



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

CHPC • NUMBER 024 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, November 22, 2006

—
Chair

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Wednesday, November 22, 2006

•(1555)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): Welcome to this meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

I apologize for our late start, but we all had to stay in the House a little longer today.

We welcome here this morning, from the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund, Robin Jackson and Jean-Louis Robichaud.

Whoever is going to lead off with your statement today, it would be appreciated if you do. Thank you.

Ms. Robin Jackson (Executive Director, Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund): Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Robin Jackson. I am the executive director of the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund. With me is Jean-Luis Robichaud, the co-chair of the fund and, in his regular day job, director of the Centre provincial de ressources pédagogiques in Saulnierville, Nova Scotia.

We thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund is a dynamic private sector funding body that supports non-theatrical film and video projects created by Canadian independent producers to enable lifelong learning.

The fund provides financial assistance to documentaries and educational and informational films and videos, and it has also supported new media projects. These programs are destined for use in the educational sector—kindergarten to university—museums, film festivals, libraries, health services, community groups, cultural and social services, educational and specialty television, airlines and cruise ships, and in the business, home video, and new media markets.

The CIFVF has supported many award-winning projects and talent; for example, *The Corporation* was partially funded by us. It has won 25 awards and grossed more than \$5.6 million worldwide. In 2004 it was the second most commercially successful film in English Canada, either fiction or documentary.

The CIFVF funds projects that are culturally, regionally, and linguistically diverse. Through our programs and policies, the CIFVF has been able to allow entry of first-time and emerging creators into the industry and to assist them in gaining real experience in filmmaking, including business skills, such as securing

financing, hiring crew, and negotiating distribution agreements. Since 2000, 32.3% of the successful producers receiving money from the CIFVF have been new and emerging producers.

One of our success factors is continuity. In many cases, the CIFVF has helped launch and grow the careers of producers, directors, writers, and other creative craftspeople, and those individuals have continued to work in the audiovisual industry. In many cases, these emerging filmmakers have gone on to work in drama and/or feature film. Zacharias Kunuk is one such example. He has received assistance from the CIFVF for three documentaries and has gone on to direct two feature films, one of which was awarded the *Caméra d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival in 2001.

We would like to read you a note from a talented new director.

[Translation]

To whom it may concern:

I'm the director of the documentary called *La Vie après la shop*, which was recently nominated for a prix Géméaux for the best social documentary. This is my first film. So I am very proud. Had it not been for your organization, this documentary would never have been made. So I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Vincent Audet-Nadeau

[English]

The CIFVF is one of the few funding agencies in the country that does not require a broadcast licence to be in place in the financing structure of projects. While this may not seem significant, it can be very difficult for a newcomer to gain the attention of a broadcaster, let alone get a broadcast licence, as new producers do not have the track record that broadcasters demand. While the CIFVF does not restrict a producer from obtaining a licence, it does not mean that a licence is mandatory in order to access CIFVF funding.

Because the CIFVF assists new and emerging filmmakers, it often finds itself in the role of being the first financier to commit to a project. This is very important to a producer, as it provides incentives to other funders to step forward and invest. In 2003 the CIFVF was the first committed funder in 22 of the 63 projects that we financed, or 35% of them. In 2004 we were the first funder in 19 of 56 projects, or 34% of them.

New and emerging producers are often not successful in securing funding from the Canadian Television Fund or Telefilm Canada. Since 2002, 61.8% of projects funded by the CIFVF have had no Canadian Television Fund or Telefilm assistance. In these cases, CIFVF funding has been critical to the realization of these projects.

•(1600)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud (Co-Chair, Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund): Mr. Chairman, I would like to talk about the social impact of the projects we support, if I may.

Many films that received assistance from the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund do more than provide information: they encourage people to get involved, to bring about social change. In this regard, we think the fund has done much more than encourage film-making; it is a way of allowing Canadians to talk about various subjects, to get to know and understand others better and thus make our world a little better.

The film entitled *The Boy Inside*, produced by Marianne Kaplan from Vancouver, is a very good example of this. *The Boy Inside* us about Adam, a 12-year old boy with Asperger syndrome, who talks about his struggle as a teenager living in the complicated world facing young people today. Adam has a type of autism that is being diagnosed more and more among children, but which is far from being understood by the public, which tends to see only a child who speaks frankly and says silly things, rather than a child suffering from a disease.

The film shows the intimidation and exclusion of this child and informs children about their classmates who are different. The Family and Child Development Ministry of British Columbia said it was interested in showing the film in public schools in that province and has already provided funding for a website that allows parents with children who have Asperger syndrome to talk to each other.

We would like to read you a few e-mails that illustrate the impact the film has had on two Canadians. The first one was written by a woman who lives in Halifax. Since it is quite long, we will read just a few excerpts of it.

[English]

Hi Marianne & Adam & Family,

Tonight, my almost 9 year old son and I were watching a documentary on spam and saw the preview of your movie. During the preview, my son started to cry when he saw Adam sitting out on the basketball court, lonely and sad, being shunned by the other children. Evan, my son, said — "Mom, that's me at school, I don't know why no one wants to play with me." It breaks my heart.

Late last year, Evan was diagnosed with ADHD and ODD. ... Evan's main difficulty is socializing with other children, and has never maintained one friendship throughout his life so far, and he's almost 9 yrs old. ...

It was hard watching the clip with Adam saying he just wants to die for a few minutes, because my son says he'd rather die than live like this. ... Evan doesn't want to stand out for misbehaving and getting into trouble, and even though he struggles with this every single day trying his best, he feels he's a bad person and a failure. ...

I guess—I just want to let you know that it gives me hope to get through this—I don't know how we're going to yet, and sometimes it feels hopeless—but you're the first person I ever heard talk about what it's really like. ...

...I want you to know that you have given me a sense that I feel like I'm no longer alone anymore. I never realized there was autism that only affected socialization, and it seems to fit with what Evan exhibits.

Thank you so much for sharing your life. Just writing to you to let you know you moved me is therapeutic. I'm anxious to watch the whole movie, and think it should be mandatory for all school boards to have for staff to watch as well.

