HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

CHPC • NUMBER 015 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

Chair

The Honourable Rob Moore

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● (0850)

[*English*]

The Chair (Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC)): Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

As we continue our study on Canada's 150th birthday, we're very pleased to have a panel that I think will bring a lot to the table when it comes to our discussion.

We welcome Peter Dinsdale, who is the chief operating officer for the Assembly of First Nations.

We have with us David MacKenzie, who is the deputy minister, Department of Tourism and Culture, with senior responsibility for Prince Edward Island's 150th anniversary. That's certainly a perspective we're interested in hearing about.

Thank you for being here, David.

We have with us Deborah Apps, president and chief executive officer of the Trans Canada Trail, and Paul LaBarge, chair of the Trans Canada Trail. Paul has some experiences that we know will be relevant to our study that we were just discussing.

Welcome to our panel. You will each be given 10 minutes for your opening remarks,. Then we'll go into a question and answer period. We'll go in the order that appears on our agenda and start with Peter Dinsdale, from the Assembly of First Nations.

Go ahead, Peter.

Mr. Peter Dinsdale (Chief Operating Officer, Assembly of First Nations): Thank you very much.

Thank you to all the committee members for inviting the Assembly of First Nations to present today on behalf of the national chief, Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, and the entire executive. Again, we are very honoured to be here and to have the opportunity to share some perspectives.

As you know, hopefully, the Assembly of First Nations is the national and political representative of first nations governments and citizens across the country. Our role is not to act as a government; we're clearly not a government. We're an advocacy body on behalf of first nations and are directed by them as to what areas they want us to be responsible for. We try to harmonize and coordinate as best as we can. There is a wide range of diversity across the country, as I'm sure you can appreciate.

This conversation on Canada's 150th anniversary comes at an important time, I think, with respect to our position, the first nations position in Canada. It has been around seven generations since Confederation started, and in many aboriginal cultures, including mine—I'm from Curve Lake First Nation—seven generations is an important cultural touchstone. We try to think seven generations into the future in all the decisions we make and in regard to what impact we'll have on those generations, and we try to guide our planning and priorities appropriately.

So it has been seven generations since Confederation began and, as you know, our collective joint histories have taken many turns throughout this history. Really, it started off as an economic relationship. By no means were there embassies of peace and friendship sent across the ocean: they were looking for trade missions and wealth to bring back. Our first relationship was very much an economic one.

Quickly, as our history unfolded, it turned into a military relationship, where there was some antagonism and some support. Without the first nations in the War of 1812, we probably would be American right now. We probably would not be Canadian, in all honesty. So I think there's an important joint history there that we've shared in developing this country together.

Then we have this idea of treaties, of treaty building and nation building across the country. Some would argue that it was to open up more economic development and westward expansion, and some would argue that it was a broader vision. I think that's a part of our reflection upon 150 years of Canada as a country.

Then we move to darker times of assimilation, where first nations were no longer needed economically. They were no longer needed militarily. They were no longer needed as joint partners in Confederation; now they were challenge and a burden to the rest of the country. The famous Duncan Campbell Scott killed “the Indian in the child”. Residential schools, the banning of ceremonies of potlatch, and determining who was an Indian through federal legislation, which still exists today, are all part of the first 150 years.

It really seems that why it's important that this conversation is happening today is that we're starting to have a bit of a switch into maybe more of a recovery aspect. We had an historic apology in the House of Commons on the residential school issue. Canada has recently endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which sets out a pretty broad framework with respect to how to partner with first nations, with indigenous peoples around the world and, in particular, the first nations here in Canada.

This conversation today also comes on the heels of *The National*'s lead story last night about Attawapiskat and the horrific infrastructure that exists there today. This committee is not struck to get to the bottom of Attawapiskat or any of those infrastructure issues on first nations, but you need to reflect that it's a part of the legacy of 150 years of partnership in Canada. If we do nothing else here today, it would be wonderful to be able to set in force some kind of movement so that 150 years from now, at some committee celebrating the 300th anniversary of Canada, we're not reflecting upon shameful conditions in first nations communities across the country.

To contextualize this existing relationship, it is all based, in our view, on treaties. They really were, in our view, the fundamental principles of a nation-to-nation relationship between original peoples in this country and the crown. The early treaty-making of course is characterized by shared and clear objectives around coordination and today I think we should try to find mechanisms that actively reflect that nature and spirit of cooperation and working together.

We've talked a little about our long history of interference in this trust with each other, and how I think this comes at an important time, because we may be turning the corner on that. There are unique opportunities for this committee and the Department of Canadian Heritage, frankly, in the short term, and to maybe set a tone in the long term for how we work together.

We've always had an ambitious agenda for change, particularly always in self-determination and wanting to govern our own communities and affairs, but our self-determination is firmly grounded in language, culture, and traditional decision-making processes, all of which are mandates of Canadian Heritage outside of this particular study you're doing today.

There are things we can do in a more immediate sense. We can support first nation languages. You know, we spend more in Canada supporting primarily European art forms of ballet, dance, and things of that nature than we do on supporting and maintaining the first languages of this continent, which are going to be lost forever if they disappear. That's something important to reflect upon on Canada's 150th birthday, and something this department can do.

We can look at developing curricula for all schools that provide full and clear histories of first nations with respect to treaties and those relationships that we have.

We can have sustained support for first nation artists and the kind of work they do to help tell those stories, to help believe in the revival in communities and really to help be that first wave of change.

You can support full recognition and commemoration of first nations in this country in Canada's 150th anniversary. One of our leading elders all across the nation, Elder William Commanda from Kitigan Zibi, passed away recently. He had a real vision for Victoria Island being a gathering place in the nation's capital, an important touchstone, ceremonially and also in the commemoration aspect, which is something that this committee could get behind as well.

We could create a hall of leaders to recognize the contribution of first nation leaders across this country.

There could be an indigenous peoples library, both real and virtual, to catalogue and consolidate historical contributions that indigenous peoples have made to this country moving forward.

So Canada at 150 is an opportunity to share and fully support first nation peoples and an understanding of their histories and supports of this country. I think that through supporting those histories, perspectives, and aspirations we can support the way forward to ensure that the next seven generations have a much better path than the previous generations.

Thank you very much

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you, Peter, for your presentation.

Next is David MacKenzie.

Go ahead, David.

Mr. David MacKenzie (Deputy Minister, Department of Tourism and Culture with Senior Responsibility for Prince Edward Island's 150th Anniversary, Government of Prince Edward Island): On September 1, 1996, Parliament declared Charlottetown the birthplace of Confederation, and if Parliament said it, it must be true.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's really a pleasure to be here in front of this committee. I've had some counterparts speak to you over the last month or so and I was very envious of their ability to get in, so thanks very much.

I'd also like to thank you for bringing this group together at the table, because Peter, Deborah, Paul, and I have had a chance to connect, and we're also exploring ways to work together as we think about 2014 and how it connects to 2017.

Prince Edward Island is extremely proud of the fact that Charlottetown was declared the birthplace of Confederation, so much so that we have a lot of “Confederations”. We have the Confederation Centre of the Arts, the Confederation Trail, the Confederation Bridge, the Confederation Centre Children's Choir, Confederation Lincoln Mercury, and Confederation Realty. You name it, we have Confederation on it.

In fact, as many of you know, the Confederation Centre of the Arts was opened on September 1, 1964. It was Canada's national gift for the meeting of Confederation 100 years before in Charlottetown. I am honoured to have been the centre's CEO for the last 10 years.

Fifty years later, plans are afoot in P.E.I. to showcase the role that Prince Edward Island played in nation building, and I'd like to share a little bit about that with you.

In August of this year, the provincial and federal governments agreed to form a company called Prince Edward Island 2014 Inc., of which I was president and CEO for about three months before I moved into the deputy minister role. However, I retain some of my responsibilities.

The vision of that organization and the partners is to create an unforgettable 150th anniversary year in 2014 that will serve as the catalyst for the sesquicentennial of Confederation in 2017. It will unify, inspire, and serve as a source of pride for Prince Edward Island and for the country.

There are five pillars of activity that have been outlined in the draft plan being presented through a series of public engagement pieces, starting on Thursday. They include celebration, which is the party side of any anniversary. That's really important for people. I know that you've talked to Peter Aykroyd and Helen Davies, and they both talked about the importance of celebrations to the public.

There's also commemoration: creating stamps and coins for 2014, public awards, and public recognition.

Hosting is an important element. The first ministers conference will be held in September 2014 in P.E.I. We've challenged every organization, every group, every minister, and all federal counterparts to bring their conferences and meetings to P.E.I. in 2014. We also met just last week with people from the Juno Awards, the Canadian Country Music Awards, and the Gemini Awards. We're negotiating with the East Coast Music Awards about being in Prince Edward Island that year. That's the hosting side of things.

There'll be a large marketing piece, which will be national in its scope. We'll be working closely with the 2017 organizers across the country to connect the Charlottetown conference and the values that shape it with the rest of Canada. That marketing program will be very much national in scope, as will all the elements.

The last piece is legacy. We often talk about legacy in relation to creating new buildings and leaving behind that type of infrastructure. We're not so sold on that in this case.

