of ideas. There certainly wasn't when we brought people together at the National Arts Centre.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my thanks to you all for being here today. It's wonderful to have you. In particular, it's a real gift for us to have someone like Mr. Aykroyd, with the institutional memory of the organizing of the centenary. It's surprising we don't have the qualitative and quantitative documentation about what we did right, other than this testimony, which we are really thankful for. We have a lot of anecdotal evidence that we did something right.

That was 1967. Mr. Aykroyd, what do you think is the biggest change that we're living through right now, compared with 1967?

● (0930)

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: It's in the field of technology. It's communications. It's the whole question about what we are calling social media. Anybody can talk to anybody else in the world on the Internet and online. It's a simply stupendous advance in communications and relationships of individuals with one another. It's in that realm that things have changed. It's in that realm that we should be looking to take advantage of this with the impetus of 2017 behind it. That would be my response.

Mr. Andrew Cash: I'm wondering, Mr. Aykroyd, were you consulted by the federal government when the government was planning the 125th anniversary?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Which anniversary?

Mr. Andrew Cash: The 125th anniversary.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: No, I don't recall. I wasn't involved.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Okay.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: It's worth responding to you, as members of Parliament, that in 1967 it started in the Prime Minister's Office—in Mr. Pearson's office. He had a private secretary named Jack Hodgson. Jack Hodgson was a distinguished naval officer in the war, and he was an executive in the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Mr. Pearson handed Jack Hodgson this responsibility in 1967. It all started with one man. He did some consultation, and I believe somewhere along the line it had to start in the House of Commons, because that's where legislation starts. I remember when the draft bill went to the Department of Justice. I was around the Privy Council Office at the time. I remember the draft bill was all laid out there. Somebody did all the work, and I don't know how involved the members of Parliament really were. Had there been a committee like this, well, they'd have sure had lots of input.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Yes. I'm wondering about the commission itself. I know it's in here, but how independent was the commission? How was it structured?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: The Centennial Commission? Of course, it was established by statutes to start with, and the Centennial Act was quite clear about what its purpose was. The members of the commission were well chosen from across the country to represent a broad spectrum of Canada. That didn't work very well, and we can talk about that a bit, because it's very important to see why that didn't work.

The members of the executive committee were very diligent. They met 52 times during 1967 and made the executive decisions very responsibly, I would say.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you.

Mr. Jackson, you referred to Alberta's 100th anniversary and you said it fell flat. The reason you give is that it was top down. That may well be a reason, but I would like to hear if there were other reasons that you can think of for it falling flat.

Mr. Colin Jackson: Another way into that same thought is that I think as human beings we care about that which we help create. If it's simply a cocktail party, I'll come and we'll have a conversation, but if it's a potluck, we're into a much more intimate dynamic. In Alberta, some events travelled the province, but government would propose; there would be very little disposition by private sector or by not-for-profit or cultural sectors. There was very little pickup.

Mr. Andrew Cash: What you're saying is there wasn't a lot of consultation with the broader society in advance?

Mr. Colin Jackson: I think there was consultation, but the feel of it was the premier of the government of the day throwing a party and we're invited, rather than the premier and the government of the day throwing out a challenge of how we were going to celebrate the very important anniversary of our province together. There was no legacy out of it, Mr. Cash. I suppose it's like Canada's 125th, so little was done with it.

● (0935)

Mr. Andrew Cash: A period where among other things we were enjoying some of the greatest equality of income in our history was in 1967. Between World War II and 1977, the income share of the richest dropped from 14% of total income to just under 8%. By 2007, the richest share of total income had doubled. So that's a fundamental shift in our economy, and consequently in our society. How important is that income gap between 1967 and today to the pickup we're trying to create around the 150th?

Mr. Colin Jackson: I think you're going to get a spread of opinion, from a downtown Torontonian to a Calgarian. There will be somewhat different angles—

Mr. Andrew Cash: About the income gap?

Mr. Colin Jackson: No, I think it is a very important issue. There may be some differences in how we might address it.

But to your point about education, Peter....

Mr. Peter MacLeod: Let me just offer a very brief response. I don't think it's for any of us at this end of the table to offer an opinion on that. It really is for Canadians to decide. I think that's why an occasion like a sesquicentennial major milestone can be such an important opportunity to take stock of where we are.

In response to Mr. Brown's question about how you consult with Canadians, you don't just ask them what they want. You have to give them context to compare and contrast where we are today to where we've come from, to what some scenarios for our future might look like. Certainly, given that Canada is among the OECD countries becoming more unequal faster than all but Germany, it's probably an important context in which to situate this discussion.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cash.

Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): First of all, thanks for coming. I'm extremely impressed with the material in front of me, and I'll tell you why. The spirit in the late 1960s was something I was fascinated with. When I saw it on TV and reflected on it, there was a spirit that I think sparked all things Canadiana for the next 10, 15, 20 years, at least, if not more.

When I see the material that comes from that year, I'm impressed with how it was handled and the enthusiasm in the 1960s. Obviously the enthusiasm that was sparked from the year 1949, when Newfoundland joined Canada.... I may call for a vote on that pretty soon.

Anyway, what I like about this is there's this implicit challenge to ask people to become a Canadian, to challenge people to realize what they already know. We had a similar experience in 1997, in Newfoundland. We celebrated our 500 years of existence—when John Cabot discovered Newfoundland—and during that celebration we realized what kind of history we had. We realized the legacy was within the children in the schools, who now know far more about Newfoundland and Labrador than we did growing up in the 1980s.

I do like this because it says, “Carry it. Fly it. But above all, use it.” In the book—I haven't read your book, but I thank you again—there is a great ad that says “What can I do for centennial?” It suggests, “Fly my flag. Have a family reunion. Paint my house. Support local projects.” There's that impetus for people to actually do something, which I think Mr. Jackson was alluding to, about giving back to the country, but at the same time receiving.

One thing I do recall about the centennial, and it has stuck in my memory over the years.... We have about seven or eight Newfoundlanders playing in the NHL, and one of them won the Stanley Cup last year. They learned how to play hockey in the smallest of towns, in arenas that were built in 1967. So there's no limit to the legacy.

You mentioned a UFO landing. There's a small town in my riding by the name of Happy Adventure—I kid you not. It would be a good place to have a UFO landing, really.

But when you were deciding how to use these legacy projects, like arenas, structures that kids can use, how did you start? Where did you say we're going to build arenas, we're going to build town halls? What was the genesis of that?

● (0940)

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: It was a cost-sharing program with the three levels of government. The federal government, by statute, said they'd put up a dollar if the province put up a dollar, and then the municipalities could put up one dollar or more. The aggregate funds would be used to build centennial projects, preferably projects of a “lasting value and nature”—those were the key words.

There's an analysis in my book. First of all, there's a statistical table that shows all of the projects all across the country and what kinds they were. They reflected the ethos of the province in every case. It was really quite remarkable.

The program was going so well. It was very slim on time then. Who was the minister...not Judy LaMarsh, but Lamontagne, who said, “Well, wait a minute, all these municipalities are getting all these projects. I think we should have a major project in each province paid for fully by the federal government—$25 million each.” That's where some of the great big projects occurred, and the two Jubilee projects in Alberta are examples. They were paid for totally by centennial grants, so it was kind of the whim of the minister at the time, and it was accepted.

Mr. Scott Simms: I'm glad you said that, because the problem with these cost-shared programs in today's context is that a lot of these smaller communities do not have the capacity to go to the level they want to. I'm not turning this into a rural/urban battle here, but in the 500 celebrations, we built a large replica of the ship that John Cabot was in—sorry, Giovanni Caboto, actually, he was Italian—this huge ship that's still there. Now, it's in trouble. It's needs money. We have a campaign called Save the Matthew!

To celebrate what is distinctive to one part of the country is also a celebration of Canada's sesquicentennial—you should get the Order of Canada if you can pronounce that without pausing, quite frankly.

I think you mentioned they were distinctive to a province, a project like that.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: I'm sorry, is there a question there?

Mr. Scott Simms: I'm wondering if there's a question myself.

The question is, some of these projects are very distinctive to one particular area—

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Oh, yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: —like the replica of the ship that discovered Newfoundland. When you were doing this 1967 celebration, were there projects like that?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Oh, yes, there were.

One of the problems with capital projects of that nature is that there's no money made for maintenance in perpetuity, and that becomes a burden.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: Each province was given one major gift. That's how Ontario got the archives and Alberta got a performing arts centre. There was one big flagship build, and then there were all the municipal projects.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Aykroyd, that's what you alluded to as one big project that was fully funded by the federal government?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Yes.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: I would suggest that just doing an inventory of every centennial and memorial project in this country would be a very good place to start, because how many kids go to a centennial school or play hockey in a centennial rink or memorial arena or kick around a ball in a centennial park? Part of the infrastructure question about 2017 is just taking stock of the previous legacies, thinking about whether they can be rehabilitated or improved, and then thinking about the sort of infrastructure that's appropriate to 21st century Canada as well. Having the frank conversation about where we are is important.