Carlene Hood
Halifax.

[Translation]

The next e-mail is from a father in Ontario who, like many parents with an autistic child who has Asperger syndrome, feels very alone in trying to deal with everyday challenges. He's very happy to find that there's a film that explains all the aspects of this disease and it helps the public better understand people who have to deal with it. He writes:

[English]

My boy, Brandon, same age as your boy, same grade (as of when the film was being made), he has Asperger's Syndrome. Seeing your son was almost identical to looking at my child...there was many quiet moments in my house that night after the film. ...

I want to know, is there any way to get the entire full-length video? I have no problems with a fee, but I would like [to] say, I want to show it to as many people as I can get to see it. I want to approach 2 independent small cinemas locally (...in Ontario) to screen it. I will pay them for their ad space in local papers. I NEED your film to be seen by as many people as possible.

I need what you made, this film, to be out there. I need people to see it and revisit it and learn. ... I believe your film can help the world to understand that they are not freaks, they are just dancing to a slightly different beat, but the beat isn't bad at all!

Regards, and oh yes, a BIG HIGH-5 to Adam for the courage and great spirit he showed during the filming. Please let him know how courageous it was and how much help he will be to so many kids out there.

Ron Singh

•(1605)

[Translation]

The Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund is one of the rare organizations that supports one off documentaries. And that is another reason why it is vital that the Fund be able to continue helping producers make these important documentaries.

Ms. Manon Barbeau, the President of the *Observatoire du documentaire* recommended in an open letter published on November 2, 2006:

Documentaries are in a crisis [...] And yet, documentaries are essential. They take a reading on society, wake it up, provoke it, and question it. They encourage people to take action, to take a stand [...] Documentaries speak to the heart and to people's conscience and are concerned more about human development than about ratings.

We hope you will agree with us that the CIFVF plays a very valuable role.

That completes our presentation, Mr. Chairman. We would be pleased to answer your questions. If we do not have the documentation with us to answer all your questions, we would be pleased to send it to you as soon as possible.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: The first question is to Mr. Simms.

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

Thank you, Mr. Robichaud and Ms. Jackson. Merci beaucoup.

In the last session we carried out a study on film in this country, and many issues came up. I don't know where to start, but one of the issues that I found was probably the biggest obstacle is that if you look at the statistics, it will state that if we have a goal of viewership of 5%, some of these goals and that sort of thing—Is that a realistic goal we should be looking at? Because one of the comments you just made was that it was the human spirit, not so much ratings.

What do you think about the fact that you put this money invested into films that don't get the ratings or may not get the distribution you so desire? Is that a failure to you?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: I think what we're looking at is talking to Canadians about Canadians presenting Canadian issues, the world as it's seen through Canadian eyes. It may not be the bestseller in commercial theatres, but it's something that needs to be told. It's what we're all about.

Ms. Robin Jackson: You were primarily studying feature films in the last session, right?

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes.

Ms. Robin Jackson: This is a bit of a different species, animal, bird, I don't know.

•(1610)

Mr. Scott Simms: I realize that, but I just wanted you to touch on some of the similar obstacles that young producers—you have to make a living doing this.

Ms. Robin Jackson: You do, but you've also got documentary filmmakers who are very driven by their passion, particularly. They're driven by what they do. This woman who has just done the story on Asperger's syndrome lives it every day. She wants to communicate with people. People who go off and study *la vie après le choc*, where there's a situation in a town in Quebec where the factory is gone, and the effect it's having on people. These documentary filmmakers are dedicated to studying these things, trying to work towards social change. I think it's a very laudatory thing, and if they don't get huge ratings, I don't think you can say that they have to really. I think there's a merit that is perhaps separate from what you might want to gauge the box office by.

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, and I wholeheartedly agree. I'm somewhat biased, coming from broadcasting myself, where I would almost put a documentary in the category of an art form more so than others would. But one of the biggest challenges, and I go back to distribution again, is that many independent producers can't seem to find the distribution they want. Where does your organization fit in, speaking about your budgets, as to what is towards distribution and what is towards the actual production itself? Is this some type of thing that you monitor, or is it pretty open-ended?

Ms. Robin Jackson: We're a very small organization, as you know.

Mr. Scott Simms: Understood.

Ms. Robin Jackson: We have put all of our moneys towards production, not into distribution. We don't have enough money to have a distribution program. What we do, however, is we have a moral obligation to our distributors. There are only certain distributors who work in the non-theatrical area. We have a list of

them, and we require that when a producer receives funding, they have to take somebody from that list because those people know how to get to the non-theatrical market. They know to go to the film showcases. They know to go to the institutions, that kind of thing.

We do require that the distributor gets the non-theatrical rights for Canada for three years, so that's the way we support. It would be wonderful if we had money for distribution, to give them money directly to help in promotion. Those kinds of things we don't.

Often the distributors have to fund out of their own pockets teachers' guides or guides that people use in a community setting if they're going to discuss a film. It's a challenge for them, the same challenge as feature film distributors face on a different scale.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay. That's a pretty good point.

What are some of the bigger restrictions you place on film producers who receive the funding?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I'm sorry, our restrictions?

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes. Perhaps restrictions is a bad word, but what are the criteria?

Ms. Robin Jackson: The individual has to be a Canadian; a landed immigrant or a Canadian citizen.

The subject matter has to be educational or informative. It might be an animation piece, but it definitely has to be educational or informative.

It has to comply with our proof-of-market demand. It has to tell us who the specific audience is. It's not enough to say it's the general public from ages 15 to 25. You have to specifically tell us who the audience is going to be.

We need letters of support from end users. The producers work with individuals in the community in many cases, and we want to know how people in the community are going to use the film. You've now heard a little bit about that from the illustration of *The Boy Inside*. This film is going to be used in schools, and there would be letters from end users.

There would be a letter and eventually a contract from a non-theatrical distributor. We don't want a product that we fund to sit on the shelf. We want to make sure it's distributed, and there has to be a distributor involved.