We think that an idea was created in Charlottetown and later in Quebec City in 1864, and that this idea ultimately became Confederation in 1867. We're challenging ourselves and you and folks across the country to think about ideas that could change the country, the world. What kinds of things can we do in 2014 to connect with 2017?

The other piece is public engagement. We have a couple of pieces planned for public engagement. On Thursday, we are hosting about 100 people from across P.E.I., from all walks of life, to come and look at a draft strategic plan designed to help us shape the vision for 2014. We're fortunate that Deborah is going to join us, because we've been in talks with the Trans Canada Trail about possible partnerships for 2014 and 2017.

We also have, in February and March, a national forum planned under the leadership of Peter MacLeod, who spoke to you from Toronto. Peter has been engaged by us to bring together national leaders to talk about 2017 in Charlottetown and how we can connect the fact that it has been 150 years since the Charlottetown conference.

● (0900)

I'll speak briefly about the governance. We're proposing a national advisory trust to lead the 2014 celebrations, with a board of directors and a project review committee that would be made up of Canadian Heritage, which has been designated the department responsible for 2014, ACOA, the provincial government, and P.E.I. 2014. We work very closely with ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, in the region on the tourism and economic objectives the celebrations will have.

Turning to money, we've developed a budget. It's kind of been an interesting process, because we've been asked to think about what it would take to do that, so of course it's a chicken-and-egg process when we don't have the programming solidified, which we do not want to have until we have public engagement. But we have developed a budget, and the Province of P.E.I. has stepped up to the plate and committed to a total of $40 million over the next four years, both from provincial coffers and also from the municipal and private sectors. So that's an objective. We also have a request in to the federal government for $30 million, to be started next fiscal year, and we've been in discussions with Canadian Heritage folks on that.

The biggest objective of the funding would be to develop what's called a P.E.I. 150 fund, which we would develop criteria for and groups would apply for. We've looked at examples like Vancouver's 125 and the Quebec 400, which groups and communities and citizens are eligible to apply to in order to develop their dreams. Again, getting back to the philosophy, we're not necessarily about creating new buildings and infrastructure. We're about supporting and strengthening the existing, from coast to coast to coast, as part of 2014.

I understand that you've had a large number of witnesses here. I was looking at the list of some of them. Colin Jackson is a predecessor of mine at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, and we've talked about the work he's doing in Calgary. As well, you've had Peter Aykroyd and Helen Davies.

The year 2017 will be and should be a very, very special year in this country. The vision we have for 2014 and the 150th Charlottetown Conference is no less ambitious and should serve, as it did in 1864, as the catalyst for 2017, a celebration of Canada evolving as a nation, of considering all things possible as we reach for 2017, and it should serve as a time to reflect on the values that were shaped in Charlottetown in 1864.

Thanks for your attention. I look forward to your questions and comments.

The Chair: Thank you, David.

We'll move on to Deborah.

Ms. Deborah Apps (President and Chief Executive Officer, Trans Canada Trail): Good morning, Minister Moore and committee members.

It's a pleasure for us to be here with you this morning. I'd like to thank all of you for inviting us to share with you what we believe is going to be one of the centrepiece opportunities for celebration in 2017 as we celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary. The year 2017 will be memorable for Canadians, but the years leading up to 2017 will be equally as memorable and exciting for the Trans Canada Trail as we work towards the completion of the trail, which, as we speak, is about 73% completed across the country.

I'd like to hand this over to Paul LaBarge, who was involved in the celebrations for Canada 125. Paul is the new chair of our board. He will walk you through where we are today and describe our vision for the future.

Thank you.

● (0905)

Mr. Paul LaBarge (Chair, Trans Canada Trail): Thank you, Deborah.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[*Translation*]

Members of the committee, it is a real pleasure to be here today.

[*English*]

You have in front of you a summary of our notes. You also have a book that gives you some idea of the majesty of the Trans Canada Trail, an article from the *Globe and Mail*, and as well, a package that is the case for support, which has been developed as part of the fundraising.

[*Translation*]

Canada 125 was the entity created by the federal government for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. There were a broad range of events and projects but the most successful were those that brought Canadians together as Canadians, as participants, and not as spectators.

[*English*]

So the success of Canada 125 was focused on events that were initiated by the people, with Canada 125 being an enabler. We see Canada as a community of communities, caring, sharing, and cooperating. These are the best values of Canadians. You see that right across the country.

[*Translation*]

We have been a nation of trails and travellers since the earliest fur traders and voyageurs. To me, it is a history that dates back to the coureurs des bois and the adventures of La Vérendrye and des Groseillers. It encompasses all the adventures in our history. There is enormous pride for our vast spaces and the splendour of our magnificent country.

[*English*]

The Trans Canada Trail is a legacy project from Canada 125. It was actually founded—again—in P.E.I., in Summerside, in September of 1992, and was the brainchild of two individuals, Bill Pratt from Calgary and Pierre Camu from Ottawa. It was seen as a way of creating a permanent recognition for Canada in the day-to-day life of Canadians and it has been an enormous success.

Why did they think that was the case? Because the single most successful event that was planned by Canada 125 was something called the block party. That doesn't refer to the Bloc Québécois, but actually to a block in a city. That initiative came from a woman in Winnipeg who had sent in the idea.

What happened was that Canada 125 created a bucket, effectively, and in that bucket were streamers, logos, flags, ideas—initiatives for a party. Those parties all took place on the same day, July 1, 1992, and it was an enormous success. The amount of correspondence and reaction we had from the public with respect to that one event.... The reason was that it allowed people to share Canada. It allowed them to meet their neighbours as new friends. Also, it allowed everybody in Canada to celebrate their differences and our common values.

Like the railway and the Trans-Canada Highway, the Trans Canada Trail links Canadians to one another, but it does so at human speed. It's a huge success. It has been driven by local communities as part of a coordinated plan that is owned by all Canadians. It has been built by thousands of donors and volunteers in every part of Canada.

[*Translation*]

The trail enjoys the tangible support of every province and territory as well as 400 local trade groups. We have been fortunate to receive non-partisan support from all governments. We can say that every prime minister who governed since the start of the Trans Canada Trail has given it its support. The same goes for governors general.

The trail was one of the two entities recognized by the federal government in its original legislation as a qualified entity for the donation of environmentally sensitive lands.

● (0910)

[*English*]

Today, the trail is close to 75% complete. There are 400 community-based trails, each with distinct features and unique and diverse landscapes. In fact, Peter noted that every time he travels in Canada, he tries to find a piece of the trail to exercise on. I do the same thing. So does Deborah. So do many, many Canadians. It is within 30 minutes of 80% of Canadians. When it's complete, it will extend 22,500 kilometres, from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic Oceans, and will link over 1,000 communities and all Canadians.

The names of the trail sections evoke a sense of place in history: the Waterfront Trail, the Niagara River Recreational Trail, the Voyageur trail, the Confederation Trail, the Lachine Canal trail, the Grand Concourse, and the Fundy trail. All of them represent parts of our history.

[*Translation*]

Across the country, there are many important trail projects in progress and we definitely have momentum. There are 200 identified gaps in the trail, totalling approximately 600 kilometres.

We must establish links between wilderness trails and urban areas. Some require major engineering and construction to overcome rugged terrain, while others require thoughtful design to protect environmentally sensitive areas. We know exactly what needs to be done and we have a strategy in place.

[*English*]

The Trans Canada Trail has recently established a foundation—and you have the package in front of you—for a $150-million fundraising campaign. The national leadership consists of Hartley Richardson and Valerie Pringle, so we don't lack for spokespeople or enthusiasm.

We want to create opportunities to engage every Canadian in connecting with this national legacy project. The trail is a collective endeavour. It is a tangible and symbolic tie that brings us altogether, and we believe is a source of national pride.

One of the things about the trail is that it really speaks to our history as Canadians. It speaks to us with respect to our character as Canadians.

This country started with trails, followed by a railway, and then, in 1963, that was followed with a highway. Now we're going back to the future. We've created a trail that is a pedestrian trail, a ski trail, a biking trail, an equestrian trail, and, in some places, a water trail. Why have we done it? Because there's a strong sense in our public, a strong demand in the public, for preservation of our natural environment and, also, an opportunity to share this country in a human way.

I think the trail demonstrates some of the best characteristics that define us as a people. The determination of and the effort made by the individual volunteers who build and maintain this trail are truly astounding.

[*Translation*]

It helps us celebrate the best of ourselves — the places, the stories and the experiences that make us who we are. It celebrates Canadian values.

By generating passion and commitment among Canadians for our country, the trail makes Canada strong. It inspires us — emotionally, intellectually and spiritually — and gives us hope. I would say that the human aspect of the Trans Canada Trail is extremely important for our families and our country.

[*English*]

The trail is one of the largest volunteer projects ever undertaken in Canada. More than 100,000 people have contributed time, energy, and resources, and most of them tell us that they're motivated, not by their own self-interest, but by a desire to make a difference and leave a legacy for their children and their grandchildren.

I have to tell you that it's inspiring to me to meet these people, it's inspiring to see their efforts, and it's inspiring to be part of this whole exercise.

