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The Honourable Rob Moore

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•(0850)

[English]

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

We're very pleased today to be able to feature the Bay of Fundy in the new seven wonders of the natural world competition. We're quite excited about the Bay of Fundy being the only Canadian finalist in this competition, and we are quite keen as a committee to hear from people who are working on the campaign.

Today we have with us Terri McCulloch, the executive director of the Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership. Representing the Government of New Brunswick, we have Helen Jean Newman, executive director of marketing, tourism, and parks. From the Government of Nova Scotia, we have Stacey Jones-Oxner, who is a marketing adviser.

Welcome. We're very pleased that you are able to join us today. We know that you have a video presentation, and I'm told by my technical people that it's ready to go, which is great.

I will turn it over to Terri to lead off. You each have 10 minutes for your presentation and your video presentation.

Welcome.

Ms. Terri McCulloch (Executive Director, Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership): Thank you very much, Mr. Moore.

Good morning, *bonjour*, members of the standing committee. Thank you so much. It is lovely to be here in Ottawa, as always, and it is our great pleasure to be here to present to you the amazing opportunity that has been afforded to Canada by the Bay of Fundy's participation in this global campaign.

The Bay of Fundy is indeed representing our country in a worldwide quest to identify the new seven wonders of nature. It's an opportunity to involve people from all over the world in identifying the world's most extraordinary natural regions.

I have lived in the Bay of Fundy area all my life. The Bay of Fundy is indeed a place of wonder. It is a place of great beauty. It is a place of incredible natural phenomena. And it is a place that the world now knows more about.

Today we would like to share an overview of the Bay of Fundy's journey and Canada's opportunity.

First, I would like to give you an overview of the origins of the new seven wonders of nature concept. In 2001, a Swiss-born

Canadian adventurer and documentary filmmaker, Bernard Weber, created the New7Wonders Foundation. It's a non-profit association based in Switzerland. Its objective is to raise awareness of some of the world's most extraordinary places.

The foundation's first initiative was to organize an historic effort around the planet to recognize and identify the new seven human-made wonders of the world. Those of you who know your Greek history will remember that Herodotus, of course, identified his favourite seven back in 300 B.C. Of those, of course, only the pyramids remain. So Bernard Weber took the opportunity through the New7Wonders Foundation to basically energize the world around identifying the world's seven human-made wonders in a fun but rather intense global competition. This historic global vote took place from 2001 to 2007, when the new seven wonders were announced on 07-07-07.

At the conclusion of the built wonders campaign, the foundation announced a quest to determine the new seven wonders of nature. There were, incidentally, over 100 million votes received for the built wonders in the original campaign.

The built wonders campaign actually concluded with a highly televised gala in Lisbon, Portugal, on July 7, 2007. It was hosted by Sir Ben Kingsley and Neil Armstrong, two names I hope you recognize. The entertainment was provided by such international superstars as José Carreras, Chaka Khan, and Jennifer Lopez. It was broadcast to two-thirds of the world's population.

Petra was one of the winners in the built wonders campaign. Of course, there are some significant economic benefits of participating in such a global quest. Jordan's tourism revenues tripled during the new seven built wonders campaign.

Chichen Itza was also one of the final seven, and its visitor numbers have increased 75% since it was declared one of the new seven wonders.

That brings us to the new seven wonders of nature campaign, the campaign that was announced at the conclusion of the built wonders campaign. How did we get here? That's a good question. How did the Bay of Fundy become Canada's sole finalist in the global competition? I'll answer one of our FAQs, which is what were the other Canadian sites, or were there other Canadian sites. Yes, indeed, there were other Canadian sites nominated in the campaign. The Bay of Fundy rose to the top through a number of voting stages and became Canada's finalist.