Part of the reason that build-out happened is because the Royal Bank of Canada issued a newsletter in 1958 that pointed to the centennial as an opportunity to deal with—and I love this phrase—"the cultural deficits in this country". They said we needed housing to replace slums and places for the performance of the arts and the elevation of our society. It was very strong language, where they challenged government to embark on this program. RBC's gift to the country was something you'll find in the library here, called *A Conspectus of Canada: Centennial Year 1967*. What do bankers do well? They count things. So they counted everything in the country, from the number of boxcars we had on the rails to the number of kids we had in schools.

The decisions that were made around centennial were evidence-based in that way. It was based on understanding where we were as a country, and responding to those needs.

● (0945)

Mr. Scott Simms: Can I have one final comment?

The Chair: Well, you're at eight and a half minutes, so—

Mr. Scott Simms: "What are you planning for Centennial?" That's a fantastic thing to do. That was a great idea.

The Chair: Thank you for that little extra comment, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): I feel bad for Mr. Simms, because I think we could have these witnesses for two or three days on this committee.

First of all, I want to thank you all for being here. We're still at the beginning of the study, and I think we have some themes starting to emerge, but I think there's so much to learn. Every time we have a new witness come in, we go down a different path, a different avenue. It's been very productive so far.

One of the things I think we need to have is a recommendation coming out of this committee.

Mr. Aykroyd, you could probably comment on this. I think it's so valuable to have a resource like you here, who actually was a part of the planning. I think it would be very important for us to make sure that as we go through this process, we actually have a process so that we can have some plans and some records when we plan the 2067 200th anniversary of Canada. I find this very valuable.

So I think as we go forward we actually should have that as a component of our plan for this sesquicentennial. But we should also have a plan for the next one, because I think this is a very valuable thing.

Mr. Aykroyd, I really appreciate your being here because it's providing us with a very valuable resource. One of the things you put in your book is what I call a 10-point plan. You call it "The Anniversary Axiomatique". I think it gives us a good guideline about a place to start when we plan because it provides what was best of the centennial, in my opinion, from reading through it. I'm going to talk about two of those points, and I'm going to get you to comment, if you could.

On the first one, you say "...accentuate unifying elements: symbols, songs and all things that are held in common, that have [a] bonding potential" for the country. So far in our study we have witnessed people talking about the passport. Several witnesses mentioned this passport that people were given. We've also talked a bit about the song, the Bobby Gimby song, and now what we've had brought to us today by Mr. MacLeod is the actual symbol and the logo of the centennial.

How important do you think these unifying symbols are? And do you think that's a good place for us to start as far as the public relations campaign goes, to build up energy towards the sesqui-centennial?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: I have a chapter in there on symbols and how the centennial symbol was chosen, and the centennial song, "Ca-na-da, we love thee". That's a kind of an anthem, which is still viable and still owned by the Government of Canada. I believe the patent on it has not expired.

It's extremely important to have symbols that people can focus on and that just by their definition join us all together—extremely important, very, very valuable. We had to have a symbol for the centennial, of course. It was my responsibility to get that symbol. That forms a very lively chapter in the book, on how that happened, because Canada was going to show the flag to the world, and it didn't have a flag. Here we were, trying to get a centennial symbol through the executive ranks of Parliament and our federal decision-making centre, and at the same time the flag debate was on. You remember Mr. Diefenbaker held the debate up for the whole summer because he was wedded to the old symbol. My answer is, it's almost clear, on the face of it, that symbols are extraordinarily important, and it's a very, very good place to start to bind people together.

● (0950)

Mr. Scott Armstrong: On the second point I want to accentuate, and they're all excellent things we should consider, you say we have to make sure that we make this fun, "but also allow for [both] dignity and emotion: it is healthy to release the spirit through noise, through laughter, through tears and through awe." That's the last point you make. I think it brings some clarity to the direction you would like to see us push towards as we do our planning.

I'm a former elementary school principal. Any time you really want to push something through with children, you have to make it fun, you have to make it engaging.

Now, did you put every activity you were doing as a central committee through a lens: is this going to be fun, is this going to be engaging? Was that something you used when you were evaluating your plans?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: It was not. "The Anniversary Axiomatique", which were my 10 precepts for a successful centennial or a successful anniversary, was done after the fact, by analyzing the programs that we had finished, by taking what were the elements of those programs and then saying, "Well, wait a minute, what did that mean?" Out of those dropped those 10 precepts, but they came out after the fact, not before.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: I'm not going to go through all of them because there are time constraints, but I believe from reading through it that if you developed an instrument we could use to evaluate activities we choose to do and try to perpetuate, and if we used an instrument to evaluate those to see whether they met some of the criteria—because those are criteria from successful events that we did last time—in running them through that lens we would probably have a pretty good tool to evaluate.