We ask the producer to research competing and analogous products. If a producer comes forward and tells us one day that he or she would like to make something on aluminum, or mining, or farming, it's not sufficient. We need to know whether or not something has been done before. Are they taking a newer approach? Are they using a different point of view? We want the producer to think through those kinds of things.

Mr. Scott Simms: I have a quick question. What do you require from the new government as of now? What's on your ask list? What's your number one priority?

Ms. Robin Jackson: We need some money. Right now we're between contribution agreements; our contribution agreement ended on October 5, 2006. We understand there is a submission in process to Treasury Board. We're very hopeful it will be renewed.

In an ideal world, if you asked me for my Christmas list, I'd say I'd like more money to do more things. We get an enormous number of applications, and we could do a lot more.

But on a basic Christmas list, I'd like to see a renewed contribution agreement.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kotto.

•(1615)

[Translation]

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Ms. Jackson and Mr. Robichaud. I would like to begin by paying tribute to you for the quality of the missionary work you do, so to speak, with the few resources you have. I would also like to pay tribute to your rigorous approach and, in light of your experience, I would like to ask you a simple question for the information of the members of this committee, because some of them are new.

Is the next generation of directors, scriptwriters and other people in the film industry beginning to come along?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: Yes indeed, there is a new generation in the industry. We established a mentoring program to provide the young generation with guidance. At one time, we did so even if we did not have the means. But there is an emerging pool of talent; these are young people and not so young people, but who are new in the field, people who have vision and new things to put forward.

So to answer your question, yes, there is new talent, and it is encouraging.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Would this new generation exist without the support of an organization like yours?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: I could be very categorical and answer no.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Very well.

I would like to check the accuracy of the numbers I have before me. How many projects that were refused, and yet met the conditions, could have qualified if the fund had received more financial support?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: Robin, do you have those statistics?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Last time, we received 201 applications, a dozen of which were turned down. So there were 190 acceptable projects. We funded 68 of them.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Some 190 projects were acceptable, but because of a lack of means, they were rejected. Could you indicate the proportion of francophone projects that were rejected compared to the number of anglophone projects?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Last time, we received 47 French-language projects and accepted 18 of them. There were 25 projects from Quebec, including French and English language projects.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Very well. Do you think the request by the Conseil québécois des arts médiatiques to increase the fund to \$3 million would help reactivate the multimedia component, which was abandoned owing to a lack of means?

Ms. Robin Jackson: We would like to do so because, as you know, there are cross platforms.

Mr. Maka Kotto: I will restate Mr. Simms's question. Ideally, how much money would you need to meet the demand from eligible project applicants, taking into account the fact that the new government is very tight-fisted with its money?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I do not know.

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: We have asked for \$3 million.

Mr. Maka Kotto: That request is similar to the one made by the Conseil québécois des arts médiatiques. Is that a minimum amount?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I think so, it is a minimum.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Very well.

Since when have you been working with the emerging generation?

•(1620)

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: Since about the year 2000.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Since that time, have you in any way been reprimanded for having mismanaged funds that were allocated to you?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: On the contrary. An assessment was made of our management system, and we received very high marks for the way we manage the funds that are granted to us.

Mr. Maka Kotto: In a clear and transparent manner?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: In a clear and transparent manner.

Ms. Robin Jackson: We can send you the report, if you are interested.

Mr. Maka Kotto: Oh! I do not need to be convinced.

Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): I'd like to just ask, first off, in the transformation from analog to digital, has there been a complete transformation? Are people still using analog?

Secondly, in terms of digital, has it made a major change in the price of projects and in the kind of people who are coming to the tables who wouldn't have been there before?

Ms. Robin Jackson: It's interesting that in documentary almost everybody has made the switch to digital. In terms of the price of projects, I can't say that I've noticed a real increase.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Or decrease—?

Ms. Robin Jackson: A decrease...that's interesting. No, I can't comment on that.

I can tell you that the average production budget for 2006 was \$287,740. I would say that's probably up about \$60,000 or \$70,000, so I guess there has been an increase. I don't think there's been a decrease.

In terms of the people coming to us, because we don't have the money to do new media right now, I would say we are turning away certain people. The whole question of addressing the multi-platform is quite new, as you know. If we are successful in being renewed, we wish to discuss that with Canadian Heritage. We would like to broaden our parameters and say that the platform, whether it's cellphones or iPods, or whatever, shouldn't be an issue. As long as it's educational, informational, we would like to be able to support that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Now you've jumped into my next question.

It seems to me, from what you're doing—we had the new media fund as well and what they're trying to do—that the problem we have in Canada is distribution, getting the product out there. Yet we also have a phenomenal opportunity because we have Canadians who are now used to going online. Because they are in so many isolated spots in the country, they are now getting online what they want.

I know it's probably not within the purview of your specific fund, but should there be a separate fund or organization mandated through the government to ensure that we're looking at platform delivery, so that there is an avenue that projects can go to so that we could have, say, a Canadian online, video-on-demand program for people, in order to ensure the product is getting out there?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: I sit on the board as an end-user, not as a producer or distributor. I can assure you that what you are speaking about is in the minds of all people who are dealing with education in this country. It's very difficult in the present situation to have access to thousands of documents that would benefit children or teenagers in schools, or young adults at university level, because they're not online. If they were online, through a streaming process or whatever, it would be most beneficial. Everybody's looking at that, but it's not happening.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Have you looked at ways of monetizing that? Has that been part of the discussion? For example, with peer to peer in music, there's been a lot of talk about how to actually chart what's being downloaded, what's being traded, so we're not saying that these are going to be online for free, but that there is remuneration to artists. Within the music community, the monetizing of product going through the peer-to-peer networks, they've looked at a number of models. It would seem to me, for documentary, we would have to find a way to make sure it's available on demand. Would you think a fee for service, a monthly service, perhaps educational service fees for using whatever they want, would be appropriate?

