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The Honourable Rob Moore

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• (1145)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC)): Welcome to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage and our study on Canada's 150th anniversary. We are pleased to have a few witnesses with us here today. I apologize to the witnesses for our late start. We had some votes in the House we had to attend to.

We'll get started right off by hearing our witnesses' opening comments. We will have ten minutes for those opening comments, and then we will go into our rounds of questions and answers.

We will start with the Canada Science and Technology Museums Corporation. The floor is yours. Go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Denise Amyot (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Science and Technology Museums Corporation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also wish to thank the members of the committee.

On behalf of the members of our board of directors and its chair, Mr. Gary Polonsky, allow me to thank you for having us here today and giving us this opportunity of sharing our ideas with you.

[English]

Please allow me to first give you a brief overview of who we are and what we do. The Canada Science and Technology Museums Corporation's vision is to engage all Canadians in their past, present, and future scientific and technological heritage.

[Translation]

The Canadian Science and Technology Museums Corporation has close to 230 employees who work in the three museums it operates and administers, that is to say the Canada Science and Technology Museum, the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, and the Canada Agriculture Museum.

[English]

In other words, as I sometimes like to say, what we cover spans everything from Holstein to Einstein. It is a testament to how pervasive and ubiquitous science and technology are in our daily lives.

Currently our corporation's offerings reach over nine million Canadians, both online and offline. We have had nearly 14 million visits in the last 20 years across the three museums.

We are here today to present the contribution our three museums will bring to the celebrations surrounding the 150th anniversary of

Confederation, which are being planned to mark this important milestone our country will reach in 2017.

[Translation]

2017 will also be an important milestone for us as we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Museum of Science and Technology in 1967.

[English]

As you know, innovation in the fields of science and technology is an important priority for the Government of Canada. It is an important factor in the competitiveness of our economy, the prosperity of our nation, and the well-being of all Canadians. Our legislated mandate compels us to support these priorities.

Our mandate is twofold. On one hand, we are responsible for keeping alive the memory of the numerous scientific and technological innovations contributed by Canadians to the world. As one reporter writing about us in the *Ottawa Citizen* put it this weekend, we are a bit like the nation's attic—a fascinating place full of treasures where generations can celebrate and rediscover past accomplishments and get inspired for the future, lighting a spark of interest that may steer young Canadians towards careers in science and technology down the road.

[Translation]

By stimulating the imagination of the innovators of tomorrow in this way, by exposing them to the wide array of possibilities that are open to them and by showing them everything they have yet to discover, we contribute to the ongoing improvement of Canada's innovation culture, and to ensuring that we remain one of the world leaders in innovation. Our projects for the celebration of the 150th anniversary will build on our main strengths, that is to say our museums, our partners, the history of Canadian men and women, and our collections. Our celebrations will cover the past, the present, as well as the future of science and technology in Canada.

[English]

Throughout the preparation of our contributions to Canada's 150th celebrations, we intend to continue to rely extensively on the use of social media platforms to actively engage Canadians from across the country so they can tell us what we could be celebrating on that occasion. We will focus on objects, people, places, and careers using the past, present, and future.

•(1150)

[*Translation*]

The first part of our celebration will consist in identifying 150 scientific and technological innovations that have marked our history and changed the life of Canadians, as well as identifying related artifacts and objects. Our museum curators have already begun to identify some of these innovations and artifacts. We will be using social media to ask Canadians to identify the innovations or technologies that have affected them the most. We will use our museums, either in a real or virtual way, to celebrate our successes of the past 150 years.

[*English*]

The second area we will focus on is people, past and present.

As you may already know, the Canada Science and Technology Museum is home to the Canadian Science and Engineering Hall of Fame. It includes the likes of Alexander Graham Bell, who made it possible for Canadians from Newfoundland and Labrador to speak in real time with their fellow citizens in British Columbia, or indeed to anyone, anywhere in the world, at any time.