We nominated the Bay of Fundy. Actually, the Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership nominated the Bay of Fundy. We are a non-profit tourism association working in partnership in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The sites were not permitted to be nominated by government; they had to be nominated by the public. We were pleased to be in a position to nominate the Bay of Fundy. Ever since then, we've been working in a very successful partnership with New Brunswick; Nova Scotia; the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, our federal funding partner; and also the Canadian Tourism Commission.

We started this journey together in 2007 when we were one of 441 global sites nominated in the campaign.

• (0855)

The next phases of voting took us to 220 semi-finalists, a further 77 semi-finalists, and then on July 7, 2009, we were selected as one of 28 elite global finalists.

We are now in the last 23 days of the campaign—28 finalists and 23 days—and we are certainly witnessing great momentum. You may recognize a few names or images from the slide. We are in very prestigious company on the global stage, with such internationally renowned sites such as the Amazon, the Galapagos, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Great Barrier Reef, the Dead Sea, and a few others that I'm sure will ring a bell.

We are very confident competing for Canada on the world stage. It may sound strange, our little old Bay of Fundy on the east coast, but there really are some extraordinary features of the Bay of Fundy that garner the world's attention normally, and certainly through this campaign.

Now I would like to pass things to Helen Jean so she can tell you a bit more about the Bay of Fundy and how it became so popular on the world stage.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman (Executive Director, Marketing, Tourism and Parks, Government of New Brunswick): The Bay of Fundy is truly a Canadian icon, although perhaps not as well known as the Rockies or some of the others, but incredibly impressive. It is seen as a natural wonder. It has been declared so by journalists and magazines from around the world.

For those of you who may not be quite sure where the Bay of Fundy is, it is basically nestled between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

As Terri said, we have an amazing partnership working on it.

The Bay of Fundy has the highest tides on earth. They are five to ten times higher than tides anywhere else in the world.

I will just give you a visual reference. A second ago you saw the Hopewell Rocks at low tide; now you are seeing them at high tide. The tide rises literally 53 feet in a six-hour cycle. To put that into perspective, it is equivalent to a four-storey building. That is very significant. The Bay of Fundy is actually like the Grand Canyon emptying and filling twice a day on a tidal cycle, so you can appreciate the real grandeur of the Bay of Fundy.

We also have another visual here of Hall's Harbour. You can see the power of the tide. One tide cycle—and again we are trying to get

you to understand the natural phenomena of this—is 100-billion tonnes of water twice a day. That's more than the combined total of all the freshwater rivers in the world.

The tide has done some spectacular things for our area of Canada. It has created some amazing landscapes. It has created a way of life. As you can see in the previous photo, the fishermen in New Brunswick are clearly attuned to the tide. You don't come in from fishing or leave for fishing until the tide tells you that you are able to do it. The tide influences our way of life in a very powerful way.

Also, the tide contributes to an incredible marine diversity not found elsewhere in the world. There are 12 species of whales frequenting the Bay of Fundy every summer to feed. Included among the 12 species is the rare right whale. There are believed to be only about 350 left on the earth, and they frequent the Bay of Fundy every summer. I was in Grand Manan just two weeks ago, and driving around the island, we literally saw a humpback and right whales playing offshore. We had whale-watching expeditions going out where people were seeing 30 to 35 whales at a time. There is nowhere else on the earth that you will see that kind of whale.

James Audubon also discovered the phenomena of the Bay of Fundy many years ago. I'm sure that's a name you are all very familiar with. He did most of his sketches of seabirds from Grand Manan, and there is an amazing museum there showing that.

The Bay of Fundy also presents to the world 1,200 kilometres of coastline. It is a 270-kilometre long, salt water bay. In addition to the ecosystem and the spectacular scenery, the Bay of Fundy is steeped in incredible history. The first permanent settlement in North America happened on the Bay of Fundy. It started on Dochet's Island and moved to Port Royal.

The Bay of Fundy has Canada's oldest incorporated city. There are over 25 provincial and historic sites along the Bay of Fundy. There are several UNESCO-designated sites along the bay, plus it home to the first geopark in North America, which UNESCO just named at a conference in Greece last year.