• (1625)

Ms. Robin Jackson: I would have to tell you that we haven't really examined that. I think the whole issue is fairly new. The funding agencies are all trying to grapple with this. The producers are trying to grapple with the rights they will be able to hold onto, or not hold onto, and how the broadcasters will pay for it or not pay for it. This whole issue is up in the air right now.

The CRTC has been looking at it. It's a situation and an issue that I think we're not sure about right now. To protect the producers, I would want to see some kind of remuneration. These rights cannot be simply given away for free. Producers have to make a living, and it's a very difficult area to make a living in, as you know.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I want to take the argument now from a completely different point of view, which is the difficulties some of your documentary film producers might have accessing stock footage, historic footage, that is presently under copyright. I understand for many projects it's very difficult to get access, and to pay for, and it's becoming more difficult. Is that a problem you see with the budgets that are coming before you?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I can think of one project right now, done by Caroline Martel, which was *le Fantôme de l'opératrice*. Her film was on the telephone operator and it was all archival footage. It was a huge amount of work and a huge cost for her. I think it gets prohibitive for some producers, many producers, to deal with this kind of thing.

That's only one of the challenges they're facing. There are things like errors and omissions insurance, the cost of which is very prohibitive for producers. There is a number of challenges for independent producers right now on the horizon.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Fast.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank both of you for coming here and introducing us to your organization.

So I can familiarize myself a little bit more with your organization, I first of all want to completely understand your mandate. We've had some material given to us. Am I correct in assuming that your focus is informational, educational films and videos that are done on a small scale? Is that correct?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Yes, because we have a mandate to deal with new and emerging talent—not our whole fund, but a portion of it has to go that way—and they tend to be smaller budgets. Generally speaking, the educational information area is an entry into the film industry, so a lot of people will start in this area because they can do it on smaller budgets.

I was saying an average budget is \$287,000, which we saw this year. That's probably on the low side for some, but that's what we're seeing. It doesn't compare with a feature film, you know. That's much, much more expensive. But when new producers are starting in, this is a much more accessible way for them to start, so producers will work with us and then they may move on, or they may stay and work in feature films as well, like Zacharias Kunuk.

Mr. Ed Fast: Did you say *The Corporation* was funded through your organization?

Ms. Robin Jackson: It's interesting, yes, *The Corporation* was funded by us, and—

Mr. Ed Fast: That's the film by Joel Bakan, is that right, the lawyer from Vancouver?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Yes, the lawyer from Vancouver. Bart Simpson is the producer.

The film started out as a non-theatrical project. It was going to be with TVO. We are often partners with educational broadcasters like Télé-Québec, TVO, SCN, and Access Alberta. They're very important partners. So the film was going to be in that area, for non-theatrical use, but it then grew into, as you know, a feature film, which none of us saw at the beginning.

The interesting thing about *The Corporation* is that there is a course at the University of Western Ontario based around *The Corporation*. That for us is true non-theatrical use.

Mr. Ed Fast: Let me go back to the issue of funding, which has been raised a number of times here. In fact, Mr. Simms asked you what your ask list was from the new government.

First of all, what federal funding did you receive in the year 2005-06?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I can tell you that we've had a contributions agreement with the Department of Canadian Heritage since 2000. That expired October 5, 2006. The contributions agreement started off at \$1.8 million. Through some budget cuts it was reduced in 2002 or 2003 to \$1.55 million. So we've had \$1.55 million from the government.

We also get money from the private sector, specifically Star Choice Communications. They started out at \$800,000 a year. Through cuts, we're now down to \$100,000 a year.

•(1630)

Mr. Ed Fast: The cuts that you mentioned you experienced in 2003, those were budget cuts?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Not budget cuts to us but to the Department of Canadian Heritage. I think program review was going on, and as part of that our budget was cut.

Mr. Ed Fast: And that review indicated that perhaps not all of the money was actually needed? Is that the rationale?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Oh, no, no. We were part of the feature film policy, and if you look at the evaluation commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage last year—it was done by Nordicity, I believe—we actually got the best report card in terms of what we did.

Mr. Ed Fast: And they still cut you back.

Ms. Robin Jackson: Well—

Yes, they did. But I'm not in government, so I don't know what their problems are.

Mr. Ed Fast: Understood.

I'm teasing my friend across the way, and I think I'm teasing you a little bit too.

Further, you mention that new producers can avoid having to get a broadcast licence. First of all, does every producer or filmmaker have to get a broadcast licence? I don't quite understand that process.

Ms. Robin Jackson: It's not that they want to avoid it, it's that the way of financing has changed quite a bit. I'd say that seven years ago you used to be able to finance a film from the educational sector. Education, as you know, has had its share of problems, and that's no longer possible.

This fund started back in 1988, under Flora MacDonald. That's when it first started. At that point in time, things could be funded by the educational sector. Then life changed, and what is now prevalent is that the broadcaster funds many things. It's very important for a financial structure to have a broadcaster in it.

It's not that new producers choose not to have a broadcast licence, it's that they can't get one. The broadcaster has a number of things to choose from. They have certain slots—i.e., they can only do so many documentaries—so they can't fund everything. They want largely producers with track records. New and emerging producers may not have a track record, so they can't always get a broadcast licence. In some cases, even if they do get a broadcast licence, it may not be high enough to qualify at the Canadian Television Fund. As I think we mentioned, about 62% of the projects we funded couldn't get money from the CTF, or, in the past, from Telefilm.

So our money has been quite critical for people who haven't been able to get that piece of the puzzle.

Mr. Ed Fast: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Keeper.

Ms. Tina Keeper (Churchill, Lib.): I'd like to thank you for your presentations.

I want to ask a question about your mandate. I want to ask about what differentiates you from the National Film Board in terms of your mandate.

Ms. Robin Jackson: The National Film Board, as you know, is a producer; we're a funder. We work with producers to try to help them develop business skills. The National Film Board will act as the producer. So they are mainly interested in working with directors in the private sector because they have their own producers who will look after getting all the distribution rights and getting the financing together so that the director can just focus on the creative side. So—

Ms. Tina Keeper: I'm sorry to interrupt. A lot of people don't understand the film or television industry and what is required of the different players within the production. So perhaps you could just clarify that a bit more in terms of fostering producers, I guess, and how critical that is to the industry.