We also count among the inductees Sir Frederick Banting, the Canadian Nobel Prize winner who discovered insulin, with the result that for tens of thousands of people suffering from diabetes, a diagnosis of that condition is no longer a death sentence and they can lead healthy, normal lives.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Science and Engineering Hall of Fame is a very select club and only those who have made a phenomenal contribution to those areas are admitted into it. At the present time there are 51 members in this pantheon. However, as new members are admitted every year, and given the incredible richness of the scientific and engineering communities in Canada and of their work, our curators believe that it would be entirely warranted to see this number reach 150 by the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

We will celebrate these 150 individuals who have contributed to our technological and scientific heritage, while creating a link with the future. We are considering various activities involving members of the public so as to twin these great Canadian innovators with some young innovators of today who may one day, in their turn, be admitted into our hall of fame, thus creating a sort of hall of fame of young promising innovators who are making their mark in the fields of science, technology, mathematics and engineering.

[*English*]

The second aspect of our planned contributions to Canada's 150th celebration would deal with present places of great scientific and technological interest across the country, and invite Canadians to identify them, and to go out and visit them. This is a way to engage Canadians from all over the country to think about the place, literally, that science and technology occupies in their lives and all around them.

I'm thinking, for example, of TRIUMF, Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics at the University of British Columbia; Canadian Light Source in Saskatoon; and the

colossal engineering works of the James Bay hydroelectric dams or the Confederation Bridge.

[*Translation*]

By asking Canadian men and women to participate in identifying these 150 locations that have particular scientific and technological significance, once again through a dialogue between our experts and the public using social media, we will be able to make our contribution to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Canada, while remaining faithful to our mandate, which is to demonstrate to Canadians the influence of science and technology in the economic, social and cultural fields.

[*English*]

On the subject of places, I'd like to mention that we will bring into the fold of our celebrations those activities that are currently occurring under Let's Talk Energy, our pan-Canadian energy literacy initiative, which we launched last year and which is scheduled to culminate in 2017. We've begun gathering a network of partners, in 27 locations across the country already and from coast to coast, to help Canadians find answers to their questions and concerns about the sustainable future of Canada's energy production, commercialization, consumption, and distribution. We are aiming to have 150 partner institutions and venues to help us engage Canadians in a conversation about energy by 2017—Canada, as you know, being an energy country from coast to coast to coast.

Finally, I'll speak on the subject of future carriers and areas of research. For the third aspect of our strategy to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, we will give thoughtful consideration to our future. We need only to look back at the number of fields of inquiry and research that exist today, which were unheard of only a few years back, to see and appreciate that the influence of science and technology in all aspects of society will continue to grow, in ways many Canadians cannot imagine today. In order to give Canadians a glimpse of what the future might hold, we will identify the areas of interest or fields of research that will probably shape our lives tomorrow. Whether it be nanotechnology or genetic engineering, such fields of research are so vast and still so largely uncharted that we can safely assume they will continue to require Canadians' attention for decades to come. By making Canadians, especially young Canadians, aware of the fascinating questions that still need to be answered in the exciting new frontiers of science and technology, we may contribute to planting the seeds of future careers in the fertile minds of our young visitors.

Our strategy to mark Canada's 150th anniversary is based on our current capacity as an organization. We will, of course, seek to work with other organizations to maximize the impact of our resources and to gain broad national involvement in our proposed celebrations.

•(1155)

[*Translation*]

We are working among other things on the development of numerous exciting projects that may well see the light of day before the 150th anniversary.

[English]

Projects are shaping up, for example, on the science of hockey, on medical technologies, on food science, on space exploration, and on girls' participation in science and engineering, to name just a few.

[Translation]

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that aside from the pan-Canadian scope of our work, our museums are among the main tourist attractions in the national capital region. We are in second place among national museums with regard to the number of visitors.

[English]

In closing, as I hope to have conveyed to you through this presentation, the 150th anniversary provides the three museums of the Canada Science and Technology Museums Corporation with a variety of opportunities to engage with partners in a lively dialogue with Canadians from coast to coast to coast about our country's unique contribution to science and technology.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

We'll hear from the rest of the witnesses before we go into our question-and-answer rounds.

We now welcome, from the National Gallery of Canada, Marc Mayer, the director and chief executive officer. The floor is yours.

Mr. Marc Mayer (Director and Chief Executive Officer, National Gallery of Canada): Thank you, sir. Thank you very much for the invitation.