In addition to that, the tides do influence so much about the way of life. When you go to the Bay of Fundy, you will find the world's most complete fossil history going back 300 million years. In addition, you have access to the most ancient rock in the world: you can walk on it, you can see it, and you can touch it. You can go to Joggins and find amazing fossils and learn about this 300-million year history.

Enough of my talking. There is nothing that shows the Bay of Fundy better than amazing visuals, so we would like to take a few minutes and show you a short video on the Bay of Fundy.

[Video Presentation]

• (0900)

Hands up, those of you who have been to the Bay of Fundy, or not, because I know that after your having seen that video and hearing some of the amazing facts we've told you, the bay is going to get on your bucket list very shortly.

One thing I do want to stress about this global competition is that it is very much a matter of national pride for Canada. Canada is known for its natural beauty around the world, and it would be very disappointing for all of us, for Canada, not to have a destination in the country named as one of the new seven wonders of nature. We want to make history again for the Bay of Fundy and Canada by having it selected as one of the new seven wonders. The only way we can do that is to have people vote; it is a voting competition.

We are going to tell you a little bit more about what you can do to help us. The race is very tight. We are down to the finish line with 23 days left to vote. The competition are doing a lot. They are getting motivated. Desmond Tutu recently released a video of himself on top of Table Mountain, talking about it as a finalist. We just learned this morning that Ireland is going to be initiating some major efforts in London to mobilize votes for Ireland's Cliffs of Moher as part of the new seven wonders.

The competition is incredibly fierce, but we also have had some amazing partners. To date we have received \$4.5 million in exposure for the Bay of Fundy—that is, if we had to buy the media coverage we had, it would have cost us \$4.5 million. Here, you see Jeff Hutcheson with *Canada AM* doing a live remote from the Bay of Fundy, and he is going to continue to promote it. We have also had other amazing partners. The Canadian Tourism Commission has jumped on board with us and is doing some amazing work with us on social media. I had the privilege of being with Minister Moore in China on a mission last year, where he was talking about the new seven wonders.

In addition, for any of you who may have flown frequently, Air Canada is showing the video you saw onboard flights. VIA Rail is partnering with us. *The Globe and Mail* is also partnering with us to help get the message out. We can't do it alone. Already as a result of our efforts, some of our operators along the Bay of Fundy, even with the not so great weather this summer, are showing some increases.

So time is running out and we need your help.

● (0905)

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner (Marketing Advisor, Government of Nova Scotia): We do need your help and we appreciate the opportunity to speak before the standing committee this morning. We have had some fantastic success with our partners, as Helen Jean mentioned. We're also getting some celebrity help. If you have visited the Bay of Fundy, you know that you can't help but leave with a little bit of Bay of Fundy mud on you. Jann Arden in this picture is wearing some Bay of Fundy mud as part of a celebrity video we'll be releasing next week.

We have some great support from Jann Arden, and Measha Brueggergosman. There's a beautiful moment of Measha standing on a sandbar in the middle of the Bay of Fundy, and if you've heard her voice, you can imagine how powerful that is. She's lending her voice, along with Joel Plaskett and the anchor team at *Canada AM*. All of them are getting a little dirty for the cause because they're passionate champions of the Bay of Fundy and want to see us win. It's fantastic to have their support. So look for that next week.

Rick Mercer has also had some experiences on the Bay of Fundy with the Premier of New Brunswick, Mr. Alward. He went jet boating on Saint John, and that's another phenomenon thanks to the

Bay of Fundy and the tides. We'll broadcast that next Tuesday as well, so look for that. He's not poking fun at politicians; he's having fun at the Bay of Fundy, which is a nice change.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We hope.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: We hope, anyway. I'm sure there'll be some for that in there.