Ms. Robin Jackson: The difference is as I've stated.

The other thing is that the National Film Board supports emerging filmmakers, but when they're talking about filmmakers, again, they're talking about directors. When we're talking about emerging talent, we're primarily talking about producers. So there is a difference.

If the film board enters into a co-production, they will, in most cases, exercise the rights of approving the script, the people who are involved. They will take the copyright. Now, we do not do that. The reason we do not do that is we are trying to help producers on their way so that they can have the copyright to exploit the rights, so they can derive some revenue. We want them to become business people and self-sustaining. If it's ever going to happen in this environment, I don't know. It's very difficult, as you know, for filmmakers, but that's what we're trying to promote. The film board wants to keep the rights themselves because they're a producer.

•(1635)

Ms. Tina Keeper: So you're really fostering an independent film industry, rather than being the independent film producer.

Ms. Robin Jackson: Yes. We don't take any rights. We don't have approval on scripts. We don't do any of that.

Ms. Tina Keeper: I'd like to ask you this. How is your budget broken down, or do you have a set breakdown in terms of what is in the different categories? So what is a documentary? What is a docudrama?

Ms. Robin Jackson: No, everything is just in one big pot. The only way we break it down, as you know, is linguistically and regionally on the English side.

Ms. Tina Keeper: So those are two envelopes that you have, right, English and French? Is there an aboriginal envelope as well?

Ms. Robin Jackson: No. We don't have enough money to do aboriginal—

Ms. Tina Keeper: So you don't see it as necessary to have a particular portion of the existing money set aside for aboriginal production?

Ms. Robin Jackson: We see it as important. We also see having some money for cultural diversity or visible minority producers.

Ms. Tina Keeper: So you don't make that a policy.

Ms. Robin Jackson: We collect statistics on it, but we don't have enough money to divide up—

Ms. Tina Keeper: You have to divide the money you do have, I guess, because of the official languages, right? It's the law that you have to distribute it, English and French.

Ms. Robin Jackson: That's correct.

Ms. Tina Keeper: Because you're not legally bound to recognize diversity or the aboriginal population, you don't make it a policy.

Ms. Robin Jackson: No. But I can tell you that 9% of the projects we funded in 2006 were produced by aboriginal producers. Six projects were funded, and we received nine projects.

Ms. Tina Keeper: Can I ask about women? Is there a policy about women?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I didn't bring the statistics on women. We do have statistics on women. I could certainly send them to you.

Ms. Tina Keeper: Can I just ask about trends? Can I ask about whether there's been a change in, say, the last decade, in terms of what is being produced and what you're able to produce, and how that's being received in the domestic and international markets?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I'm sorry, did you say "trends"? Was that the word you used?

Ms. Tina Keeper: Yes. Is there a trend? Are you seeing a pattern emerge? We look to the U.S. a lot in terms of what we should be doing in Canada. It seems to be a theme that people want to set us up against the U.S. I believe we should be developing and fostering Canadian heritage. Are there challenges, especially over this last decade, where we've seen the television market, in particular, change so drastically?

Ms. Robin Jackson: On subject matter, I wouldn't say there's been a change in trends. I would say there's been a change from documentaries to series.

Series are more profitable to produce because you can amortize the costs across all the costs, and doing a one-off is more difficult. It's easier for broadcasters to program a series as well.

One-offs are having great difficulty. If you're talking about *le documentaire d'auteur* or *le cinéma d'auteur*, I would say they're having even greater difficulty.

I don't know if I'm answering your question or not.

Ms. Tina Keeper: Yes, you are.

I'm thinking about how much the television industry in Canada has changed over the last decade, because of so many cable stations and the accessibility of so many different genres in television.

Ms. Robin Jackson: There are certainly more specialty channels, and there has been an increase in documentaries, but the budgets have gone down. The hourly budgets have gone down because of economics, and they can't pay as much.

It's been a source of concern for our producers who want to do one-off documentaries that really look at things in depth. They don't want to do lifestyle programming.

We don't really fund lifestyle programming. It's not in our mandate.

•(1640)

Ms. Tina Keeper: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Malo.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Thank you.

Good afternoon and welcome Ms. Jackson and Mr. Robichaud.

I have a chart here with the amounts that you received from Canadian Heritage. I would like you to confirm the number I am looking at, ie, \$1,550,000. That is what you received last year. With that \$1.5 million, you supported 68 projects.

This year, if I understood correctly, you are asking for \$3 million from Canadian Heritage. Is that to increase the number of your projects, or only to maintain them?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: Ms. Jackson told you that as of the last application deadline, we had received approximately 190 projects that met the criteria. Of those projects, 68 received funding. That is not to say that the other projects were not worthy.

Mr. Luc Malo: So there were 190 acceptable projects.

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: Indeed, that gives you an idea of the number of projects we could fund. I think that basically answers your question. These are worthy projects.

Mr. Luc Malo: Is this the first year you ask that contributions to the fund be increased?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: No, we did ask before for an increase.

Mr. Luc Malo: For how long have you been requesting this? Judging by your skeptical look, I take it that it has been a long time. If the government, in its great wisdom, openness and understanding of educational film, decided to grant you the \$3 million you requested, you would not be able to do other types of film using new technologies. You could not make all the material you have available on the Web, so that people can electronically consult the works you funded. Is that correct?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: I have to specify, however, that we are not responsible for distribution, that is not our role. Our role is to support people who want to present an aspect of Canadian life to Canadians.

Mr. Luc Malo: But if those people want to do so using non-standard tools and formats, for example by using special film, could you help them?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: That is exactly what we want to do. We want to get back into new media. Earlier, Robin spoke about cross platforms.

Mr. Maka Kotto: You are talking about multimedia.

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: We already worked in the area of new media, and we would like to come back to it. We would also like to reconsider the full question of mentoring programs for young people, the directors and producers who are starting out, because that is also part of our philosophy. Those are things we used to do, but that we had to abandon owing to a lack of means.