[Translation]

I would like to speak to you briefly about the National Gallery of Canada, which is now 132 years old. It was created in 1880 as a pantheon not only of Canadian art, but also of the choices Canadians have made on the international scene. The museum began by showing contemporary art. It exhibited contemporary art when it was created.

[English]

We have stayed fairly close to that priority ever since. Contemporary art is our priority; however, it isn't exclusively what we do.

Our collecting areas are contemporary art, Canadian and international; old master European paintings, of which we have perhaps one of the most important on the continent, and certainly the most important in Canada; an extraordinary and very comprehensive collection of photography, Canadian certainly, with one small qualification that I'll make in a moment. We have a very large collection of 19th century French and British photographs and a very important collection of 20th century photographs.

We have only been collecting Canadian photographs directly very recently, because there was a separate organization that did that for many years.

At the end of the 1970s, a deal was struck that the National Gallery, Library and Archives, and the National Film Board couldn't all be collecting Canadian photography. So Canadian historical

photography was collected, and still is, by Library and Archives. Canadian contemporary photography was collected by the National Film Board. That division of the National Film Board, the stills division, was merged with the National Gallery in the 1980s and is now part of our collection. We are speaking with Library and Archives in order to present Canadian historical photography.

The other area where we are very involved is indigenous art—there again, only from 1985 to the present. Historical materials we borrow from other organizations.

So those are our collecting areas.

• (1200)

[Translation]

It is the largest travelling art exhibition network in the world. We have a network of 40 museums with whom we share the national collection. I do not know of any other museum elsewhere that can organize between 35 and 38 exhibitions a year, sometimes more, sometimes less.

[English]

That's really an enormous number of exhibition productions. We really are the world champions, and that's just because of the nature of Canada and the nature of our organization.

Since I have been at the gallery one innovation has been what we call the branded galleries, but that's our colloquial expression. What we mean by that is the "NGC at" program. There is the National Gallery of Canada at the Art Gallery of Alberta in Edmonton. There was one that was named last year: the National Gallery of Canada at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto. We will be announcing a third one before the end of the year. This gives us a higher profile, and it is a true partnership, in that these museums tend to want their own exhibition program. They are not borrowing exhibitions from our catalogue of available shows.

[Translation]

This allows us to maintain a more direct relationship with those communities. This is based exclusively on our permanent collection, so as to keep costs down. We collect specifically to serve that network.

[English]

We're not only collecting for our location here in Ottawa, but really it's to serve the entire network of Canadian museums, of which we are a very, very important part. That has been very successful. And those programs are not imposed on our satellite galleries; they are actually devised together. We work together with them. And what's been wonderful about their success is it helps us think about another community outside of Ottawa, outside of the more abstract notion of our abstract community, which is the whole country. We're working now with specific communities, and that's been very helpful in getting us to really internalize and understand the idea of serving an entire country, which we always have done.

What we're planning for the 150th—I'm very excited about it—is a complete reinstallation of our Canadian permanent collection to integrate not only indigenous art seamlessly into the story that we tell of art-making in Canada, but also photography. With that, we've been in brief preliminary but very enthusiastic discussions with Library and Archives Canada and also with other organizations that can help us present material that we don't have in our collection.

By reinstalling this way we want to tell the true story of art-making in Canada going back many, many centuries, as opposed to just the *ancien régime* in France, and forward. We think it's important for our identity and for us to really understand more clearly and more accurately what we mean by art-making in Canada. This is something we've been doing for thousands of years, not just hundreds of years. So that's very important to me. We have a named curator of indigenous art, and we have a department that has been working mostly with contemporary art,

[*Translation*]

but also, increasingly, with historical material. Of course, we have to borrow expertise. However, it is very important to us to tell that story which gives a more comprehensive idea of artistic creation in Canada. Photography, of course, is part of that.

Temporary exhibitions are another project. In Ottawa and for our program of travelling exhibitions, we are very interested in 1917.

• (1205)

[*English*]

That is a very important year in Canada's history. It was the 50th anniversary of Confederation. That was 100 years ago. We're thinking of the 150th, but we're also thinking of the 100th anniversary since 1917. It's an important moment in Canadian art history as well as Canadian history. It's the year of all the great Canadian battles in Europe. It was the year that Tom Thomson died. It was one of his most productive years. Tom Thomson is a very important figure in Canadian art history. We plan to celebrate his 100th anniversary in a specific way.