I think an important thing for all of us to realize is that there are going to be one billion votes in this competition at the end of the day. To win as Canada, we have to have a large percentage of those votes. We've been working hard to get those votes and now we're into the final 23 days. So it's even more important to build on the momentum that we've already created and continue it right through to the finish line.

The wonderful thing about this competition is that there are no age barriers. I can't think of a better place to talk about democracy and this voting opportunity than here today. We have youth ambassadors in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia who have been leading the charge and getting students really excited about the opportunity to highlight a natural wonder and to get involved in the voting process. It's a great opportunity to educate our young people about democracy, and about the Bay of Fundy, of course.

So how can you help? We have seven really simple things for you to do and to pass along to your colleagues. First of all, visit votemyfundy.com. Learn a little more about the Bay of Fundy and why it deserves to be among the new seven wonders of nature.

Here's my shameless plug. I know you all have BlackBerrys, so for just 25¢ you can text vote for the Bay of Fundy at 77077. The great thing about the text voting is that you can do it as many times as you like, as opposed to the online voting where you can do it just once.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We'd like to say that for a trip to Starbucks, you can vote ten times.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: That's right.

You can follow the campaign on Twitter. If you're a Twitter follower, you can check us out at votemyfundy.com as well.

This is a simple thing that all of us can do. For the next 23 days, on every email you send, put a simple signature at the end with votemyfundy.com, encouraging your colleagues and family members to visit the site and vote for the Bay of Fundy. Take 15 minutes out of your day and host a Bay of Fundy day in your office or home. Take your coffee break and encourage your staff to stand around the computer and vote for the Bay of Fundy, Canada's entry. You can join the campaign on Facebook, as the New7Wonders Foundation just released a new voting mechanism on Facebook. This is much easier to do. It gives us another opportunity to make your vote count.

Finally, you saw the video today of the Bay of Fundy. There are other beautiful videos and experiences that people have shared on our YouTube website. We encourage you to go there and check out some of the other experiences that are available.

I think more than anything, time is ticking. We have 23 days left. The deadline for voting is November 11, 2011. We have a really wonderful opportunity to ensure that Canada is among the new seven wonders of nature. If anyone deserves to be there, I think Canada does. I certainly would be thrilled if the Bay of Fundy were on the world stage as well. So go to votemyfundy.com.

That's the end of our presentation.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to bring the story to you and hope we can secure your support, and we encourage you to share it story with your colleagues.

• (0910)

The Chair: Thank you to each of you, Helen Jean, Terri, and Stacey, for appearing here before us taking the time to present to us.

We now have an opportunity for our committee members to ask some questions. We're going to lead off with Mr. Gord Brown, for seven minutes.

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

And thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I come from a riding in Ontario just south of Ottawa that has the Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and Rideau Canal. I also have a background in tourism, both on the private and public sides, so I appreciate your efforts here today and want to congratulate you on what you're doing. Already you're giving great exposure to the Bay of Fundy, and I wish you well in your campaign.

We have lots of questions around the table. My area has UNESCO-designated sites, such as the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and the Rideau Canal. When they were designated, there was a lot of hype about how that designation was going to increase tourism.

Obviously, what you're doing is giving lots of opportunity here. What kind of impact do you think this might have on your region just by being part of this competition? Of course, if you win, what do you think the impact will be for your communities?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: I'll take that.

Thank you, Mr. Brown, for your question.

It's a great opportunity, really, for the Bay of Fundy to have exposure on the international stage. Tourism, increasingly, as we all know, even if we're not in tourism, is a global industry. We are being compared and are in the market with sites from around the world, with emerging regions, with existing tourism icons, and so it's a great opportunity to even be in the campaign. It's almost like when people who don't win Miss Teen Canada say, "Oh, it was just an honour to be nominated". This is one of those cases in which it is an honour to be nominated; it's an honour to be participating in such a globally recognized initiative.