Mr. Luc Malo: Would the \$3 million allow you to get back into mentoring and multimedia?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: That would at least help us get a foot in the door, so to say. We could carry out such activities.

• (1645)

Mr. Luc Malo: Were some of the projects that were submitted to you last year in multimedia? Did young producers apply for mentoring assistance?

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: I will let Robin answer. That is her responsibility.

Ms. Robin Jackson: In fact, I make a distinction between new media and multimedia. We received requests related to new media but not to multimedia. However, I do think that requests will be made.

Mr. Luc Malo: Did you accept projects that use new media?

Ms. Robin Jackson: No, we decided into 2003, because of the cutbacks, to focus solely on film and video projects, and not on new media.

Mr. Luc Malo: Very well.

Ms. Robin Jackson: But we would like to get back to it.

Mr. Luc Malo: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Warkentin.

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

Thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony to us this afternoon.

I just wanted to talk to you a little bit. You've talked about the fact that the federal government is not your only funding source. I'm just wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the types of people who are investing or giving money or contributing money to the fund. I'm wondering if you could fill me in on what motivates people and what types of people are giving funds.

Ms. Robin Jackson: At this point in time, we only have Star Choice Communications involved. There is a requirement by the CRTC for distributors, BDUs, to put out a certain amount of money for the creation of Canadian content. Star Choice decided a number of years ago to put their money with us. They are the only private sector company at the moment.

Before that, we had Stentor. Do you know Stentor? It was an amalgamation of the telephone companies. We ran for them the Stentor New Media Fund.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Can you tell me what Star Choice contributes to the fund right now on an annual basis?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I can, yes. It started out at about \$800,000. There was a problem with small markets across Canada, which felt that they were being detrimentally affected by the introduction of satellite. These small markets appealed to the CRTC, and the CRTC made the decision, not only for Star Choice but for Bell, to put up some money to compensate these small markets. Unfortunately, that money came from us and also from another private fund.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Comparing the amount of \$800,000—which is the only other contributor at this point—to the past number of years, have we seen a decline in the contribution amount from the private sector, and what has that looked like in the last number of years?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I used to ambulance chase quite a bit when we first started out, before we got the contributions agreement with the Department of Canadian Heritage, for which we are very grateful, I have to say. But before that, we didn't have multi-year funding. So I did a lot of ambulance chasing, which meant that I would look at the papers and read the CRTC website to see what was being bought and sold, because each time, as you know, there was a tangible benefits package, and that was up for grabs. I would make applications to them to try to get money. That's how we got the Stentor New Media Fund. That's how we got the Fundy Communications fund, which has since been bought and no longer exists. And that's how we got the Star Choice money.

Sorry, what was the—?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: You've indicated there has been a decline from the private sector. I'm wondering what the numbers looked liked last year, the year before that, and the year before that. The federal government has not been consistent in their contribution, but you've known on an annual basis.

I'm wondering what the other part of the picture looks like.

Ms. Robin Jackson: For Star Choice, two years ago they reduced it from \$800,000 to \$100,000, and each year they review their contribution to us.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Okay, let's look back four years. What was the contribution?

• (1650)

Ms. Robin Jackson: It was \$800,000.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: And right now we're down to \$100,000?

Ms. Robin Jackson: That's correct.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Have you ever been over the \$800,000 threshold on an annual basis from any other type of investment?

Ms. Robin Jackson: No.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: So you've seen a decline of \$700,000. Is there any reason that the private sector isn't investing, why we're not seeing other groups coming to the fund and suggesting...?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Yes.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: What are those reasons, in your estimation?

Ms. Robin Jackson: The largest one is that the CRTC now allows the company that is making a transaction to administer their own production fund. We've been certified as an independent production fund by the CRTC. Several years ago, when a company would buy or sell and there was a tangible benefits package in play, they would have to put that money out into an independent production fund.

The rules have changed and they don't have to do that. For example, with Bell and CTV, they now administer their own tangible benefits package in-house, so that didn't have to go outside.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Just so that I can understand, because we have to look at the larger picture, in terms of the folks who are trying to get their productions funded right now, they're able to go to you, and now they're able to go to these other guys to get money from the funds they've created?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Well, it depends on the genre.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: I guess what I'm wondering is whether in the marketplace there is still the same amount of money as there was several years back when the contribution was being flowed through your organization.

Ms. Robin Jackson: There is money; there is probably the same amount. But they determine what kind of genre it will go into. Before, when it came to us, it automatically went into educational-informational. CTV doesn't put all that money into educational-informational projects. It goes into drama. Some of it goes into performing arts. I don't know the breakdown, but they determine what it's going to go into.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: So for our committee, as we don't have a significant amount of influence on the CRTC, would you like the rules changed back, or would you like these private organizations to have a little bit more criteria to ensure that the funds go towards the type of programming that you have provided for in the past?

Ms. Robin Jackson: As you know, the CRTC is having a television review right now. We made a submission in that vein, that we wanted to see program expenditures put back in and that tangible benefits packages should go outside and not be controlled by companies.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: What's the danger, do you think, in terms of having these companies? Is there any danger?

In terms of the larger picture, from what I'm hearing there is the same amount of money going into the industry, so that's good news. It's not as bad as we would have thought otherwise, without having these answers.

But I'm just wondering, is there some aspect of the current system that you think is a real negative with their having the control over the production and the funding?

Ms. Robin Jackson: As I said, I would like to see that money go out to independent production funds, because then we'd have more of a chance to get private sector moneys. Right now, that's pretty well dried up. It's very difficult for us.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Jackson, how are you doing?

• (1655)

Ms. Robin Jackson: Thank you. I'm very well.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I remember, and this dates me, Mr. Chairman, that back in 1999 we were discussing the ambulance-chasing habit of Ms. Jackson and how to solve it, and we found it by having a contribution agreement at the time.