We want to tell the story of Canada from 1867 to 1917, and that specific exhibition project is called "Invention of a Nation". We wanted to avoid the term "Birth of a Nation" because of the references that are not at all in keeping with the spirit of how we do things in Canada, so we found "Invention of a Nation" to be the correct term. But this is going to be in five years, and the titles in museum exhibitions tend to change quite a few times before we actually print the ads. That's one exhibition.

We've been working on an exhibition about art-making in the Second World War to frame within an international context the Canadian project during that period specifically, because it's really a very important moment in Canadian art history. The project on the Group of Seven, which has now become more and more well known in the world, is really quite unique, not unique formalistically, but really as a social project. These were what we call the nationalist landscape painters, the Group of Seven, and 1917 is a very important date for them.

We also have a commemorative publication.

[*Translation*]

This book will discuss art history in Canada, from 1867 to today. That represents 150 years of creation in Canada. It is a luxury commemorative publication which will be based on our permanent collection. I don't want to tell you more because you are still at the conceptual stage for the moment. We are quite enthusiastic about this project. In addition, a publication will accompany the reinstallation of the permanent collection.

Another recent initiative is a website device and an audio guide which do not discuss art history exclusively. We allow other voices to come forward and talk about these objects that make up art history in Canada. These are professionals from various areas who show us to what extent these objects, beyond their artistic and aesthetic function, can resonate with other ways of thinking and other professions.

Of course, we will be relating the history of art in Canada through the use of many voices and various methods, by using several avenues,

[*English*]

in order to multiply the points of access to Canadian visual culture. We also plan a publication specifically around the permanent collection of Canadian art.

That, in a nutshell, is what we're planning for the 150th.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation.

Finally, the Stewart Museum, Guy Vadeboncoeur, executive director, chief curator. Welcome. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Vadeboncoeur (Executive Director and Chief Curator, Stewart Museum): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank all the members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for having invited me to reflect with them on the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Canada in 2017.

The Stewart Museum is a private museum, a non-profit corporation, which has been in existence for over 56 years. It is located on Saint Helen's Island, in what used to be the military garrison built by the British in the 19th century.

Today I have made it my mission to tell you about the general situation of private museums, which make up between 95% and 98% of all of the museums in Canada. That will be the context of my first comments.

2017 will be marked by multiple commemorations—some of them were mentioned earlier—that are all important in their own way, both nationally and locally. In Montreal, three important events will be celebrated in 2017: the 375th anniversary of the city of Montreal, the 50th anniversary of Expo 67, and the 150th anniversary of Canada. It goes without saying that these two last anniversaries are historically very closely linked by the participation of the federal government at the time. In that sense, they also have lessons to teach us for the 150th anniversary.

Some public consultations organized by the City of Montreal were recently held; the city created the Office of the 375th anniversary of Montreal for that purpose.

I would like to share with the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage some of the conclusions of those consultations, as they contain elements that could in my opinion be useful in the context of your work. This consultation involved organizations that are representative of various sectors of Montreal society, citizens from various boroughs, and public servants from all city services, so that everyone had a chance to express their thoughts. A broad consensus was established around the need to affirm and consolidate Montreal's identity. I think that something similar could be done for Canada on the occasion of its 150th anniversary, that is to say that it would be a good opportunity to update Canada's image and consolidate its identity. I think that this could be an important element.

In this consultation, the concept of diversity prevailed. It is a key word which came up repeatedly, to the point where it became a key concept. Diversity was mentioned in connection with ethnic groups, linguistic groups and religious ones, as well as the different generations—young people, the elderly, children, everyone. It referred to inclusion and the equitable treatment of various groups, based on a principle of social justice in the programming of events for the celebrations.

The celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Canada should take Canadian diversity into account and open a dialogue between the various communities that constitute it. The population should play an important role in the planning and implementation of these celebrations. It would be advisable, among other things, to call on local artists and creators.