● (0915)

[*Translation*]

The Trans Canada Trail board, partners, local trail groups and volunteers are committed to fully connecting the trail by 2017, in celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary.

The connection of the trail will be a historic milestone for Canada and Canadians. Indeed, it will be the culmination of two and a half decades of work by volunteers. These are not only individuals, but also community organizations, corporate partners and governments.

We see the trail as a lasting gift from Canadians to Canadians. There is a French expression that says "*ce n'est pas un cadeau*", meaning this is not a gift.

[*English*]

This is not a Trojan Horse; this is a real gift. This is something that is truly grassroots. It's a huge success because it is an initiative of individuals from all across Canada. This is not a top-down exercise.

I noticed that in the testimony from Mr. Aykroyd he indicated that, in his experience, the most significant factor was that the initiatives came from the local groups. That was our experience at Canada 125, and I believe it is something that you should keep as a fundamental consideration in anything you recommend. The initiatives have to be initiatives that come from the wellspring of creativity that Canadians have to offer, because their ideas will be driven by genuine emotion. This is the energy that you will need to harness in order to make the 150th anniversary celebrations successful.

[*Translation*]

As we mentioned, we are linking the celebrations on the Trans Canada trail to other events: the war of 1812 Bicentennial, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the 150th anniversary of Canada's founding fathers of Confederation and the Charlottetown and Quebec City conferences in 2014. There are many other opportunities to be explored.

[*English*]

This opportunity touches Canadians in so many ways. I think if you start to do the analysis, you will see that it speaks to Canadians' health and fitness. I'm sure you've all seen the reports about the difference that getting up off the couch and getting onto the trail means for heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and even cancer.

A half an hour a day on the trail can save lives. It can join families. It is a strong, significant element of culture and history. It is a strong educational force and reinforces our commitment to the environment. Most importantly, it is unity of purpose and unity of people.

In 2017 the Trans Canada Trail, when complete, will be the longest and grandest recreational trail in the world. It joins, as we said, all Canadians, 1,000 communities, and three oceans, and it represents a huge opportunity as the venue for the 150th anniversary celebrations.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Paul.

Thanks to all of you for your presentations.

Now we'll begin our question and answer period. The time for questions and answers is seven minutes per questioner. Each member is responsible for their time, so we'll try to keep it to seven minutes.

We'll start with Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I appreciated all the submissions today.

Mr. LaBarge, the Trans Canada Trail in Atlantic Canada is basically complete, is it not? You can probably travel from one end to the other, almost, other than through Newfoundland on it—

Mr. Paul LaBarge: Well, certainly the Trans Canada Trail is all dedicated, but we have 144 bridges to build in Newfoundland, if you actually want to make it right across.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Right.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: So if you're part amphibian, you can do the whole thing, but otherwise you'll need to have other equipment.

● (0920)

Mr. Scott Armstrong: I admit that the bridges over the water are needed, but having travelled a lot of it myself, I know you can get through it.

Across the country, however, you're not in that situation. You have about what...600 kilometres left to complete?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: It's 6,000.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: So 6,000 kilometres left to complete. What's the timeline for that?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: It's 2017.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: So it will be completed by 2017.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: That's our goal and ambition.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: What is the role the federal government has in supporting your organization now? Is there anything we can do to help you reach that goal of completing it for 2017?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: Well, actually, we have a very strong partnership already with Parks Canada. They are very much helping us to reinforce the public messaging of the trail. Because our strong belief is.... It's not quite *Field of Dreams*, but we do strongly believe that if you build the trail, people will come. That certainly has been our experience to date.

What we would like to see from the federal government is what I would call a full private-public partnership, in the sense that every dollar we raise from the public, we'd like to see matched by a dollar from the government.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: What is your current relationship now? What support are you getting with Parks Canada?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: It's excellent. It's with Parks Canada and it's an excellent relationship. They have been hugely supportive. As I said, they have been working with us, certainly for the last two years. I have to say throughout the entire history of the Trans Canada Trail, we've enjoyed great support from the federal government for a number of things. We've enjoyed support with respect to contributions for capital construction, and we've also enjoyed support with respect to events that have taken place on the trail.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Thank you.

I'm going to move to Mr. Dinsdale.

During the Olympics, which was a great celebration across this country, aboriginal people and first nations communities were involved heavily, particularly in the opening and closing ceremonies, and in ceremonies throughout. Can you describe a little how that participation was reached between the organizers and aboriginal communities? Can we learn any lessons that we can apply to our 150th anniversary?

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Thank you very much for the question.

I should say at the outset that I wasn't directly involved in the engagement process leading up to the 2010 Olympics. Certainly there was a tremendous outreach. The areas you indicated, the robust opening and closing ceremonies, were significant.

Equally significant, if not more so, was the treatment of the four host first nation communities around that area. As heads of state, because we were in their territory, they were welcoming people from across the world to their territories. They actually had a significant role in sitting with the Governor General and with other heads of delegations in attending those appropriate events and being treated as such. It certainly set a high-water mark with respect to their participation.

I will say that there was a lot of engagement leading up to the Olympics—for sure. There was an excellent outreach process that was utilized in terms of a number of activities leading up to that, including days for first nations children to come out. There was supposed to be a legacy fund developed from some of the proceeds of the first nations-themed merchandise...well, they said it was first nations-themed merchandise, but they all had inukshuks on them, so I don't know how they all weren't first nations. But anyway, I digress. I'm sure they had some special classification.

It was a very interesting, multi-faceted engagement process, and I think it was that respect and outreach that is the primary lesson that can be learned.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: We could use the process used in leading up to that as a model to reach out for the 150th. That would be a good place to start.

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Absolutely: it was well received.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Mr. MacKenzie, you talked about legacies not being buildings, but being more about ideas and thematic approaches, I guess, for this 150th anniversary for Canada. Can you be more specific in what you'd like to see coming out of this, basically from the 150th in 2014 in P.E.I. and then also the nationwide one in 2017?

Mr. David MacKenzie: Thank you for the question.

The philosophy that is growing is one of looking at the existing state of infrastructure in the country, and in Prince Edward Island specifically, and asking if we need to build and create new problems that all of us as public officials have to monitor very closely. When we look across the breadth of existing organizations—the Trans Canada Trail is an excellent one—we think there are a lot of winners existing that need strengthening and support. As a philosophy, we are suggesting that perhaps we should think of legacy in a different way.

There's an example in Prince Edward Island that best illustrates it. There's a movement afoot to create a new provincial museum in the province of P.E.I. I will not get into that debate, but we have a decentralized system of heritage right now in P.E.I. There are seven historic sites across the island. They are all in desperate need of programming and capital dollars.

As a thought, instead of creating a new museum with new management, new expenses, and new funding requests, we're suggesting as one concept that we build on the existing seven sites across the province. They are in rural parts of the province and they reflect all cultures on Prince Edward Island. That's an example, Mr. Armstrong, of that philosophy of supporting existing infrastructure.

● (0925)

Mr. Scott Armstrong: You're not looking at big, new initiatives and grandiose buildings and places that mark 150 years. You're looking more at supporting existing structures and finishing or supporting projects that are under way to make sure we do them right.

Mr. David MacKenzie: Exactly. Fulfilling the dreams of existing projects is the suggestion I'm making—and that we made in the draft document—but it has not been approved formally by partners at this point. Yes, that's the philosophy.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: What government structure do you have in P.E.I. for the 150th celebration in 2014 ?

Mr. David MacKenzie: What we're proposing is a national advisory board of 11 to 13 people. Similar to the Confederation Centre of the Arts, they have a national trust. It's very helpful in connecting with the provinces and territories, with a provincial focus at the board of directors level. Then there's a project review committee that would be made up of the deputy VP of ACOA and Canadian Heritage senior officials out of Moncton to sort of govern the budgeting perspective.

The Chair: Your time is up, Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Thank you.

The Chair: On to you, Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Good morning.

Thanks to all of you for joining us.

I try to learn something new every day and I learned something new today: I didn't know the Lachine Canal was part of the Trans Canada Trail. Part of it runs though my riding, so I am very excited.

My first question is for Mr. Dinsdale.

You've touched on some very hard facts about conditions today. With that in mind, I'm just wondering.... We've heard a lot of previous testimony about reconciliation and about connecting with that history and connecting with that present, but in a way that moves us forward as opposed to pointing fingers and saying “this happened”. With that in mind, for the 150th anniversary, what do you think the reach-out to the first nations and aboriginal community in general in Canada would be? It's a hard question.

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Well, the Olympic question I think was telling with respect to a process in outreach for that particular event, and also for 2017, in whatever you recommend with respect to a particular curriculum, event schedule, or maybe a series of events leading up to it.

Our national chief has called for a fundamental resetting of the relationship between the first nations and the crown, as we describe it. The 150th anniversary is a natural time for us to reflect upon that. If we're going to be engaged in a national dialogue on what activities we should undertake, it is incumbent upon us to talk about this chapter of our history and talk about how we move forward.

I think the 2010 Olympics provide an interesting framework with which to begin those conversations. Dave and I had a brief conversation about engaging with them directly on that in the planning and the process. I'd also encourage us to lift our heads up a bit and reflect more broadly on where we're going. I think the reconciliation movement is incredibly important. Everything can always be better, but I think the apology and the follow-up have been significant. I think the signing of the UN declaration has been significant. But there's a lot more work we need to do.