Obviously, we're hoping that it will result in increased tourism in the region. As Helen Jean mentioned, we have seen very strong numbers in tourism as a result—even compared to other parts of the Maritimes, which is interesting—and we're hearing from our industry that there is a good general buzz about the campaign.

What it really does is to establish the Bay of Fundy as one of the top Canadian nature tourism icons. That's been the objective from the get-go, for our organization to really give the Bay of Fundy this high profile nationally and internationally. Our \$4.5 million of media coverage to date certainly goes a long way to that end. Obviously, we're expecting more in the last 23 days, as we race to the finish line.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: I'll add a couple of points to that, seeing that you are familiar with the business.

We have tour operators who are based in the U.K., London, France, etc. We've struggled to have the Maritimes, the Atlantic region, on their Canadian itineraries over the length of time and to the depth we would like. Being able to go to those tour operators with this significant icon of being a finalist for one of the new seven wonders of nature has meant a great increase in business from tour operators carrying New Brunswick product and Nova Scotia product. For example, there are tour operators from Germany who are citing a 30% increase in bookings to the Maritimes, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in particular, a result of having Bay of Fundy itineraries on the shelf.

The other thing, the reality in our world, is that we have a relatively short tourism season, even though we have the capacity for a much longer tourism season. To put it bluntly, we still have a lot of rooms at the inn and a lot of beds that we can still fill in that June-to-October period. And thinking really big—and I'm sure Mr. Moore can attest to that—there's nothing more spectacular than the Bay of Fundy in the winter, when you have the amazing ice and those sorts of things.

So it also gives us the ability to increase the tourism season significantly for the region. And it isn't just about the Maritimes, it is about Canada. You go to other countries, and they know about the new seven wonders and have these on their bucket list of places they want to go.

• (0915)

Mr. Gordon Brown: All too often people don't understand the importance of tourism as an economic driver, an economic generator. So maybe you can tell us just a little bit about how many people are employed in tourism in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and what the economic impact in those regions is.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: I can start with New Brunswick.

We have about 33,000 people employed in full-time-equivalent positions in the province of New Brunswick. In addition to that, tourism represents about 3.2% of New Brunswick's provincial GDP, which is among one of the higher GDPs in Canada for tourism.

I also like to say, because I'm a tourism marketer, that from a GDP perspective, tourism in New Brunswick represents more than the combined total of fishing, forestry, and agriculture, as far as what it contributes to the economy.

In addition, it generates about \$218 million of actual tax revenue for the Province of New Brunswick, where our revenue is about \$1.3 billion or \$1.5 billion a year.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: And it's similar for Nova Scotia, where there are about 30,000 direct jobs as a result of tourism and 22,000 indirect jobs, and about the same numbers GDP-wise. It's a huge industry that we would love to see grow more, and that's why we are so passionate about this opportunity. We've seen how the other destinations have grown as a result. That's pie in the sky thinking, but I think it's a wonderful opportunity.

Mr. Gordon Brown: In order to get onto the tours that these receptive tour operators run in Canada, you really need to have a worldwide promotion effort. Could you tell us a little bit more? I know you touched on that a little bit, in mentioning what you're hearing out of Germany in terms of their knowing about this and people there asking to get onto a tour operator's program. Could you tell us a little bit more about what you're doing to help promote that?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: There are a couple of things that we're doing. There is an Atlantic Canada tourism partnership of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., and Newfoundland and Labrador, along with ACOA. We are working very aggressively in the European market in particular. We are doing everything from familiarization tours with tour operators to travel agent training. We are putting on seminars and workshops for the people at these tour operator desks.

Another thing that we're doing is using the media. Their value of the media is incredible. If you're a passionate golfer, you're probably going to be much more impacted by an amazing article on a golf course than you are by an ad. So last year, for example, there were about 125 media in the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia region. Several of those groups were actually from the U.K. and there was also a group from Germany.