That may be a legacy that your book provides us. I want to thank you for that. I think I'm going to push that forward as a recommendation.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Thank you. I think it will live on. It's good.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. MacLeod, you said something that has inspired me, and I think it is something else we should talk about: you believe that the sesquicentennial should be an exercise in public imagination. It goes back to what Mr. Jackson said about top down and bottom up.

I agree with you that we have to have the ability to provide Canadians the opportunity to imagine what the sesquicentennial means to them and be able to develop their own events and their own infrastructure in their local communities, and we need to be able to provide the resources necessary from a federal level so that they can express this imagination.

Do you have any suggestions, so that we don't make it top down, as to how we can provide the resources and the supports necessary without being too controlling of what happens on the ground?

Mr. Peter MacLeod: You have some immediate assets at hand. The first is the work I've already mentioned by David MacKenzie, with P.E.I. 2014. That's a great opportunity, and I know there is the possibility of federal government commitment to and participation in that exercise.

What I have tried to say today is that I believe the federal government's role is really about convening, ultimately, and providing some of the connective tissue through the symbols and other iconography.

Get started by looking to those groups that can convene Canadians today. Work with P.E.I. 2014. Work with the YMCAs of Canada. They had an enormous role in the staging and planning of the centennial, with 52 associations clear across this country. Look to one of the important legacies of Canada 125 ,and that's the Trans Canada Trail, which they would very much like to complete and finish connecting in time for 2017. They've had the idea that we need a Trans Canada Trail party to get Canadians out and hiking on that day.

I think if you even just brainstorm among yourselves, you'll quickly be able to spot local civic associations, many of which have provincial and national connections, that could work with you to stage that conversation today. You don't need to reinvent the wheel. Work with our national broadcaster as well. I think it has an important role to play here.

● (0955)

Mr. Scott Armstrong: I have one more question, but I'm really low on time, so I'm going to make it a quick one.

It's in relation to what Mr. Simms was saying. We have many municipalities and smaller communities in the rural parts of this country that will have difficulty, if a program is one-third, one-third, one-third funded, coming up with their third. The province and the federal government can allocate large budgets to this project; they can meet their two-thirds.

My suggestion would be to have some sort of base line that all municipalities get and on top of it a top-up of local investment in which they can engage with one-third. I really think that if this is going to be an event that is promoted across the country, we have to provide every community, every group across the country, with the ability to do something.

So I suggest, Scott, base line funding for everyone so that they could do something; then if they have more resources available they could engage in a program divided into thirds. That might be an answer. What are your feelings on that?

Mr. Peter MacLeod: I don't have a technical view on the financing of 2017, but I would suggest that it's no surprise that government already has a very big footprint in this country. One of the very simple things the federal government did was to insist that the centennial logo be printed on every cheque that was sent to Canadians in the year before; thus in 1966 and 1967, every veteran's cheque, every benefit the government sent out had that little logo on it.

Conduct a kind of search across government about all those contact points with Canadians and use them as channels to communicate this opportunity. Every time you step across a sidewalk that has one of those Centennial symbols stamped into it, it should be a reminder to each of you to speed up, because we're getting there quickly.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Armstrong.

Now we're moving into five-minute rounds, in which you have five minutes for the question and the answer.

We'll move to you, Mr. Nantel, first.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Thank you.

First, I really appreciate your presence here, Mr. Aykroyd. Honestly, it's a big privilege for us.

Obviously 1967 came during a very rich, candid, and optimistic era. The last 45 years have brought many changes concerning national unity tensions and the economy also, which is not as clear as it was.

If you were to be reassigned today for our 150th, how would you adapt to these changes?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: I didn't understand the question.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: If you wanted to be reassigned for the 150th anniversary, would you make any changes in your approach, considering the changes Canada has been through in the last 45 years.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Absolutely. It would be essential to do that. It would be prudent for any planner to make an assessment of that and come right up to date with their database and their opinions about trends, absolutely. Some of the work that is going to come out of your committee will reflect that for sure.

I'd like to say something that I have to mention, and that is what we call the private sector. Where was the private sector in the centennial? Nowhere. And the big corporations of Canada? Nowhere.

The only corporation that stepped up to the bat was the Royal Bank. They donated $50,000 every year to some worthy cause upon application, and it was considered a centennial gift. Nobody else did that, not one.

One has to pause and wonder why the ethos and personality of the corporations of Canada made them so reluctant to take part. One of the answers was that they went to Expo, because Expo had some place for them and had a structure for them, so that the rest of the celebrations across the country in which all Canadians were participating were neglected.

It's something to think about. What part will the private sector play in the upcoming anniversary?