Recently, for some reason—I'm not sure why—I ended up at the National Film Board website and viewed their documentary on the 1987 constitutional conferences that were meant to deal with the first nations issue, the aboriginal issue that wasn't resolved prior to 1982. It really is telling in regard to the kind of the work we have outstanding as a country to do on the place of first nations in this society, and I think we're seeing some of those challenges in the broader conditions we have today.

So that's almost out of the purview of this particular study, but I think it's important that we reflect upon those challenges, and that we don't lose that in this idea of parties and commemorative trails. That's not to disrespect the trails, but I don't think we need to lose this with respect to the broader vision we have of the country and where we're going as a society. I think it's an important part to keep at the forefront.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Any time you celebrate or commemorate a moment in history, it is important to look at both sides, at the balance between where we've come from and where we're going. It's a common saying that you don't know your future until you know your past, and I'll take that a step further to say that you can't move into your future until you reconcile with your past.

My other question is along the same lines. What would the message be from the aboriginal community to themselves and to Canadians? This is a hypothetical question, but what do you think the message would be for the 150th anniversary?

● (0930)

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: I think it would be very much that we're still here, we're part of Confederation, and we're moving forward together.

I'm not that old, and when I was in grade eight studying history, I learned that the Indians died with the buffalo. I saw the big picture at the end of a railway track with all these big buffalo bones all piled up and some buffalo soldier with his gun, on the mound, looking quite vindicated. Then we moved on to the rest of Canadian history.

I think there is a much greater story to tell, and it is coming out. The apology process is important, but you see polls and you read the comments on websites, like those under the story on Attawapiskat last night, and you understand that there is such a lack of understanding of the history, the current conditions, and the current relationship. That's the kind of thing we need to bust through together.

So I think the primary message is that we're here, we have a historical relationship, and we're going to continue and grow that relationship moving forward.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

For all our other guests, I guess, on making the tie to the connection, what kind of interaction with the aboriginal peoples has there been in developing the Trans Canada Trail as far as... anything...? Has there been much contact? Has there been much interaction on the development of the trail?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: There has been some, but not as much as we want. In fact, I was speaking with Peter just before we started this session, and our belief is—as he has articulated—that it is essential that aboriginal people be a part of the Trans Canada Trail. There are lands that are on the route of the Trans Canada Trail.

In fact, I was saying that one of the most moving experiences that the Trans Canada Trail has seen was a presentation by a group of Métis to our meeting in Saskatoon, I believe, about the black horse trail. That trail was in fact an original Métis trading route. They wanted to register it as part of the Trans Canada Trail. More significantly, they had organized a gathering of Métis who had actually travelled the trail using traditional methods, with traditional equipment, traditional camping, the whole works, right across this whole section. Truth be told, it brought tears to everybody's eyes to see the sincerity and the commitment that these individuals displayed.

We believe that the Trans Canada Trail can be part of the educational outreach, and that the aboriginal community will be seen as a continuing, vibrant part of the fabric of our country, both in the past and in the future.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

I'm—

The Chair: You had just one second, and now you have no more at all—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Okay.

The Chair: We'll go to you, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our guests.

I want to get to a specific technical issue with our three guests.

Before I do that, I've been waiting for some time now, Mr. Dinsdale, for you to come here, because I think your story or stories will play an incredibly large part in the 150. I would not presume to know where to start telling the story you want to tell.

No, actually, that's not true: there is one story I'd like you to tell. I'm hoping, from a personal point of view, that the story of the Beothuk in Newfoundland and Labrador is one of those stories. I think that serves as an example of how you can tell the story of nations within a nation in the 150. What an incredible story, as you've mentioned. It is more than the basic narrative that's out there right now.

There is the War of 1812 and there are the constitutional talks of 1987, as you've brought up, but there's so much more to this, and the human element is played out in sound bites of a minute and 30 seconds every night, and quite frankly, that's a shame.

I think 2017 will serve as a pinnacle, a fantastic example not only of creating something for people to visit but also of the message that goes out about the myriad stories across the country.

That being said, yes, I'm very interested in museums. I'm very interested in these centres people visit. But there is another way for people, young and old, who are not able to visit but want to know the story and want to know first nations history. I think there is a substantial investment we can make in the production of content across this country. You mentioned the National Film Board with regard to 1987. Do you think that is a key component?

● (0935)

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: They're certainly a major player. I'm fascinated to see old media translate to new media and how they've opened up their archive for all Canadians and for the world, I assume, to view and utilize. It's spectacular.

I think we have a fourth national broadcaster in the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. I don't pretend that it's perfect—no one is—but I think it's a tremendous lightning rod for us to go to.

We have a terrific arts community. We get a glimpse into it as Canadians every year at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards in the wonderful show that the foundation puts on. I think we have many, many talented artists out there who require support.

This department, frankly, has a major role in supporting them, and it has. I would continue to support them, and perhaps a particular focus on 2017 would be in order as well.

Mr. Scott Simms: I'm glad you mentioned that, because APTN actually is a world example. It's actually used.... When I was in Europe, people brought it up with me when we discussed public broadcasting.

Switching gears for just a moment, perhaps at some other point I can have a conversation about the Beothuk.

Whenever we put together money for a celebration on a local level.... I agree with you that the initiative should be local. The content and flavour of how you celebrate 150 years is a narrative that can be told by the smallest community. When it comes to our funding, yes, Canadian Heritage obviously is always there, but the regional development agencies are really kings and queens when it comes to the funding.

You talked of ACOA; I know of ACOA. Across this country, we have three or I guess four others now. How do you see your role with them in partnering to create this? Or should the mechanism be one big funding mechanism to look after all projects across the nation?

I see that you're eager, so maybe I'll stop here.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: I'm actually going to let Deb answer this one, because it reflects the experience she has been developing with these organizations throughout the years.

Go ahead.

Ms. Deborah Apps: Thank you for your question.

We work with provincial and territorial partners in every province and territory, and those partners are the ones who lead the discussion with the regional development agencies. We give them the information, the collateral, and anything that's happening on a national level to ensure that there's synergy with the conversations we're having with Parks Canada or Canadian Heritage.

They then have those conversations, and we're the backup. For instance, I was at a meeting in B.C. where we were talking about the Sea to Sky Trail from Squamish to Whistler. We were talking to the agency about potential funding.

That is happening.

Mr. Scott Simms: Just before we get to Mr. MacKenzie, I think that when we had the economic action plan, a lot of this infrastructure money was filtered through the regional development agencies, which I thought was a good idea because they had that on-the-ground knowledge. If we make it more of a national program, I find that we lose some of that local vision. That's just my opinion.

Go ahead.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: If I can just make one comment on our experience, and certainly my experience.... I've been at this for a lot of years and I don't think I've ever seen a project that enjoys such a level of cooperation as the trail does in terms of the community, the volunteer base in the community, the province, the region, and the federal government. I mean, if you look at the numbers of the contributions that have been made over the years, it is remarkable just how consistent it is, with the participation at every level.

Mr. Scott Simms: I would agree, because my backyard is 100 metres from your trail, and I am a big fan. I get a lot of visitors that way. I love it.

Mr. MacKenzie.

● (0940)

Mr. David MacKenzie: Thanks. We work very closely with the economic development agency at ACOA. It is a blend. I agree with your comment that the closer to the ground the public organization is, the better they are attuned to the issues and the realities of the street.

The beauty of the work we've been doing is that we have both ACOA and Canadian Heritage at the table at the senior level, and I think that's a magnificent testament to the objectives we have, which are tied to heritage and economic development.

Mr. Scott Simms: Do I have time?

The Chair: You have 10 seconds.

Mr. Scott Simms: You look great today, Mr. Moore.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Scott Simms: You look great, and thank you.

I have a quick comment, though, in that I would agree with you. I think the infusion of community money—maybe through a theme of 150—through our local regional development agencies would be a good idea.

The Chair: You have no time left.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: As a comment, Wetaskiwin, which is a buffalo jump in Saskatchewan, is a site that was done in conjunction with the aboriginals. It was a Canada 125 project and represents a perfect example of the cooperation at every level in making that a success.

The Chair: Mr. Young.

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

First I'd like to say to Mr. MacKenzie that I really like your idea for a theme for 2017: that all things are possible in Canada. Is that what you said? Yes? We've heard some other ideas. I have to say that personally I think that's the best one yet, so thank you for that.

Mr. LaBarge, I wanted to ask you.... First of all, I think the idea of the trail as a way to celebrate Canada in the years leading up to 2017 is terrific. Plus, we've received advice from others that we should build on things we're already doing well, so I think it's a perfect match. As well as its partnerships with Parks Canada, local communities, and the private sector, it's truly national. It raises awareness of our environment and environmentally sensitive areas. I think it brings Canadians together, it's reflective, and there's a way to build synergies on awareness of our Canadian histories, so for all those reasons I certainly agree with you.