So what we're trying to do, in the absence of great marketing budgets, is to create a buzz about the region and the Bay of Fundy by working with the travel media and with tour operators that have a really good track record of selling Canada.

We are also partnering with those tour operators. If you take a company like Audley Travel out of the U.K., it's a very high-end, high yield tour operator. We're partnering with them so that they can go out and reach their client database. So we're doing promotions and marketing with them, and it's the same with Canusa, which is one of the biggest tour operators in Germany.

We're being very strategic. We're not going out with a shotgun; we're going in with a laser focus working with the tour operators that have the highest potential to sell to the right kind of people, because that's one thing that's very important moving forward. We want the right kind of people coming to the Bay of Fundy. We want the people who will appreciate what makes the Bay of Fundy area a special place to live and to visit. Put it this way: we're not Las Vegas, we don't pretend to be, and we don't ever want to be. We want to stay special and unique.

• (0920)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Welcome, and thank you for your presentation. You'll find there's a pretty unanimous sense of awe about the Bay of Fundy in this room, and

we're looking forward to working with our colleagues, as I'm sure they will be working with us in future endeavours.

What do you anticipate the shelf life of this project to be, win or lose, as far as the Bay of Fundy and tourism are concerned?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: My colleagues have all whispered to me, "forever".

But really, once you take a step in this direction on the global stage and you stand confidently there for two years with such esteemed colleagues as we have been with, we needn't look backwards. I think we do need to look forward to other opportunities to promote the Bay of Fundy and to market it and really bookend our country with yet another beautiful place. That's my perspective.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: And it's a claim that we can make forever, and all of us certainly intend, in all of our marketing efforts and all of our promotion efforts, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, to continue to pound that message out. It is forever.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Good.

You were talking about some of the international activities and rollouts. What about Canada and getting the message out to Canadians right across the country? That's where you need a large percentage of votes, right? I'm looking at this list and it's pretty impressive, and I would assume that all of the residents of these various nations will be voting for their part of the world. I've been fortunate enough to spend time in South Africa and I have stood on top of Table Mountain and, indeed, it is very impressive. So you're in very good company and that alone is a source of pride for Canadians.

But what kind of rollout has been happening across Canada to get Canadians in general to vote?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: One thing I can say, just to address your observation about the different populations among the finalist countries, is that the New7Wonders Foundation, in its wisdom, requires that people doing online voting do vote for seven sites. You can't go on and vote for the Bay of Fundy seven times and for Table Mountain seven times. You have to choose your favourite seven. It is a way of equalizing the votes among the various populations.

Helen Jean mentioned a few of the national initiatives. It is certainly a challenge in this country; it's a very big country. To get what appears on the surface, perhaps, to be a regional message out to the rest of the country has been challenging. We've really stepped things up in the last year and a half or so, I would say, with some international partnerships, which I'll speak about in a moment.

The Air Canada partnership has been key. If you've been on an Air Canada flight in the last couple of days, either domestically or internationally, you will have seen the two-minute video we just saw.

We have information through VIA Rail all across the country, using our very dedicated partners at VIA Rail—a natural partnership for us in the travel industry—at both the point of sale at VIA Rail and on the trains.

We've had national full-page ads in *The Globe and Mail*. We had the front cover of the *National Post* and an editorial a couple of weeks ago as well.

We've had a couple of interesting initiatives. We had a university challenge a couple of weeks ago. We had seven Canadian universities from coast to coast prepare giant sevens. Some were made of people—people in Bay of Fundy mud, actually, in one of our universities. Some were made by engineering students. It was just a way to put the challenge across Canada. We got a lot of coverage for that.

We're also working with Parks Canada in the region and nationally as well. And we're running the full media circuit.

Have I missed anything, ladies?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: We had a media partnership with *Canada AM*, specifically, which we'll be extending for the next few weeks. We are putting the final push on.