My first question would be to solicit information from the government, through Mr. Abbott, the parliamentary secretary. Is it possible to have an indication from the government as to whether there is an intention to continue with a contribution agreement of some sort with this fund? That would be my first question. I'm not expecting an answer now, but I would hope to get an indication, because I, for one, am sold on the nature and the usefulness of this fund.

Overall, the numbers are quite impressive, Mr. Chairman. Since 1991, with \$17.9 million, they've basically helped 20,000 projects along. Some of them might have been crashing successes, but some of them were not; some of them were great successes. It's part and parcel of developing the basic material to have an industry. I'm sold on this.

Perhaps, however, and this is in line with some of the questioning I have heard, I'm a little bit disappointed that there isn't more private sector funding. I think that they, too, have to realize the importance of having an industry fed by new producers with new ideas and new methods of trying things. I think they'd be well advised to perhaps kick in some more dollars, and perhaps even some from the provincial authorities as well in some instances, where they have educational television that benefits from the independent producers. In a strategy—and I'm not here to dictate one but perhaps to think out loud—I would encourage a government to find ways of enticing private sector contributions more, and greater cooperation on that basis.

The only other thing is that I was wondering if you had any stats in terms of the impact the fund has had on the exports of cultural products in terms of productions. Do you have any stats on that?

Ms. Robin Jackson: No, we don't have any stats.

I can't even say that I can get them for you, because export isn't really an area we deal with particularly.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize for arriving late and for leaving early.

The Chair: There is just one thing. This might be a little inconsistent, but seeing as Mr. Bélanger is about ready to leave, I'm just going to interrupt our questioning. We're going to go on with a couple of more questions here yet.

This is just a notice to the committee members that on Monday, the minister will not be able to attend the meeting. It's been suggested that there is a funeral on Monday, and I know that a couple of our members who sit around this table might not be here. It's for Madam Broadbent.

We have a suggestion that it's a possibility that on February 7 the minister could be here and we could deal with plans and priorities of the department at that particular time. We don't have any more time from now until Christmas break. It's the second week that we're back.

The other thing is about Monday. What do we want to do on Monday? It's been suggested that maybe the committee could deal with the draft report on the Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Act on Monday. It's something that has been suggested.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Will we need a quorum?

The Chair: Yes, we will need a quorum to handle that.

Mr. Scott Simms: How many meetings do we have before the Christmas break? Do we have four meetings before February 7?

The Chair: No, five.

Mr. Scott Simms: Can we make an exception for one of these meetings, in order to bring the minister in?

The Chair: The closest date that the minister can be here is February 7.

Mr. Scott Simms: Is that the trade-off? Two hours?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Since it's being done with so much time in advance, she can make sure her calendar's not booked.

The Chair: That will be at least three times that the minister has been before this committee in one year. It's two more than I've ever seen before.

Yes, Mr. Kotto.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maka Kotto: That date would be acceptable given that it is before the budget. The committee could then support her as she makes her representations to the Minister of Finance and respond positively to the concerns that will have accumulated. She will have to consider us as her allies, not as her opponents.

● (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: On a point of order, we're supposed to be spiteful and low to the ground and partisan. You're supposed to rise above us all the time and make us see the big picture.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Thank you for that. I'll try to rise above it.

I just needed to have that confirmed for next Monday. We will work on the Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Act. That gives my clerk and our staff here some direction.

Sorry for that interruption, but we will now go to Mr. Abbott for questions.

Mr. Jim Abbott: Thank you.

I really appreciate the information that we've received from you today, and I'd like to ask you a completely wide-open question. With all of these funds, the funding from the department, and so on and so forth, obviously there is an issue of accountability for the taxpayers' dollar. I respect that completely, as I know you do. But I'm just curious to know if you had any comment you wanted to make with respect to the paperwork aspect of your job.

One of the things that can happen very easily is that we can end up with a lot of overhead simply because of the cost of the time of people actually filling in the forms and so on and so forth. I'm just opening this up for you to make a comment on whether the current paperwork is just fine, or if you think there are some efficiencies that could be created, while at the same time ensuring that we have full accountability for the taxpayers' dollar.

Ms. Robin Jackson: Are you talking about paperwork for the producers or for us at the fund?

Mr. Jim Abbott: Both. In other words, for the producers, someone isn't going to be able to come in on their own time and spend a full day doing the necessary paperwork. That wouldn't be expected, and naturally they should be compensated for it.

I'm always concerned about any of these programs making sure of the most effective use of people's time. If they're producing something, they should be involved in functions specifically related to getting something on a screen.

Ms. Robin Jackson: You've opened up a real can of worms.

Mr. Jim Abbott: I rather suspected I might.

Ms. Robin Jackson: If you spoke to a producer here today, if there was a producer appearing in front of you, I'm sure they would say it's too much paperwork—and it's not just our fund, it's every fund in Canada. We've gotten to this position because of the accountability that has been imposed on us. But I also have to say that the money we give away comes from contributions. It's free money, so we're not just going to throw it out the window and say to pick it up and go forth. There has to be some kind of organization, an application made, and some thought given to it, because we take our job seriously. Where do you draw the line? I don't know. We'd have to have a producer in the room and debate that.

Because we're the administrators, we feel there's some accountability. There may be a little bit too much lately for a small fund such as ours. I'm the only employee right now. I find it very difficult to keep up with all of the paperwork we have, and I don't think I'm alone. A lot of the charitable organizations—You've had this blue panel committee. I don't know what their outcome will be, but you're probably very aware of all of those issues. So I don't know how to come out on that one.

Mr. Jim Abbott: The basis of my question is not directly related to Heritage; it's related to this whole issue of accountability.

A couple of years ago, on my own time and expense—I want that on the record—I was in Tanzania visiting a couple of NGOs. I was at the Canadian embassy and we were talking about the CIDA programs and other aid and assistance programs that were coming from the Canadian taxpayer. We were talking about the accountability issue.

I was shocked when it was reported to me that upwards of 40¢ of every aid dollar was consumed, one way or the other, in a reporting function. That is just absolutely obscene, because NGOs can do administration, overhead, and advertising for under 10¢ on the dollar. So that's the basis of my question.