I wanted to ask you how we could get some ideas out of these communities. You mentioned that it's grassroots. How can we go out now—because we have a lot of time now—to get ideas out of these communities to participate in the trail across Canada, to make it happen, and to get more people out there? For example, to get more people on the trail, including the disabled, which is a challenge, but I'm sure they're up to it, and they deserve to see more of Canada as well, or to raise more funds to complete it.... How many kilometres are left? About 6,000?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: Six thousand. Some of it is moose pasture.

Mr. Terence Young: You'll have to tell me about that because I don't know exactly what that means—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Terence Young: —but it doesn't sound good. It sounds like a challenge.

And to connect our environment to our history and how it influenced our Canadian character...? Sorry, it's a big question.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: It's a big question. I'm going to split it in two. I'll answer part of it and I'll ask Deb to answer part of it.

In terms of the remaining portions that are to be done, when I say “moose pasture” it's because some of it is very remote. I sometimes make the jest that if anybody is going to walk on it in a particular year it will be because there was a plane crash in the vicinity. It is remote. It's a big country. Our biggest partners going forward will be the Federation of Canadian Municipalities—the smaller members—and they also, hopefully, will be aboriginals, because a lot of these remote areas are in fact aboriginal areas.

We are also looking at a hugely active social media campaign as part of the educational effort to get families on the trail. It's our belief that the trail is totally accessible—in some areas, more so than in others. There is no question that in urban areas accessibility for the disabled is much higher, simply because the finish is much higher, but it is a commitment of ours and of our trail partners to make the trail as totally accessible as possible.

As well, there is no barrier to use of the trail, so it is in fact a perfect family activity. It's the kind of thing where you can get a family out on a Sunday afternoon to go for a ski, for a walk, for a run, whatever. In that sense, it is oriented to both health and family. We will be initiating a very large social media campaign to reach out to young people, because we need this to become an intergenerational activity.

As for how you can participate in this, Deb, will you talk about the regional meetings? It's the perfect time.

● (0945)

Ms. Deborah Apps: We're just completing regional meetings with our partners across the country. I was in Thunder Bay on Sunday and Monday meeting with a group, and in Halifax on the weekend meeting with our Atlantic partners, and we're going to Regina next week.

The opportunity is for them to feed into our strategic plan and our strategic vision for 2017. We're asking the question: what can we do together as we work towards the 150th anniversary of Confederation and what do the next five years look like? What are the celebrations? Who are the communities we need to engage?

The conversations have also extended into tourism, to provincial tourism agencies, and to local and municipal governments, of course.

Another meeting that we'll be having when we're in Regina, which gives you an example and a flavour of the interest, is a provincial symposium for Saskatchewan, thanks to the support we've received from the federal government.

Saskatchewan is struggling to get a lot of trail built. They're at the point that it is about 39% complete, so there is a lot of trail to cover and to build. There is a symposium that will bring together all levels of government and all interested organizations that want to help to build the trail. As part of this, we'll be talking again about the road to 2017.

As much as possible, we're opening, the conversation to as many people as possible so that we can engage not only all levels of government but many in the community.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: We are sharing those results with Parks Canada.

Mr. Terence Young: Thank you. That's very helpful.

Mr. Dinsdale, you mentioned improving conditions; I think you meant it just as a reference point. Maybe 150 years from now the conditions will be at the point where we'd like them to be for our first nations, but I want to ask you whether you have any ideas on what targets might be set annually, leading up to 2017, for specific improvements on quality of life for first nations, targets that can be committed to by the band councils and the provinces and the federal government. I'm thinking of perhaps by 2012 raising participation in public school education and equality; by 2013, ensuring that potable water is always available year-round on first nations reserves; and by 2015, developing small business for sustainable communities. I'm thinking of those kinds of goals, which the three parties could agree upon together and set as goals, so that in 2017 there is a visible and a real change in the quality of life for first nations—something worth celebrating.

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Thank you for the question.

I don't have that particular list here for you today, but that's exactly the sense we're trying to talk about when we say “a relationship”.

In December 2010, the Prime Minister wrote to the National Chief about wanting to work on these issues. In the spring, he committed to a joint Canada-first nations action plan that is really meant to, in these next number of years, look over what the specific deliverables are that we can deal with together. I think you've touched on them. We've talked about education being the primary priority. You mentioned housing, of course...well, I don't know if you did mention housing, but housing and water are usually also referenced with respect to infrastructure issues.

Economic development is very important as well, and we have a number of real structural barriers with respect to treaties and the claims process—both comprehensive and specific claims—which require examination and some modernization. If you do those things, I think we're coming a long way to beginning to address the conditions so that first nations themselves can be active partners in the federation. We may have some disagreement under the goals and objectives of Bill C-27, but accountability and transparency itself are important, naturally, and improved governance is important, naturally; there are just different pathways to get there.

Those are some examples without specifically saying that we need to raise the education rate to a certain percentage of the national average. In some communities, less than half of first nation children are graduating from high school. I guarantee that if half of the children in your ridings were not graduating from public education, there would be royal commissions, inquiries, and a massive national call for action, but that's the reality in first nation communities, so we as a country need to come together around that particular priority. The others are important as well, but if we were to focus on something, I'd say education is it.

Mr. Terence Young: Would it be helpful—

Are we out of time?

The Chair: Yes, you're out of time. When I stick to it strictly, it goes pretty fast.

Madam Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, lady and gentlemen. As I forward, I will ask my questions in French.

A couple of years ago, I was still working in a museum in Montreal, Pointe-à-Callière. There was a group of half a dozen First Nations' people — I believe they were all Iroquois — who came from both Canada and the United States. There was also somebody there representing, let us say, the English, but no one represented the French. I am just giving you a broad description.

These people went from one place to another in Montreal and were looking for sites where various events had happened. I should say that it was a religious group. Their goal was to confront past problems in order to heal. These were healing ceremonies. When they got to the museum, they came as tourists. But then they found out that the museum encompassed a cemetery where French as well as First Nations' people were buried, whose remains date back to the foundation of Montreal. A dozen First Nations' people who were catholic are buried there. They started with their ceremony and they called on me as a representative of the French. It was very touching. I was literally crying. However, I already knew the situation. I knew there were problems in the past and that there is a need for healing. However, this is not a knowledge that most people have.

Mr. Dinsdale, you talked earlier about cooperating and working together in order to turn the corner. I believe this is essential, not only for First Nations, but also for the descendants of the Europeans. I know this has already been mentioned, including by Mr. Young. In my view, there are very important projects and legacies. These are not only physical legacies — which are important for the 150th anniversary —, but also social legacies or rather psychological legacies. I already mentioned aspects such as social housing in general. This would be an important legacy of the 150th anniversary. This is what we are looking at in today's discussion. You said it was difficult for First Nations to tackle certain issues, such as clean water.

However, I have another example. There is a project called Wapikoni mobile. I don't know if you are aware of it. It has been cancelled. It was a grass roots project that tried to establish a foundation for First Nations youth to get back to work, to have a foundation not only to get back into a job, but also to survive. Do you believe this type of program should be put into place and could help the healing and promote cooperation between First Nations and other nations?

● (0950)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Thank you very much for the question.

First off, we have such a fascinating history, and we know so little about it. You mentioned the Iroquois group that came out. They were members of the Six Nations, I am sure, most likely Mohawk, given the proximities.

People often say, well, you're first nations, and ask, "Why aren't you Canadians first and why do you have this other concept?" Sometimes I describe the Mohawks around Akwesasne and St. Regis, near Cornwall. They have part of the reserve in Ontario, part of the reserve in Quebec, and part of the reserve in New York State. They have five jurisdictions governing their affairs: Canada; the U. S.; the State of New York; Ontario; and Quebec. So when you ask a young person growing up in one of those communities who they are, they will say, "I'm a Haudenosaunee, I'm Onkwehon:we, I am not Canadian, I'm not American, I'm not Quebec...". So it's this fascinating history we have of how borders come across somewhat arbitrarily during the history, the dividing of nations.

I know about the project that you're talking about, but not the particular excursion to do some reconciliations. If you haven't read it already, *Champlain's Dream* is a fascinating history and account of the first foray into Canada and the nature of the relationships, particularly between the Mohawks in what is now New York state and Quebec and this area, and how they engaged. It's part of the history that we don't know enough about.

On storytelling like Wapikoni Mobile's, we actually met with them last year when the funding first was cut. The National Chief wrote a letter of support, I think. The arts more broadly are those that are able to tell the stories we can't always articulate. Their projects had many different functions. One, of course, was employing young people and training them for future opportunities to tell those stories and have them out there. Those, like many arts projects, are incredibly important, and we would support more of them to tell the stories and try to foster that relationship.

● (0955)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Wapikoni is an arts project that aims not only at telling a story but also at developing basic skills, such as following a schedule and that kind of thing. I believe this is very important.

You also talked about self-determination for your governments. How do you view self determination within the framework of the 150th anniversary celebrations? How could your ideas be advanced in order to really reflect what you would like to see, not only during the 150th anniversary but also more generally within your culture?

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Well, I think the broad framework of inviting first nations of the host areas of your communities but also across Canada—representative of reconciliation and how this country has developed—would be fitting. An appropriate role in the ceremonies, being associated with the ceremonies, is very important in our culture, of course, and in most first nation cultures, as is recognizing each other, the sharing of gifts and of extensions of peace and relationship, whether through treaty or simply through ongoing engagements. I think that would be an important kind of practical opportunity there.