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you, Mr. Aykroyd.

My other question is for Mr. MacLeod. In March 2010 you met with many people to bring in ideas for the next celebration. Were there any themes that popped out overwhelmingly? Let's say we're talking about the....

[*Translation*]

I'm going to speak in French.

Let's consider the example of health insurance, which has considerably changed matters in Canada. Has this theme come out? Have other themes come out? I essentially heard you talk about the success of 1967. What ideas have you received for the future?

● (1000)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter MacLeod: Thank you for the question.

The report we published from the conference identified seven or eight principles that the conference thought should inform the design of 2017.

The first is the idea that diversity is Canada's pride; that it's part of our character and it's our strength, and 2017 should reflect that; that it is big ideas that ultimately contribute to a lasting legacy; that it should be an occasion to rekindle the sense of public imagination; then the idea, which I mentioned, that demography is destiny.

One point that was discussed at length at the conference is that the novelty in 1967 of becoming a multicultural country, bringing in more immigrants per capita than any other country in the world, a legacy that has continued, is no longer the whole story. We're also a country of emigrants; that is, in fact 8% of our population lives abroad, and that is a higher percentage than for any other country in the G-8. It's not just about Canadians of convenience. It's about young people pursuing education, about travel opportunities, about business people around the world.

So how, In 2017, do we make it a global celebration? How do we activate our embassies and our consulates to participate in this? The conference talked about ours being a better, fairer society, and said that ultimately the sesquicentennial needs to be shared by all.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: My last question is to Mr. Jackson.

I liked a lot your idea of Canadians giving each other gifts. To me this is a nexus. We're talking about ways of doing the celebration and how it worked well in the 100th, thanks to Mr. Aykroyd's efforts and team. But tell me more about your concept of gifts.

Mr. Colin Jackson: Thank you.

A gift could be as simple as moving your barbecue to the front lawn and inviting neighbours you've never met to a conference on the future of Confederation.

One of the elements that fascinates me, which would be difficult for the government to engage in but which it probably should, is what our obligations are. We speak frequently about our rights to vote, human rights, and so forth, and they're to be celebrated, of course. But my understanding is that my obligations as a Canadian are to pay taxes and to serve on a jury, if called, and that's about it. Is that sufficient? Is there something more we could wrap around this notion of our formal obligations to each other?

To the point about corporate involvement and business involvement, my experience so far—of course, it's very short, it's just a year old—is that there's a quick willingness to explore the contribution of finances and time. But a question I'm getting from all kinds of businesses in Calgary is on how they involve employees. Well, maybe it's that you go to Tim's, buy some coffee, get some donuts, and have a conversation about what we can do as a business for the centenary.

Corporations, again, in Calgary and elsewhere, have remarkable networks nationally and internationally. That's to Peter's point about how we recognize our global nature. Well, Nexen has business interests in the North Sea, in the Middle East, and in many places. Those are networks we can activate.

The Chair: You're out of time.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I'm out of time.

The Chair: Next is Mr. Young.

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming here today and for giving your time. It's very informative for us.

I'm a little older than Mr. Brown and Mr. Armstrong, so I actually knew the song very well by Bobby Gimby, the Pied Piper, about Canada. That's very memorable for my generation, my group, anyway.

I also wanted to thank Mr. Peter Aykroyd for his definition of patriotism. It is very simple: “[T]his is my home, my native land.” I'm sure that this “Anniversary Axiomatic” will be very helpful as a template or guide for this committee and for the government.

It must be nice to be called back. They still need you. They still need your advice.

Mr. Aykroyd, you commented that one suggestion you had for the 150th is to involve the private sector more. Do you have any other suggestions to make our 150th more exciting?

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: It's too complicated and too extensive a question to be answered in anything but a very extensive omnibus way, and I'm not capable of doing that.

There are lots of suggestions. I noticed in the paper given to me by the clerk of your committee that there are quite a few suggestions already for you to start on. I think that's not a bad beginning. I appreciate the work that was done to put that together.

That's my best answer to that.

● (1005)

Mr. Terence Young: Okay, that's helpful as well. Thank you very much.

One of the things I'm interested in for the 150th celebration, and leading up to it— we want this to be a celebration that leads up to 2017—is telling Canadian stories. For example, I don't think very many Canadians know that Sir John Graves Simcoe, the first governor of Ontario, banned slavery in Upper Canada 60 years before the American Civil War, and not a shot was fired. I'd love to see that story told in film or dance or opera or whatever.

Peter MacLeod, I wanted to ask if you have any suggestions on how to involve Canadians in the arts more in the celebrations.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: Well, I think, actually, Colin, who is the head of the Confederation Centre of the Arts, and the Epcor Centre for the arts in Calgary may have more suggestions about that.