Finally, everyone knows that celebrations are an opportunity to party. However, the population of Montreal—and the same may be true of the Canadian population—also expressed the heartfelt wish that this be an opportunity to make related existing infrastructures permanent. One example is the creation of the Museum of Science and Technology in connection with Canada's centennial. This has become a permanent organization created at the time of a celebration.

• (1210)

The celebration thus becomes an opportunity to offer the population a way of continuing to express and celebrate its diversity and carry on the dialogue. There are currently several cultural institutions in Canadian society that could be consolidated in the context of these celebrations. This is the case for several museums, among others.

As for the position of museums, and of historical museums in particular, such celebration projects will generally arouse very enthusiastic reactions. As participation in a pan-Canadian holiday of such scope requires commensurate preparation time, the federal government will have to announce sufficiently in advance not only the means that will be put at their disposal, but also the parameters that will allow them to have access to them. I believe a preparation period of at least three years is necessary before launching the program.

Most museums are in a very precarious situation and this justifies the need for medium-term planning in the case of so-called extraordinary events. The vast majority of museums are private, non-profit organizations that have a public mandate to showcase our heritage, and very often they lack adequate means to do so. In order to participate in extraordinary commemorative programming, they must call on all sorts of sources of funding, public and private. This requires time, which monopolizes resources that would normally be used for daily management, among other things.

That is why I believe government aid that could be made accessible to museums for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation should take into account the precarious situation of most Canadian museums, on the one hand, and their diversity, on the other. Any organization or entity entrusted with distributing funding should have some more flexible rules than those that are presently imposed by the Department of Canadian Heritage, for instance in the context of the Museums Assistance Program.

Based on the experience derived from a career spanning more than 40 years in the museums field, and after having held the presidency of the Canadian Museums Association—which named me a Fellow of the association—as well as the chairmanship of the Société des musées québécois on two occasions, I can assure you that if favourable conditions are put in place, the creativity and spirit of initiative shown by museums—historical museums and societies, in particular—will come through in the development of varied, exciting, instructive and educational programming.

The Stewart Museum has just reopened its doors to the public after two and a half years of closure, due to renovation work to the heritage building we occupy on Saint Helen's Island. The permanent exhibition we renovated is now called "History and Memory". We use the plural in French. Why? Because we believe that there is no single history. History is an interpretive science. What we may call "our history" is made up of bits and pieces taken from an array of histories and is influenced by others, be it the history of the first nations, that of France, England, the United States, Europe, the history of discoveries and of sciences, the history of art, the history of attitudes and even of philosophy. This is true also of memory which is influenced by family traditions, schooling, information or disinformation from all sources. Memories are multiple and diverse, be they individual or collective.

We strongly believe that the role of historical museums is to offer a unique place where these histories are exhibited, where memories and the recollections that accompany them interact, meet and confront each other in an environment conducive to an opening up to self and others. Such important celebrations, marking the creation of a federal state like Canada, recognized for its openness and its great tolerance, should allow us to carry on our work in that spirit.

•(1215)

And to conclude, I would like to express a very personal wish. In the spirit of openness to others, the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation should mark the end of a less than edifying chapter in our collective history, and eliminate an inconsistency that is staining our reputation as a tolerant country. I would like to see the final abolition of the Indian Act. This would be a great step ahead in the definition of a truly inclusive Canadian identity. That is a personal opinion I am voicing. It does not reflect anyone else's opinion, neither my employer nor anyone else. It is personal.

That is what I had to say to you today. Thank you for your attention.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you to all of our witnesses.

We'll begin now the question-and-answer period, with seven minutes for the question and answer. We will start with Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wonder if you could talk about one of the things we've been hearing. We had individuals come from the Vancouver Olympics, telling us how excited people got from an event, which spurred on other discussions or people thinking about other things, like young people wanting to become Olympic athletes, and so on and so forth.

I'm wondering if you've given any thought to how 2017 can be used to engage young people, not only in getting them through the museums, but perhaps as a catalyst for them thinking about other avenues where they can look at turning this into something of a career, and going back then to their communities. Perhaps there are programs through the National Gallery that they can then bring back into their communities.

As my colleague from Brantford reminded me, the telephone was created in his riding, so perhaps we could get students from his riding who then could become experts in particular things and bring them back into the communities.