We have traditions of coming together in ceremonies and also socially, like powwows and things of that nature, so it would be a very interesting dynamic to have these kinds of arts and festival relationships engaged as well.

I think a lot of people may come with a little lighter agenda when they come to this committee, particularly for Canada's 150th, and we've reflected a lot about it, about whether we simply talk about the ceremonial events that are incredibly important. This department has some responsibilities around languages, arts, and culture that could certainly feed into this and are critical. I think we also need to put down our placeholders, though, to say, “This is where the relationship is and this is where we need to go”.

I'm a chief operating officer, so I'm very operationally focused. I think we need the bigger thinkers among us to help drive that vision forward, but if we have the framework, it's certainly going to help facilitate a more inclusive relationship. Again, 150 years from now, let's look back and see where we are, and hopefully we won't be seeing the same things on the news.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Hillyer.

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

I have a question for Mr. Dinsdale.

You mentioned something in your introduction which really intrigued me: the idea of investing in the preservation of first nation languages.

I produced a documentary film about the Blood Indian Reserve, which is right by my place. The question that we were trying to learn about was, what makes a difference? I have adopted siblings from the tribe. Their mom died of a Listerine overdose, but her brother is sober, middle income, and teaches Blackfoot immersion; same parents, different situation.

The question was, what makes the difference between the 20% who are like Andrew, who are sober and free, and the people who are in bondage? We found that three elements were present in almost all of the people who were free. They were: they spoke Blackfoot, they were involved in religion of some sort, whether Christian or native, and they had a strong relationship with their grandparents.

We also found that the loss of identity was worse than suffering itself. There was a teenage kid who said: “What the heck is an Indian? I have no idea what that means”. His parents and his grandparents were taken from their communities and taught not just that they were savage, but that they shouldn't even exist. Then, in the sixties and seventies, we came to our senses—whatever that means—and said that the pre-Columbian Indian was a wonderful thing, it's what makes them wonderful. But this kid says, “I can't be that, so my worth is based on something that can't even exist”.

So how can we help first nations people? When you look at roots and people who study their geneology, you see that there is great power in freeing people if they connect with their ancestry. But how can we do that in a forward-thinking way without giving them this desperation of not being able to go back?

● (1000)

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Thank you for the question.

I think what you highlight are certainly the impacts of the residential school experience, of that child's grandparents either having successfully avoided residential schools or being able to survive it with the culture intact in some manner, and of that allowing them to be parents and move on. I think that's an important dynamic of what you describe.

I think this idea that our culture is static, that after contact and signing of the treaties in the west, and the plains in particular, with the long headdresses and the teepees...if that's the view of it, then we should fully anticipate that our British brothers and sisters would have powdered wigs and covered carts and that kind of.... Cultures evolve, as our culture has certainly evolved.

With respect to languages, once they're gone, they're gone forever. We can't go back to a homeland somewhere, and reintegrate back into that culture, back into that language. When those cultures die, when the Beothuk died, when other nations die, those languages are gone forever.

We go back to the elders and we ask what should we be focusing on. When we do drug and alcohol programming, when we do employment training programming, why don't we just go to the mainstream institutions...? Because they don't work. If the mainstream institutions worked, then we would have success in these interactions right now. It's about rooting those programs in culture, and the language is in the culture. Our elders say that culture is the language. It expresses world view. It expresses your position in the cosmos. It expresses how you interact with nature. It expresses all aspects of your identity. Once you lose that, where do you go to define that identity? This makes culture so critical.

The push really is to invest in those cultures. You mentioned the Blackfoot immersion program. There's an incredibly successful program in the Six Nations, where they're doing immersion in Mohawk and Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa for their communities. It's really a push that requires support, because it is so tenuous right now. The projection is that of the 50 aboriginal languages now, only 12 are going to survive a generation: what can we do today to stop that? That is a great legacy for Canada: to take this on as a project.

Mr. Jim Hillyer: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hillyer.

Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My thanks to our witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Dinsdale, you've been careful to qualify your comments and to state that some of the issues affecting first nations and aboriginal peoples maybe aren't in the purview of this committee. Well, we're spending a hell of a lot of taxpayers' money on meeting to discuss Canada 150. If we're going to do that, it would be good if we could come out of this with some significant recommendations on a legacy that would make a difference, especially in the lives of first nations people.

If we're going to wait till 2013 to guarantee potable water for first nations communities, we'll have waited too long. I think there's an urgency. The concern I have with celebrations is that they can sometimes blunt the urgency of our social issues, especially as they pertain to first nations and aboriginal communities.

The minister has promised that in whatever way this celebration is going to come together, first nations will be consulted. I'd like you to advise us, first, on the best way in which first nations could be consulted, and second, on the governance makeup of the Canada 150.

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Consult early and consult often: that's important relationship-building advice. One of the things the Olympics did successfully was to go to various advocacy groups and ask them for help on the planning committee, to join in and bring their ideas forward. There were opportunities for them to plan and carry out their own events. Those are the kinds of things that would make sense.

It's not just first nations, of course; there are Métis and Inuit who should be respected and engaged in this. I would recommend urban peoples and native women as well. There are groups out there that could help support and facilitate where it's appropriate.

It would be outstanding for this committee, in light of Canada's 150th and the bigger picture, to talk about resetting the relationship. You could talk about the tone that could be set. You could talk about the importance of moving forward together. You could talk about supporting ongoing reconciliation across the country. I think all of those things would be spectacular outcomes for this committee in your report.

● (1005)

Mr. Andrew Cash: If my honourable colleague, Mr. Brown, has an opportunity to ask a question, he may talk about the lack of knowledge of Canadian history in our schools.

Reflecting on that, it strikes me that part of the reason we have a lack of knowledge of our history is that our history is painful. There are a lot of troubling aspects in our history, and the reconciliation process is one way in which we're attempting to approach these issues. With over one million first nations and aboriginal people in this country, and with the population explosion within those communities, we and our country have an opportunity to reset that relationship.

Are you suggesting that as a legacy of Canada 150 we should work towards a fundamental shift in our relationship?

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Absolutely: I think legacies can be overt and stated and I think legacies can be understated.

When people think of the 2010 Olympics, they think of the participation of first nations, Métis, and Inuit in those celebrations. I don't think there was ever an overt statement that we were going to have these four host nations treated as heads of state, that we were going to have these significant celebrations and engagements—like the first nations torch-bearer program, the legacy fund, or the whole gamut of what took place.

The legacy was the engagement. The legacy was the high profile that these leaders had at the event and the level of engagement that took place. It didn't diminish the Olympic event at all. In fact, I think it elevated its overall perception in Canada and across the world. The legacy can be presented simply through your actions, and I think these would be the most poignant ones to demonstrate in the long term.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you. I have just one—

The Chair: You have about eight seconds.

Mr. Brown.

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

Thank you to Mr. Cash for reiterating something that's very important to me, of course, which is this promotion of our history.

Maybe I'll start with our friend from P.E.I.

I'm impressed that you're here today. We all know that Prince Edward Island is an important tourism destination, and you're going to be using our history and the development of our country. I've talked about it a bit before. One thing that impressed me with the CBC was the Sir John A. Macdonald program, which ended with 1864.

Maybe you can talk a little bit about how you're going to use the 2014 and the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown conference as an opportunity to promote P.E.I. as a tourism destination and to help promote our history at the same time.

Mr. David MacKenzie: Thank you very much.

You've touched on the biggest challenge of any anniversary and that is to blend the celebratory components that the public adores and the sometimes hard truth—good and bad—that exists, particularly as part of anniversaries.

I must admit that Mr. Benskin talked about how he likes to learn something every day. I'm just fascinated by what I'm hearing from Peter, because one of the challenges that we have is how to incorporate the first nations into 2014. Basically, they were group excluded from the discussions in Charlottetown in 1864 and 1867, as were women and as were other groups.

We don't have an answer for that yet, Mr. Brown, but the challenge that we have taken on wholeheartedly is how to work with groups to determine the relationship between the haves at that point, in the 1864 and 1867 period, and the have-nots, and how that has changed over the last 150 years. It won't be easy, and the challenge will be to blend it, again, with the party scene that people expect. By working with people like Peter, I'm looking forward to getting the answers to that big question that you asked on the educational role.

I'm positive. We've done a little bit of surveying across the country about whether people know that the Fathers of Confederation first met in Charlottetown, and the knowledge level is extremely low. The federal government's focus on what *The Globe and Mail* calls anniversary-palooza, I think, is a great step to start thinking about things like the War of 1812, the kickoff of World War I, the 75th anniversary of World War II, etc. Those moments will be important to us, and I think they will help us tell the story of 1864 in Charlottetown as well.

● (1010)

Mr. Gordon Brown: Great. Thank you.

I'd like to get to our friends from the Trans Canada Trail. Back in 2000, I believe it was, you had a relay across the country, which I participated in. Part of the Trans Canada Trail, the Cataraqui Trail, runs through my riding of Leeds—Grenville. It crosses into my riding at Chaffey's Locks. I was at the event and I handed off the water being carried across the country to Dan Aykroyd, who happened to be here a few weeks ago with his father.