It's been a challenge, because it's been a long campaign. Making sure that we're using our dollars to the best of our advantage as we move towards the finish line has been—

Ms. Terri McCulloch: Yes, it's the world's longest campaign.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We also can't forget the role of social media. We are being very aggressive. The Canadian Tourism Commission has helped us a great deal with the social media campaign. We are working with social media experts, and our message is going everywhere. It's been very viral. That sort of thing is happening. For example, we have a time planned when both of our premiers will be sending out emails to all civil servants in the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia asking them to vote and to tell their friends and families.

Later today we're hoping to capture media attention and MPs' attention when Minister Moore is going to be receiving a bottle that we have here. It contains messages from school children along the Bay of Fundy that basically ask for help and support.

When we talk about Air Canada and VIA Rail, they are also sending emails to their databases telling people about the competition and encouraging them to vote.

We don't deny that we need more help. Budgets are always interesting. We have really maximized the budget that we have, doing everything we strategically and possibly can within the budget we have. It's now over to people like you to help us spread the word even more through the channels you have, whether you have a newsletter going out to your constituents, an email database, or friends who own companies. It is whatever you can do.

There is a nice little toolkit available on votemyfundy.com to make it really easy for you to plug into some things you can do.

• (0925)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

I'll pass the rest of my time on to my colleague.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Could you give more details about the very entertaining history of mud in the Bay of Fundy?

I think that we could improve service to the francophone community. I don't think that the Acadian community around the Bay of Fundy is very large, unless I am mistaken. Would there not be a francophone representative who could develop the significant French TV network available in Quebec, that covers all of the Canadian francophonie? We could imagine a major mud battle in a television show.

[*English*]

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We actually have been working with celebrities and do have a gentleman in Quebec. He is a young gentleman, a very vibrant entertainer. His name is Jean-François Breau, and he is our spokesperson. He has been raising the profile of the Bay of Fundy. He's often asked to host television shows or to be on shows like *Salut Bonjour*, etc. So we certainly are engaging the Quebec market as well as the market in France.

Talking about the history, the first permanent settlement in North America was started in 1604 by Samuel de Champlain and Sieur de Monts on Dochet Island. They had a bitterly cold winter there and later moved to Port Royal, which became the first permanent settlement. The Saint John River was named by Champlain, I believe, and there is a very vibrant Acadian history on both sides of the bay. Grand Pré is a national historic site.

So there is a great connect to the francophone and Acadian communities with this whole initiative, and it has caught on quite strongly. As a matter of fact, we are doing some initiatives in France between November 4 and 10. We're going to be in London and then we're going to be in France, again promoting this whole connection. The francophones do see the Bay of Fundy as part of their heritage, because when the ships came over, they left from Deauville outside of Paris and actually sailed directly to the Bay of Fundy on that historic voyage.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: So do you think that Jean-François—

The Chair: Time's up for this round, but we can get that in the next round.

Thank you, Mr. Benskin, and Mr. Nantel.

Mr. Cuzner.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Thank you very much.

And thank you for being here today, and thank you to the committee for allowing me to sit in on this.

Thank you for clearing up the fact that my colleague, Mr. Brown, thought that Chaka Khan was one of the actual seven wonders of the world. I appreciate your clearing that up.

I too stood on Table Mountain this past year when I was at a CPA conference. I went up in the lift with Joe Preston, a colleague of ours. He's one of the great storytellers, and I'd encourage my Conservative colleagues to get that story from Joe about his trip up in the tram car.

You made the comment that this whole process has been beneficial regardless of the outcome. Certainly we want to see a positive outcome, but regardless of that, it has been of benefit because I think that in the east, we're notorious for trying to get as many tourists as possible on the ground there. We will fight over the tourists rather than trying to grow the pie. This seems to be a really positive opportunity to grow that pie.

You mentioned incidentally that you're seeing some benefit already in the numbers now. We're not seeing that. This past year has been desperate in Cape Breton. Typically at the fortress at Louisbourg we would see 160,000 to 180,000 visitors per year, and we're going to be lucky to hit 90,000 this year.