Have you given any thought to how we can do that? What programs are you using right now to get young people excited? How can they be made better because of 2017?

•(1220)

Ms. Denise Amyot: Thank you very much for your question.

I will start by saying that I am a prime example of that. When the Museum of Science and Technology was created I was a child, and I visited this museum and went on to study science, and my two brothers became engineers. Our three museums are very active with youth, whether it is with summer camps or virtually. We have a lot of materials for teachers, which they can download at no cost. We also have travelling suitcases and travelling exhibitions.

We believe it's very important for a country to have people interested in science and technology. I'm sure that you are all aware

that in the last ten years in fact this is where there has been the most job creation, in jobs in science and technology and engineering. Therefore, for us it's part of our mandate to excite youth in pursuing studies in science and technology.

If you look at the different projects that I mentioned, whether it was objects, places, places to visit that are not only in Ottawa, but across the country, we believe that this will give the spark to those youth, in fact, to pursue careers in science and technology. We're also thinking about doing things virtually where in fact there could be dialogue between youth across the country to that effect, like what we are currently doing with our energy project.

Mr. Marc Mayer: We have a program called "So You Want To Be An Artist". It's an online contest for youth that is slowly growing and one I'm particularly interested in. I think it's a great initiative. But we have a number of concerns in our field specifically. One is diversity. There is diversity in the Canadian art world, but it isn't really as reflective of the diversity in Canadian population as we would like. We would like to know why we have the same problem not only in art, but in art history as well. There's very little diversity in our schools in studying art history. In fact, there isn't very much gender diversity any more. It's mostly white women who are studying art history.

This is of concern to us in our field. This is also an issue in the United States, and we discuss this quite a bit among ourselves—museum directors at various conferences. We want not only that our organizations reflect the population in our country, but also we want to make sure that all Canadians feel that there are opportunities for them, particularly if they're very talented, in Canadian art, for them to participate and to represent not only themselves individually, but also their ethnic communities, as it were. So this is an issue we are grappling with.

Youth is also a big issue. One of our big problems, of course, is that art hasn't been digitized and it's not digitizable. So you can have a cultural experience with music that's complete through your computer. You can have a cultural experience with literature that's complete through electronics—I read mostly on my iPad now. It's the same thing with films, but not with art. You have to see the actual object, experience the actual video installation. It's not like a film. We've got sort of a lost generation in the visual arts, who have been fairly distracted by these machines they've grown up with, which are novelties in their family, etc. Art really isn't participating in the technological revolution, and we're having a really hard time understanding how it could.

So all these things concern us. But really, for the 150th, in reinstalling the Canadian collection, we have the general public and youth in mind, in that we want to simplify as much as possible the story we tell, and make it something you can learn very easily. We want to make it so that you can get a good sense of what the strengths of Canadian artists have been, what their participation has been in the history of Canada, and the meaning they have generated through the various generations, in ways that are easier to understand by a simple visit to the National Gallery.

•(1225)

Mr. Guy Vadeboncoeur: I cannot agree more with what you've just said.

I think it's this sense of giving an experience. And especially for history and civilization museums all over the country, we have the real stuff, the real old stuff that even sometimes you can physically access. You can touch it. I'm bringing forward all those aspects that we can find in most of the historic sites where you have interpreters who are actually re-enacting. This is not losing the gesture, and this is very important.

We usually deal with a long process to present a product to a visitor, and that product is there for a duration of time that has nothing to do with twitting or zapping. You are there to take a moment to stop, to look, and to reflect, and the reflection is we don't have any access to it as that of the visitor.

That's why our exhibition is called "History and Memory". I don't know what history the visitor has learned before coming to the museum, but he'll be exposed to the history of the discovery of North America, Canada, right up to 1840. And objects are presented. He looks at the objects and finds out that during the 1837 Rebellion some of the political chiefs were Robert Nelson, and Brown, and they were not French Canadian. No, they were not French Canadian. They were patriots and they rebelled. And Papineau had correspondence with Mackenzie and so on.

Think about it, and then rethink and probably change what your memory transmitted to you. And this is giving access to that. I think that's a role a museum should play, giving access to different points of view. You have your own view. You go in, and my way of judging the success of my exhibition is that the visitor has more questions coming out of the exhibition than he had coming in. This is where the education comes into the portrait of museum business.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

Madame Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelega, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for being here with us today.