I haven't heard a lot about the Trans Canada Trail since 2000. Maybe you can tell us a bit about what's been going on. I didn't realize you had gaps that haven't been completed yet. Maybe you can tell us a little about what's been going on since 2000 when you had that relay. Also, how do you think we can really use 2017 and Canada 150 to help reignite interest in the Trans Canada Trail?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: After 2000, the Trans Canada Trail was faced with quite a challenge, because a lot of people sort of said, well, that's done, and went off somewhere else. Since then, a lot of rebuilding has taken place on the Trans Canada Trail as far as the organization goes.

One of the challenges of the Trans Canada Trail—the simplest way to phrase it—is that there's a mob of volunteers. Mobs, as you probably gather, are kind of tough to get motivated and get going in a single direction.

Since 2000, we have probably added about 23% to the trail that was completed. More importantly, we now have a robust national network of trail groups that will get us to the completion point. That is probably the short answer to what has happened since 2000.

There are elements we look at. For instance, in that time period, Deborah joined us. We have built relationships with organizations like the Historica-Dominion Institute. We feel that in order for the trail to become truly iconic it has to link our past and our future. With a lot of what you might look at today, we were building the trail on the ground, but also building the infrastructure of the trail in people's minds and getting that sense of local ownership.

We certainly made a great effort and managed to get letters of support from every provincial premier as a part of the trail so the federal government would see that this was a non-partisan effort and something that was reflective of all Canadians. That's where we've been dedicating the bulk of our attention.

The Chair: Mr. Nantel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Let me state right away that what Mr. Dinsdale from the First Nations Assembly told us this morning is very important. This was the deepest reflection we heard since the beginning of our hearings on the 150th anniversary of Canada. Mr. Hillyer's question was especially touching and your answer was just as much so.

Considering all that needs to be done in order to be able to celebrate without being ashamed of what lies in the background, we have a lot of work ahead of us.

I hope the Assembly of First Nations will be widely consulted on the preparation of the celebrations. We cannot help but agree that the Trans Canada Trail is indeed a perfect image. I would imagine there are some repairs to be made but those sections would be fewer than those who remain to be built.

This brings in more of the other aspects by which we could approach 2017 by which I mean carrying out unifying projects. Yours has taken 21 years to reach this point.

An hon. member: It started 20 years ago.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: So, now we have reached your 20th anniversary and it is not complete. What kind of support do you expect from Canada 150 in completing the trail? You put forward a very interesting scheme where the government would contribute one dollar for each dollar collected in your funding drive.

So I have two questions. What kind of funding or official participation of Canada 150 for the completion of the trail are you seeking? Do you believe the trail could be used in different ways?

We heard from people here who proposed all sorts of approaches, including getting Canadians to travel. Do you believe the Trans Canada Trail could be one way for Canadians to travel throughout Canada while benefiting, for example, from reduced prices in hotels? Could we envisage that communities along the trail might develop a hospitality infrastructure to allow people to discover Canada?

● (1015)

Mr. Paul LaBarge: These are very interesting questions.

Let us talk first about funding. Whether it is Canada 150, Parks Canada, Environment Canada or any other agency that provides funding does not really matter to us. If it gets into the budget, yes, that would be fantastic.

I am struck by one similarity, among others, which I believe is essential: in some way, our history is like a thread. The trail is a continuation of that thread. The 150th anniversary is not a stand-alone event. It is about reaching a certain point and continuing on. So it is not a celebration of a day, but a celebration of our existence. This is why we believe that the Trans Canada Trail could indeed be a preferred site for these celebrations. We recognize that we need methods to encourage the use of the trail, whether it be a passport tailored to each region or special hospitality arrangements for travellers. One of our board members who is 90 years old decided to walk a hundred kilometres in each province and territory before dying. And he did. So we need to foster a level of enthusiasm that reflects grass roots values.

So I look at things and I say to myself, frankly, that this is a prime opportunity not only to encourage visitors but also to meet other people on each visit and make new friends. Furthermore, and this is even more important, it is a means to get acquainted with the reality of others. I for one consider myself very lucky to have been able in the course of my career to work all over Canada and I am extremely proud of it. To me, it is an enormous gift. It is beneficial, whether we are talking about Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Alberta of Quebec.

Let's suppose I went to Mont-Tremblant using the *P'tit Train du Nord*: 500,000 people use that trail every year. Five hundred thousand people are an enormous number! We want to generate this level of enthusiasm and we want it to be the trail that attracts people from one region to another. There is no politics in that. It is simply Canada.

● (1020)

[*English*]

The Chair: *Merci, monsieur Nantel*.

Ms. O'Neill Gordon.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, guests. It's certainly great to have been able to sit in on your presentation. It was very enjoyable.

My first comment and question are for Mr. Dinsdale. I have to reiterate what everyone else was saying here this morning, which is we certainly appreciate and value the success of the Olympic winter games. The best part was that we were able to witness the participation of all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and I know this is what we want to look forward to in our celebration of 2017.

Coming from the constituency of Miramichi, I have three aboriginal communities in my riding. I also have the experience of teaching on one of the reserves in that area. I realize that this topic will be front and centre in the schools and will be enjoyable.

My question is, for those who have small communities like I have in my riding, how do the plans unfold for those communities to get involved—not only the students but every member of those communities—so that everyone comes to really realize the importance and the great value we have of being Canadian and of being so proud of our country? Could you tell us how this will unfold in each community?

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: I can't pretend to have all the answers on this in particular. I think that even with regard to the Olympic participation there was a lot of debate in first nation communities about whether to accept the torch going through their community, because there were concerns. There were concerns about the tenure of the land in B.C. in particular, the land that some of the games hosting was going to be on, and a concern that Canada has its history, so why would they be celebrating it? There is certainly not a consensus across the country.

I think what was successful about that was the effort of engaging those who were ready and willing to participate, and I think this process could do just that. We could put the call out through our networks and through our relationships directly with chiefs and councils in the communities, and with other providers, to say that there is an opportunity here to tell our story, to be a part, as partners in Confederation, of the witnessing of this, to be a part of the ceremonies themselves.

Those who are ready will come and will engage. I think you do this through respectful relationships with organizations such as ours and others to help open the doors and say that this is a safe place to work together on this project. I think it's an example of that “consult early, consult often” mentality of open dialogue.

There will by no means be consensus on our participation amongst our communities. They're very diverse, just as they were during the Olympics. But I think as well that we could find an important critical mass who are willing and able to participate.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: The next comment goes to you, Mr. MacKenzie.

Being a neighbour to P.E.I., I certainly, along with almost all Canadians, value the fact that P.E.I. is the birthplace of Canada, because you have a lot to offer with beauty and hospitality. I know that a lot of celebrations will be taking place in Charlottetown, but do you see celebrations extending out into the other little communities as well?

Mr. David MacKenzie: Absolutely. The philosophy we're taking is that the conference happened in Charlottetown, but this is actually a national celebration of that conference, and we believe activities should take place not only across Prince Edward Island but across the country.

One of the reasons we've been in discussions with Deborah and Paul is that very reason: we are looking to partners who can provide a trail from coast to coast to coast for Charlottetown. So absolutely, yes.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Thank you.

I'll pass the rest of the time over to Paul.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. MacKenzie, let me ask you quickly whether I can ask a question concerning Province House without causing you grief back at home. Is it okay?

Mr. David MacKenzie: Let's give it a shot.

Mr. Paul Calandra: I've never been to P.E.I., unfortunately, but I want to get out there.

I've read that there is a bit of debate over Province House and that there are some infrastructure needs required there. Where we are in that process? It would certainly be a real shame, if we can't come to... I don't want to say an agreement, but if by the time we celebrate 1864, we haven't fixed that important site.

If you can't answer that without causing yourself grief, then don't.

Mr. David MacKenzie: It's not a problem at all. It's an excellent question.

The Fathers of Confederation met in Province House. It's an anomaly in that it's a national historic site but also the working legislature for the province of P.E.I., so it's owned by the Province of P.E.I. but managed by Parks Canada. That in itself creates a lot of fun. It needs about $4 million worth of renovations to bring it up to working speed, if you will, because it has been neglected, partly because of the operating agreement and the pointing of fingers about who is responsible.

The great news is that Minister Peter Kent was on Prince Edward Island about three months ago and announced a $2 million contribution to that $4 million project. I think all of us are anticipating that the rest of the job will be done as part of the 2014 celebrations.

● (1025)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: It's me again.

Something just kicked into my head, Mr. LaBarge, when you were talking about the part of the trail that is an actual section the Métis used in their travels across the country. I was wondering whether there was any thought to exploring and possibly adding to the trail some of the more significant trails that were used by the underground railroad to bring escaped slaves into Canada, again as part of that commemoration.

Mr. Paul LaBarge: I guess what I would say to you is that our first mission is to finish linking the trails. To the extent that any of these historic sections are part of that overall linking, absolutely we include them.

Our next step after the linkage is to develop what we call the feeder trails, so that any secondary roads that have significant historic, cultural, or scenic import would be the next phase of our mission.