• (1705)

Ms. Robin Jackson: If you're talking about...again, I'm not sure. Our administration budget on \$1.55 million is \$310,000. I don't know if you think that's a lot or not.

Mr. Jim Abbott: Are there some efficiencies that could be created? Can you see some way that we could maintain full accountability? That is number one. But in maintaining full accountability, do you have some suggestions for ways that the reporting could be more streamlined, whether by using a different computer program, a different format, or anything like that?

If you don't have an answer for us this second but want to provide something, that would be very useful, because everybody at this table wants to get full value for the dollar.

Ms. Robin Jackson: I don't have an answer for you. Even if I think about it, I'm not sure if I would have one, but I'm willing to think about it. There are many issues there.

The Chair: Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you very much.

We're talking about a contribution agreement. It seems to me we are talking about two contribution agreements. One is from the federal government, and one is through industry, mandated by the

CRTC, whether they give it to you directly or have to make in-house commitments to Canadian broadcasts.

You talked about ambulance chasing. Were you concerned about siren sounds from the CAB presentation in Vancouver recently? There's widespread speculation that the broadcasters are saying, "Give us a level playing field. Let's cut the obligations of the CRTC to do this, and let's put all the producers out to fund it themselves." Are you concerned about that?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Yes, I'm very concerned about it. If we want to have Canadian culture and Canadians speaking to each other, rallying around some of the issues we've made reference to, I don't see how they can do it. The broadcaster is really king, queen, whatever, right now, and I don't see how projects are going to get made in this country without the participation of broadcasters.

Mr. Charlie Angus: So Star Choice drops from \$800,000 to \$100,000. When they were giving you that other \$700,000 we could see how it was being spent and the value of it. Do you know what is being done with that money in any production they're doing—how they're spending it?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I don't know. I believe the small-market recipients are to report to the CAB, but I've never seen any of the reports. I haven't had the time to follow up, so I can't answer your question. I don't know.

Mr. Charlie Angus: There's widespread speculation right now because of the CRTC review. Minister Bernier has obviously sent clear signals that he wants a hands-off approach, a market-driven approach. It seems fairly socialistic, don't you think, that we would ask the big broadcasters to actually pay into Canadian content. Is there some concern being discussed right now about decisions that could have a serious impact on funds like yours?

Ms. Robin Jackson: Of course there is. I guess I sound prejudiced, so it's a conflict of interest for me to say that. It sounds like I'm protecting my own job.

I think it's a big issue for the producers in this country. Again it comes back to whether one wants Canadian culture. I'm not talking about culture in just an elitist sense, but the kinds of examples we've been referring to today. I think that's culture. That's what makes us a nation and keeps us together, in a way. That probably sounds grandiose, but it's important. We're talking about Canadians who are able to find solutions and express themselves on certain subjects. I think that's really vital. That's kind of the glue among us all.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is it normal for your fund not to be renewed by this time of the year?

Ms. Robin Jackson: I can't answer that. This is the first time we've had a contribution agreement with the government, so I don't know the answer to that.

I think they're kind of busy right now. But I don't know whether or not this is a normal timing problem.

• (1710)

Mr. Jean-Louis Robichaud: There's no precedent, so we can't judge it.

Mr. Charlie Angus: How long have you been receiving money from the government?

Ms. Robin Jackson: We've had this contribution agreement since 2000, so it's gone on for six years.

Mr. Charlie Angus: When was it set to expire?

Ms. Robin Jackson: October 5.

Mr. Charlie Angus: At what point does it start becoming problematic, if it's not renewed, in terms of planning future projects?

Ms. Robin Jackson: As I said, I'm the only person in the office. I've had to let everybody go—"everybody" is one other person. We have four people at deadline dates. We have two people for the rest of the year.

We have a small reserve fund because of good management. The money came from managing other funds where we had administrative fees. We have harboured that money and invested it. It's what we're living on right now.

We can do that for a few more months, but I would say that if we don't get any indication, we'll probably have to close down. We can't go on indefinitely because we don't have a large reserve fund.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Seeing no more questions, I usually finish the round.

Having been on the movie industry review a couple of years ago, I know documentaries were brought up at every turn, and I know they're very important.

In listening to some of your concerns, again, long-term sustainable funding usually comes up at this committee. I've heard it from CBC and I've heard it from everyone.

To go back to 2000, was it a six-year project in 2000 or was it a five-year project that ran out at the end of 2005, with a one-year extension?

Ms. Robin Jackson: That's why I don't entirely understand the department. They couldn't extend it any further because they shot

their bolt by asking Treasury Board for an extra year. It's why they have to now go back to try to get a multi-year agreement.

The Chair: It's not long-term sustainable funding. It was a five-year program to start with. It had a sunset clause at the end of 2005, and you were granted a one-year extension.

Ms. Robin Jackson: Yes. It turned out to be a year and six months or something. As I said, it was for the first part of the year.

The Chair: It was a question I had when I saw this and from what I had seen before on various other funding.

I know sports was one thing, which goes back to when I first sat on the sports committee. The minister came and said he had requested \$30 million more. The budget had been \$90 million, and then, lo and behold, when the announcement was made, the budget was \$100 million. When we asked for an explanation, it was because \$20 million of that \$90 million had a sunset; the program had a sunset clause. The \$30 million only brought it up.

I know for some of these things it sounds like a lot when you think \$30 million has been added, but it's not quite that much if \$20 million has been taken off.

Again, long-term sustainable funding would be such that you wouldn't have to wait until the end of 2005 to find out if you could get an extension. An extension would have been thought about somewhere along the line. You'd always be two or three years ahead, and you'd then know the funding is going to be there.

Ms. Robin Jackson: It would be nice. In all fairness, though, I have to say that the bureaucrats of the department have been very helpful and very supportive. I know they have a lot of other pressures. I don't want to criticize them at all.

The Chair: I understand.

Thank you very much for attending today.

Ms. Robin Jackson: It was my pleasure.

The Chair: I think a lot of folks around this table had questions answered.

I wish you all the best.

Ms. Robin Jackson: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.