The committee decided to set aside some time for museums during its review of projects in connection with the 150th anniversary. I would like to take advantage of your presence here today to ask you some broader questions.

Mr. Vadeboncoeur, you said that the financial situation of museums is critical. You added that most museums are private institutions. We are fortunate to have national museums. Your situation, however, is quite different. You also referred to the Museums Assistance Program. Can you tell us how the federal government could help museums to survive financially?

Mr. Guy Vadeboncoeur: That is a very complex question. Indeed, and I don't need to say this here, for some 30 years now, there have been different federal-provincial agreements concerning culture and heritage. I will of course refer to the province of Quebec.

In Quebec, the Department of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women is responsible for the funding provided for operations. For its part, the federal government funds finite projects, that have a beginning and an end.

A little earlier, I was explaining perhaps awkwardly that in a museum, preparing an exhibition or a research project is always an operation that takes from two and a half to four years. Given the way in which programs have always been set up, it is possible to solicit funds from the Exhibition Circulation Fund of the Museums Assistance Program, for instance, for the planning phase alone. But then you must come back the following year, and go through the whole competition for the execution phase, and yet a third competition for circulation.

This means that several of these projects will, so to speak, die on the Order Paper, because the funding is not guaranteed from the time of the first funding request. I think that several institutions have experienced difficulties because of that. We had a hard time ourselves with one travelling exhibition, among others. Although we had been told that we would get circulation funding, because the opening date of that exhibition fell in the next fiscal year, we were not entitled to that money.

There are many similar situations that need to be reviewed. In my opening statement, I emphasized the need to make certain conditions more flexible. This type of condition is one of them. You need a lot of time, energy and resources to prepare these funding requests. These resources are often allocated to prepare an application for a project that would go on for three years. When at the end we cannot put it on because of certain parameters outside of our control, we can get quite discouraged and simply not apply. It is that simple. There is too much hard work involved for results that are sometimes disappointing, particularly in the case of 50-50 funding.

• (1230)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: You have been discussing project funding. Let's talk about core funding. I know that in the museums in which I worked, that funding was never adequate.

Mr. Guy Vadeboncoeur: With regard to core funding, if we are accredited by our government, which is the case of the Stewart Museum, we can be subsidized by the Department of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women. Currently our museum receives approximately \$385,000, and we have a budget of \$2.5 million. So we have to find money elsewhere.

Our museum has the good fortune of being supported by the Macdonald Stewart Foundation. As for the rest, we have to find the funding that is necessary for our operations elsewhere. Often, everyone gets involved in the search for private funding from philanthropic institutions and we all wind up knocking on the same doors to ask for project funding and operational funding.

I remember a large-scale meeting that took place with the then-minister of culture of Quebec. I had asked her to allow us to have access to grey matter, which is very useful in museums, rather than giving us access to concrete alone.

Often, large museum projects are given funding for construction. However, what we need and what is useful to us is brain power. A lot of new museologists are being trained, and we do not have the means to hire them.

• (1235)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Since we don't have a lot of time today, I am going to yield the floor to my colleague, Mr. Cash.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Well, 20 seconds.... Maybe you just want to finish off then.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: My question is addressed to the representative of the Canadian Science and Technology Museums Corporation.

Recently, the media talked about the influence of private partners on the content of exhibitions. How can we make sure that this will not happen again?

Ms. Denise Amyot: Thank you for the question.

In fact, there was no influence exerted. What the media said was absolutely false. Fortunately, some of them allowed us to tell the whole story.

This is what happened. We created an advisory committee made up of representatives from society, non-profit organizations, the private sector, the government and the educational field. We asked them to provide us with feedback on what we were going to do in the context of the exhibition. We got our feedback, but in the final analysis, it was really the museum representatives who decided on the content of the exhibition.

The integrity of the museum is crucial. If you have worked in the museum field in the past, you will understand that. Unfortunately, this is not what the media chose to say. I thank you very much for your question, which has allowed me to set the record straight.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

Mr. Simms.