One of the problems we have is that we're trying to eliminate orphan sections of trail. I know that we have a section down around Windsor that was funded by Chrysler years ago—by the Chrysler employees, actually—but I'm not exactly sure whether it's on the route. I believe it touches a portion of the section that was related to the underground railroad. To the extent that we can accommodate a section that is historically and culturally significant within the overall linking....that linking is our mission number one at this stage, because it ain't “Trans Canada until all of it is actually joined together.

Our next mission, right behind that, is the additional pieces that would then become contributors to and participants in the overall trail sections. The idea is to build the spine and then start to add on the ribs and the other bones.

Ms. Deborah Apps: Let me add something to that about our relationship with the Historica-Dominion Institute, which Paul has mentioned. Although there will be the spine of the trail, when we can identify, with our relationship with Historica-Dominion or with Parks Canada, what has happened five kilometres or three kilometres away in any direction, that's part of our development of the history. To be able to put this on our website, there may be discovery panels, as there are now already, that will be enhanced.

So although areas might not be on the trail, our goal is to point people in a direction where there are some interesting opportunities for them to learn more about culture and heritage.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thanks to all of you for coming.

Mr. Dinsdale, this is a question for you.

Mr. Simms is lucky to have the Trans Canada Trail at the end of his backyard. Not too far from my backyard, there was a discovery of a village of the Wendat tribe, I'm told; it was a village circa 1500 to 1530. It's a pretty remarkable place. They say that about 2,000 people lived there. There were some 90 structures on the site and there was a palisade. We're still in the process of trying to find where the burial grounds were.

They're naming a school Wendat Public School, but one of the problems is that nobody in the town has any idea why they're naming a school Wendat Public School. Nobody in the town really has any concept of what was actually here and that it was a trading route back and forth to Lake Simcoe.

I don't like to talk about resetting a relationship, because you're always building on a relationship. I find that concept almost...I don't want to say insulting, but a lot of people worked very hard for a long time to help build a relationship—not always good sometimes, but sometimes good. I like to think we're always building on it.

One of the problems we have now and have had in the past is that for far too long in this country when there's a special event we'll ask first nations to participate, and then as soon as the event is over, we ask you to go away. I think the Olympics started to change that.

In a community like mine in Stouffville, I don't think any of the school kids have ever talked to somebody from the first nations. There has never been a visitor to the school, somebody from first nations, to talk about what was actually happening on that site. How do we, as part of the 150, help people...? My town is 40 kilometres north of Toronto. How do we get first nations out more into the...? I know that you focus on a lot of issues that are very important, but how can we provide funding to—and I don't know whether it's funding or what it is—get them into the schools, to get them out there to explain what's happening? We have a great little museum in Stouffville and it doesn't talk at all about first nations who were on the site.

How can we do that and maybe start helping people understand that it's not just the troubles they might see on the nightly news, but that there was an incredible history before that?

● (1030)

Mr. Peter Dinsdale: Thank you very much for the question. I appreciate it.

I should tell you that I lived in Barrie for eight years and commuted to Toronto, so I'm familiar with the many Huron and Wendat remains being found in the Lake Simcoe area.

If we're not going to reset the relationship, then let's go to counselling. Maybe we'll start there and find a way to stop our past behaviours, and then go on to better behaviours moving forward. I think that's the intention.

There are many different players engaged with outreach to Canadians and engaged in this kind of cultural sharing. Again, a very important one—in the purview of this department—is the friendship centre movement. The National Association of Friendship Centres has been with you since 1972, when your Secretary of State.... That relationship has been maintained all the way through to today; I saw that their executive director came before you earlier.

There are friendship centres in Barrie and Toronto and organizations out there that do this kind of outreach. Are they resourced enough to do it all? They would probably tell you they're not, but they can make that pitch to you. I think it's just as important that they reach out to you as well, or to your school boards, to engage in more of an ongoing basis. There's a tremendous powwow in Toronto and all the school kids go down to participate and see active and live cultures. That's an important kind of contribution.

I think there are many partners who can participate as part of this awakening we're having in this country about the relationship. The apology and all of this residential school disclosure stuff is helping, and people are asking more questions and reaching out a bit more.

We haven't talked about our shared history with respect to those older peoples. My community is Curve Lake, Ontario. We have petroglyphs, which are drawings that were made, and we have serpent mounds and burial mounds in the shape of snakes. We have no idea why they're there. We were just told that the old people did it. We believe that the same old people were in St. Louis: these mounds were also built there and the same kinds of societies were developed. So there's a lot of history that we need to explore and understand together, and it's work that we can do together moving forward.

I got a bit off track here, but I think the idea of how we engage with each other with respect to recognizing our past is important.

There's one other thing I'll mention, if I can have a quick minute. I don't think we should be ashamed. Earlier, someone said we were going to be ashamed of our past at the 150th, but I think we should be proud of how we're going to move going forward. That's how I think we should look at it. Yes, we can acknowledge that past, but let's be proud of how we're going to behave moving forward. I think that's something we can do together. That's just another context I wanted to raise.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

The last question will go Madam Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Thank you.

My question is for Mr. LaBarge or Ms. Apps.

In the Northwest Territories, is there a trail that leads to the Dene Nation?

● (1035)

[*English*]

Ms. Deborah Apps: I'm sorry, I don't know for sure about that. Mostly it's water routes, but we are now, just recently, in communication with our partner in the Northwest Territories, who is actually attending our meeting next week to talk about a trail they would like to build for 2017. So I would have a better answer to that in about a week.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: I have a piece of information for you. When I was at the University of Alberta, the Dene Mapping Project was being carried out. It was about mapping the traditional trapping lines. This was for the purpose of land claims. So maps have already been drawn. They could be very useful as far as trails are concerned

Andrew, would you like to share my time?

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Cash: Sure. Thank you.

In the introduction in this book, it's touched on that Canada's 125th was fraught with some difficulties, in that Canadians weren't in much of a celebratory mood, and the times dictated more than the planning did how Canadians responded to Canada 125. It's to your credit that you've managed to keep something from that celebration alive—

A voice: Well, I have my cat.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andrew Cash: —because I have to tell you that I don't think many people remember Canada's 125th birthday and the celebrations that went with that. You say there was a big block party and I'll take your word for it.

But here's what I want to ask you about. Five years is a long time in the life of a country like ours, and who knows what the political dynamics and the conversations of the day are going to be then? Based on the history that you have and the experience you had in Canada's 125th, where circumstances kind of overtook the celebration, how can we keep an eye on that?

Mr. Paul LaBarge: That's a very good point. I'll hark back to my experience as the secretary of Canada 125.

The first thing to mention is that Canada 125 was done like a nine-alarm drill. It only started months before the actual year and, as a result, we were playing catch-up ball virtually from the get-go. It had a limitation on infrastructure. It started with somebody within government and, during the course of that year, it transitioned away from that person to Bill Pratt, who had been the project manager for the Olympics in Calgary, as well as for Heritage Park in Calgary. Ultimately, Bill was brought in because they needed a project manager.

So a good chunk of the time was spent playing catch-up. The first thing I would commend to you is that what you're doing today is a huge step forward in terms of actually having a plan, as opposed to being in a reactive mode all the way down the field.

The second thing is that—when I look back again at the success of the events—there were well-attended events, but they were there and then they were gone. They had no residue. It was like a flash grenade: there was a little bit of ash and that was it. There was a bright light, a lot of noise, and it was done.

Consistently what we found was that anything that had a local impetus to it was a good expenditure. Wanuskewin is a good example of a site that is still running today for children to go and see. That was a good expenditure. The Trans Canada Trail, as far as I'm concerned, was a fantastic expenditure.

I think if we look to capturing the imagination of people, then I think.... In fact, one of my strongest beliefs is that what the Trans Canada Trail gives people is a sense of place, a sense of hope, a sense of community, and a sense of the future. Those are parts of the reason why it has endured. The reality is that it's a place where people go every day. I ride the trail every day; it's part of my life.

That's what we want to do and I think that's actually the impetus behind making Canada 150 successful: to create something that will continue to give to Canadians every day, on a go-forward basis. It will provide bridges across the country, bridges amongst communities, and bridges amongst generations. When you take your grandchild out for a walk on the trail, that memory will last a lifetime. These are gifts that will continue forever. So how to make a success out of it is to make it an icon—something that is so representative of us as a people.

I keep coming back to something, because I've heard a lot today. I grew up in a family of historians. My mother was a medieval historian who wrote 13 books, and my uncle was Mason Wade, who wrote *The French Canadians*. I lived immersed in history. When I look at the things I've read in my own past—such as*The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, the Norse legends, and the aboriginal legends...those are the types of legends that should be part of the trail. That's how we make Canada. That's how we make the trail part of our imagination and part of our identity: it becomes one of our icons. That's where I think the success comes from.

● (1040)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cash.

Thank you to all of our witnesses who appeared today. We have had a wide-ranging discussion and we appreciate your input, Mr. LaBarge, Ms. Apps, Mr. MacKenzie, and Mr. Dinsdale. Thanks to all of you for being here. Your comments and suggestions are all going to be considered, and we may be calling on you again to provide more input as we develop our suggestions on Canada's 150th. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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