Mr. Terence Young: I'm going to ask him as well.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: All right, good.

I think the arts are still important, because they convey a kind of vitality, right? They are a place for experimentation and a place for public imagination. It's arts high and low. You look to Toronto, where we have the incredible Manifesto urban arts festival that happens every year. Again, it's not about creating everything anew. It's about connecting with organizations and giving them a nudge right now, which doesn't necessarily mean funding. It means just saying to start thinking now. Suggest to all the arts associations that this year is a good time to bring it up at the AGM and to come before this committee perhaps in the future to share with you their plans. You have tremendous convening power to ask any of these arts executives to do the homework required to think about how the arts can play a role.

Mr. Terence Young: Do you have any thoughts on seed money or contests, or anything like that?

Mr. Peter MacLeod: Money that can be put toward convening is really important.

This may be a broader point about the sesquicentennial, but no one has asked about how well we are going to use Facebook and Twitter and technology to make this all great. Of course, it's going to play an important role, but let's not forget that in the centennial the federal government funded the movement of hundreds of thousands of high school students on buses and trains across the country so they could simply see their country. Canada hasn't gotten any smaller in the course of the past 40-odd years. We're going to need the federal government to continue, as William Thorsell has written, to help people mix up, move around, and see their country. We need that at the planning stage. We need that as part of the celebration.

Mr. Terence Young: I'd like to ask Mr. Jackson the same question about ways to involve people in the arts telling Canadian stories.

Mr. Colin Jackson: To build on what Peter is saying, I believe very much in the government's convening ability, but also the challenging ability. I think funding is necessary but not necessarily funding. I think there is an obligation that can be promoted for those of us who benefit from being part of this nation, to contribute to this nation, regardless of whether we're funded. If we require and can make the case for public funding for this particular project, excellent. But we should be doing it anyway. I would argue strongly with you that the first thought isn't seed funding; the first thought is articulating a challenge.

Mr. Terence Young: That's very helpful.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Young.

Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Thank you all for being here and for your presentations.

I'm going to pick up on what Mr. Jackson was saying in terms of what I might put forward as a recommendation, that this government actually throw out that challenge. The fact that these discussions are happening right now for 2017 is not very known, in the sense that the public itself is not aware that we're having these discussions.

I was struck by the logos, the photos that you put out there, and the fact that these things were sort of...this logo was sent out and said “Hey, use this”. The idea still came from the people, but the connective tissue, as you said, was the identifying marker that this was a Canadian centennial project. What I'm also hearing from this group is that there seems to be a consensus that the success of this was the fact that it came from the individuals.

Again, sort of scanning through this book, I saw the logo and I was reminded of the high school program they had for those of us who were of that period. It was the forerunner to ParticipAction. You had a series of exercises that you had to do and limits that you had to get to. You got a bronze patch or a silver patch or a gold patch. That was part of that as well, because it had the centennial symbol in there. If I may, those are the types of programs that you're advocating, as far as creating the groundswell of activity and participation of Canadians.

Would that be a good assessment?

● (1010)

Mr. Peter MacLeod: I think you're right on the money with that one. You know, sending out badges and things like that, and Expo printing up its passports—how much did that really cost? Very, very little, and look what a mark it made on a generation of Canadians. Since I started following the centennial beat, you wouldn't believe how many people have said "I think I still have my Expo passport somewhere", and they really prize it.

Right now, I don't think it's about getting Canadians all fired up about this sesquicentennial. They have lots of other things to focus on for the next couple of years. But, boy, we're almost a little bit behind the game already when it comes to getting the associations.... Is the Canadian Council of Chief Executives going to call all of its members together to have a conference about this in the next year? It probably should. The educators or the artists, are they going to come together in the next year to think about their plans? They probably should. Again, I think this committee can do a lot of good by putting that challenge to them, as Colin said.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

One of the things that struck me was the simplicity. How do you think, in today's more apathetic era...1967 was really looking forward. There was that sense of growth: these are the things that we're capable of doing as Canadians. Fifty years later, there's a little bit of malaise happening right now. What would you suggest in terms of the possibilities of getting people excited about the country again, and getting people excited about who they are as Canadians?

That's for any one of you.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: I would suggest it might be if the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party both had strong leaders tomorrow.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: We're working on that.

Mr. Colin Jackson: My experience so far is that there's a great deal of dry tinder waiting to be ignited: the challenge issue, the challenge opportunity, the challenge possibility. I was speaking a couple of days ago with a friend who is a significant philanthropist and is going to make a truly major gift to a national institution, and immediately he went to the notion of, well, why don't I do that in the spirit of 150? Gifts will probably occur anyway, and maybe in the same quantum, but they could be "in the spirit of".