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

Actually the first part I'm going to hand to Mr. Cash. He wanted to ask his questions.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you very much, Mr. Simms.

The Chair: You have six minutes and 50 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you.

First of all, thank you so much for coming, taking time out of your busy schedules to be here with us.

I wanted to bring together both comments around funding. Indeed, one knows that media get stories wrong, but I will note for the record that, at least in the *Ottawa Citizen* piece, the comment from Mr. St. Laurent... He essentially says that the integrity of the exhibit has been maintained and that you stand by your curators. I think that's a very important point to make.

That said, one of the things that concerns us about the planning of Canada's 150th is that the story of Canada, or however this 150th is going to be framed, is balanced, and that pressure is not brought to bear so that the story is skewed one way or the other. The government side has already indicated that corporate sponsorship and corporate involvement at the root level of the planning of Canada 150 is very much part of their plans. We have some

significant concerns about that. As you saw in your own exhibition on the oil sector, these things can be very controversial. Then when you put into the mix large financial donations, the power balance around whose story gets told and how really starts to change.

You've stated that the integrity of the museum and also of the exhibition remains intact. But I'd argue—and I'd want you to respond as honestly as you can—that these kinds of interventions by corporate interests in public expressions of who we are as a country begin to.... The ideas around how we keep those interests onside, how we keep that money flowing—because I understand, and you've spoken very clearly to this, these are very serious issues—the funding sources.... But the question really is, do we not have a real concern here that the integrity of Canada's 150th birthday not be compromised by the overwhelming overtures to corporate Canada to get involved in this at the ground level?

I'm not saying that we shouldn't have any. I'm concerned about the influence the corporate sector can bring to bear on what's a very important event in our history.

• (1240)

Ms. Denise Amyot: Maybe, Mr. Cash, I'll take this opportunity to rectify some of the things that were written in the media.

The exhibitions that we did on energy are in fact three exhibitions in each of our museums. It also includes a Pan-Canadian initiative of things happening across the country. So it's not only in one exhibition in one place. What is interesting, again, is that the media mentioned that it was an exhibition on the oil sands when in fact the oil sands represented 3% of one of our three exhibitions. Again, perceptions are such, and the way it is portrayed.... Unfortunately, it doesn't give the full story.

To answer your question, I think what is very important is to ensure.... For example, we put in place a national advisory committee, and I told you who we had on this national advisory committee. What we ensured also is that we added terms of reference that were very clear. Again, we did mention in those terms of reference that they were there to advise, to tell us also what's happening and what's new with respect to science and technology, because they may know things that we don't. But at the end of the day, it is the stories of the museums. We have the last word, if you like, to decide what will be written at the end.

What's happening is that, unfortunately, the media read things where we receive comments but it doesn't say what we take into account. It's not because we receive comments that at the end of the day we decide for X, Y, or Z. Again, this part of the story was not said.

So to preserve the integrity of the 150th, this is the way it would be said. I really like the way Monsieur Vadeboncoeur positioned it. What is important is the balance, to hear different stories. For example, we need to hear different voices. Again, I'm going back to the example of the exhibition that we have on energy: 60% is on non-renewable and 40% is on renewable energy. Did you read that in the media? No. It gives the impression it is on one little aspect of the exhibition. I think it is in dialogue that we're able to explain all the facts.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Just so I'm clear, you are saying that there's no concern on your part around just the overall structure of an organizing structure for Canada's 150th that's going to have quite a significant corporate presence? You have no concern at all that it's going to impact the telling of the story?

Ms. Denise Amyot: I think it's a matter of judgment. There may be some sponsors, for example, that would not be adequate for some kinds of activities aimed at certain groups. For example, if it is an activity for children, you would certainly not ask for tobacco corporate sponsor support.

• (1245)

Mr. Andrew Cash: On that note, I—

The Chair: Sorry, Mr. Cash; you guys are collectively over by 40 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Cash: That was all Scott.

The Chair: Yes.

I want to thank our witnesses for appearing today. We do apologize for the late start. We're very enthusiastic around this table about the upcoming 150th birthday of Canada, and we know that museums are going to play a very important role in telling that story. So thank you for your input today.

Now we will thank and dismiss our witnesses so we can go on to our committee business. Thank you again.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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