I had the same conversation with some of the leadership in corporate Calgary. They all have corporate responsibility groups or foundations, and they make contributions to community projects and enterprises. How about branding those gifts for the next few years in the spirit of 150? Again, it can happen through existing channels, through projects as simple as making a cupcake and taking it to the lady next door.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: We did some polling around the conference centre. I know Keith Neuman was here, and he probably told you that among francophones and anglophones, it's actually allophones who are most excited to celebrate.

We often talk a lot about civic apathy. I'm in the public engagement game, but it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. This occasion is really what we decide to make it. If you look at this ad again, the headline is "[It] turned out to be the most fun we've had in years! Were you surprised?" Most people didn't think the centennial was going to be that much fun at all, and we amazed ourselves, just as we did recently with the Vancouver Olympics.

● (1015)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Benskin.

Just a note to members. The lights flashing and the bells going mean we have votes. They are 30-minute bells, which technically means we would have to end our committee meeting now. With unanimous consent of the committee members, we could continue for 15 more minutes.

Is there unanimous consent to continue for 15 more minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay, for a five-minute round, go ahead, please, Mr. Gill.

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for their time and for being here with us today.

We are under pressure in terms of timing and stuff, and I'll try to keep my questions very short. If you can give me short answers, that would be great.

My first question is for Mr. Aykroyd. We saw the centennial symbol, and I am wondering if you can briefly describe the process for how the symbol was chosen.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: Was the question how the symbol was chosen?

Mr. Parm Gill: Yes.

Mr. Peter Aykroyd: We sent out letters to all the graphic designers in Canada who had experience in graphic design, and we asked them to submit in a standard form what they would consider to be an appropriate symbol for the centennial. That was unsuccessful, because the executive committee of the Centennial Commission did not like any of what they sent us. We had to give them the prize money anyway—first, second, and third—because we had promised to give them some money.

It was in desperation that we went to a young graphic designer who worked for one of the printing houses in Toronto and asked him if he could design something for us quickly, and he designed something that everybody liked. It was really odd.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you. I appreciate that.

My next question may be for Mr. MacLeod. In the last 45 years the demographics within Canada have gone through a significant change process. There will be a lot of new Canadians participating in the 150th.

What sort of impact might that have or what would you say we need to keep in mind while preparing, considering the new Canadians and the new ethnographics?

Mr. Peter MacLeod: One of the organizations that could be very helpful is the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, the former Governor General's legacy, run by Gillian Hewitt Smith. They've created a cultural access program for all new Canadians so that they automatically get free admittance to the country's best art galleries, museums, and other cultural institutions. They're also responsible for the enhanced citizenship ceremony process, and they would be a good group to tap for some of their ideas.

There's no question that demographics have changed this country dramatically, and again, I think that's why this isn't just an exercise in public engagement. That's only one-half of the equation. It is as much an opportunity for public learning. There's a lot we don't know about ourselves, whether it's our contemporary reality or whether it's our history or what some of the choices facing this country over the course of the next generation really look like.

For all of those who are new to Canada, perhaps it makes that conversation only that much more relevant and pressing. We have excellent institutions across this country that can help stage that conversation, but at least we know from the polling research that people are keen to have it.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you.

I have a question for Mr. Jackson.

First of all, I want to thank you for the wonderful work you and your organization are doing.

Have you had any interest from other cities to take what you're doing and implement it in their own cities?

Mr. Colin Jackson: Thank you.

We intend for what we do to be offered freely to anybody else who wishes to pick up both the content, things like the symbol we've developed, and what we've learned about engaging people, the projects and so forth that are possible. It's there to be had by anybody who wants it.

There are sparks in different parts of the country. There's no organization as advanced as we are yet. We're not that advanced, but there's nobody else that advanced. For example, in London, Ontario, there is a group that I think is coming out of the Corps of Commissionaires, who are developing a memorial project. There are those kinds of focused projects, but not yet broader umbrella groups.

● (1020)

Mr. Parm Gill: That's great.

Are you seeing a trend in the types of gifts or projects that Canadians are wishing for on your site?

Mr. Colin Jackson: This probably reflects our own biases.

A lot of what is coming back are ways of getting to know each other better; to Peter's point, about discovering each other. There are stories about origin and how we came to be in this country, and stories about what our shared dreams may become and ways of investigating those. Those are the kinds of tones and trends.

Again, Mr. Gill, I'm not sure if that's who we are, what we're hearing with our ears, as opposed to what the community is saying. We're hearing more about human learning and connection than the physical projects at this point.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gill.

Ms. Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I also thank our three witnesses for being with us.

Mr. MacLeod, in your presentation, you talked about who we are, how far we have come and where we are going. That's very interesting.

I'm going to go back to something you mentioned. You talked about symbols. I agree that symbols are very important. You talked about the permanent legacy of these kinds of parks. However, you also mentioned something that I found even more interesting with regard to permanent legacies. You talked about housing. So unless I'm mistaken, you were talking about the construction of social housing.

Could you give us more details on that topic? If not, would you agree that this kind of permanent legacy might be very important in a changing society such as ours, with increasing wage disparities and poverty problems?

[*English*]

Mr. Peter MacLeod: That's a very important question.

The centennial responded to some very real needs that this country had. It was the Royal Bank that identified housing as one of them. It wasn't part of the centennial program, but of course the 1970s was an era of substantial federal investment in public housing that created some really lasting and successful neighbourhoods in major cities across this country.

I don't have a strong position or counsel for you in this regard, except that this planning phase really needs to be based on a thorough and unvarnished view of where this country is at and what it needs. It's not just because we want to be tough-minded about it, but because we want to connect with real Canadians in their everyday experience. We want to be able to make this an occasion or event that really corresponds to their lives. I think it's wholly appropriate that the investigation of this committee address many of the social phenomena, obstacles, or challenges that Canadians are facing, and thinks about how an occasion like the sesquicentennial isn't just a party but is an opportunity for public imagination and public investment.

I also agree that the private sector needs to step up to the plate this time around and be part of the conversation too.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: I saw Mr. Jackson nod his head. So I assume you are in favour of that principle.

Would you like to comment on the question?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Jackson: One of the opportunities that this marvellous event offers is that there are multiple sources of leadership in this nation. If government can behave in a way that lifts up those sources of leadership, people who are deeply concerned about social justice will be honoured and recognized, people who have other gifts to offer us. Government's opportunity to convene and to challenge is the greatest value at this point in our journey.

Mr. Peter MacLeod: It should be a great relief to every member of this committee that you don't need to come up with the single big idea that's going to please everyone. I think your job is to create a sense of urgency about this and to develop a framework. Whether your thing is the arts, public education, housing, or travel, you should recognize 2017 as an important moment to make your mark. If you can come up with a framework that helps Canadians to recognize that opportunity, you will have catalyzed a remarkable series of events for the country.

● (1025)

The Chair: Mr. Hillyer.

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

Mr. Jackson, you talked a bit about what your group is doing. Could you explain how your group came to be? Who thought of it? How did it get started? Would you have any recommendations on what we can do to help other such groups get started?

Mr. Colin Jackson: The origin of it was the conference that Peter MacLeod and IPAC presented a year and a half ago. I was fortunate enough to be invited, and got religion, got inspired. I was fortunate to have some friends who were also, as I am, retired and able to put some time into projects that might capture their hearts and interests. The origins of it were here. As to execution, you need a sufficient number of people, some retired, some young and looking for something bigger than themselves.

How to stimulate this elsewhere? As we move through the winter and develop more content, I hope this will be an inspiration to others, a challenge. We would be thrilled to be able to point to chapters, whether they are called imagiNation 150 or whatever, in different parts of the nation and to learn from them as they learn from us. We would be delighted if Red Deer or Kapuskasing was further advanced than we are. We need to keep upping the game for each other.

What can government do? It's the challenge. You've heard my bias about being cautious with how quickly public money becomes part of the story. It's not a moral issue. It's a case of activating people's sense of citizenship, their sense of generosity to each other, and then expediting it with public money where necessary. I'm not opposed to public money. It shouldn't be a bought party, though; it should be a pot-luck party.

Mr. Jim Hillyer: I will turn my time over to Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you, and my thanks to you all for coming. I appreciate it and thank you for the presents. We'll take a look at all of them. I suspect we might have an opportunity to have you back as we start to develop this a little bit further.

Mr. Scott Simms: I have one final question. Can Mr. Aykroyd sign my book, please?

The Chair: My thanks to our panel. This was very informative. We appreciate your being here, Mr. MacLeod, Mr. Aykroyd, Mr. Jackson. This was a wonderful contribution to our study. I would also be remiss if I didn't thank Mr. Dan Aykroyd for being here as well. I think we've all enjoyed him being here. I see people are lined up to talk to him.

Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash: I want to make a point. We decided we were going to 10:30. It's not 10:30 yet. We invited our guests, and I still had a question and you've adjourned the meeting.

The Chair: It is 10:30.

Mr. Andrew Cash: I'm sorry, I was looking at this clock here. My apologies.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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