What would be the profile? Is it too early to give us an overview of the profile of the tourists and what their increased numbers will be? Where are they coming from and what type of tourists have you attracted with the excitement that's been generated through the campaign, and what are they doing when they're there? Where are they going and what are they doing?

● (0930)

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: We're waiting for the final results of our exit surveys. We won't have a really good picture of that until the season is over.

Overall visitation is down by about 3% across the province. What we are hearing, though, in the areas around the Bay of Fundy in particular, is anecdotal information from operators who are saying they had a stellar year and that their rooms are full.

So depending on where you are in the province, there certainly are differences. But again we won't know the full picture until the season has wrapped up.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We're the same as Stacey in terms of getting our final numbers. But, for example, at the Roosevelt cottage on Campobello Island, their numbers are up 25%. Numbers at the Hopewell Rocks are up 7% to 8%, and that is after some pretty dismal weather in July, but the numbers in September and October have been very strong.

I think the profile of the visitors who are coming and whom we intend to attract with this initiative is that they are highly educated people. These are people who spend a lot of money. These are not people who are going to go to McDonald's; they are going to want to experience Fundy seafood. They are going to want to buy local, authentic crafts; they are not going to want those made in China, or that sort of thing. In working together, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have a fairly detailed profile of the type of visitors whom we want to attract with this.

I think we also have to be honest. With the Bay of Fundy being a finalist for the new seven wonders, we want to be up there with the Rockies and Niagara Falls. It's kind of like our saying, "Hey guys, don't forget about us in Atlantic Canada", that we're worthy by virtue of the fact we are one of the new seven wonders finalists. We are worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as the Rockies.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: That profile gives us an opportunity that we really need not only to attract them to the Bay of Fundy but even to put Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Maritimes, on the map.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It's not a magic bullet. It's going to take a little bit of time, but by working together and being strategic we really believe that we'll have a significant impact. And we will have mechanisms in place to monitor and measure that impact.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I find there are two aspects of a successful tourism industry that have to be identified and must continue to be pursued, and these are programming and promotions. When people come over to my place for a visit, they don't come over to look at the furniture. They want to engage, they want to do something, they want an experience.

We had a good tourist trade during the fall colours in Cape Breton, but we know that was enhanced by doing the Celtic Colours International Music Festival around it. If I could throw the question out, do you see additional programming opportunities coming out of this?

The other one is the promotional side of it. You get the buzz. Have both provinces made a commitment to continue? We were identified as the top island in North America, the most beautiful island in North America. There was a little bit of fanfare, they rolled the meatballs, had a little reception, and a press release, and there was nothing after that. As I said, our numbers are down this year because it was an incredibly desperate July. But there didn't seem to be any horsepower in the wake of the designation, which should have been ridden hard. We didn't seize the opportunity, I don't think.

Could you talk about the programming opportunities and where some of the money might come from to support that? And with the promotional opportunities, what's the plan going forward from there?

● (0935)

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: I know from New Brunswick's perspective that we are certainly committed to the Bay of Fundy, and have been for a number of years. When we look at our promotion, we see four major pillars that differentiate New Brunswick from other destinations, and we are working in partnership with our other maritime provinces.

Clearly, the Bay of Fundy is a differentiator. A second differentiator for us is our amazing Acadian experience. Our third pillar is around beaches; New Brunswick has the warmest salt water beaches in Canada. Then, fourth, is our amazing river system. So it is cast in—

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: So the Bay of Fundy is the lower piece and then you fill in with the other—

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: Exactly. So we are committed.

We're already working on programming along the Bay of Fundy. Right now we're working with ACOA on an amazing project happening in Alma, which they're also hoping to roll out through the rest of the Maritimes. It's called the VEOC project, and they're using Alma as the pilot, improving and enhancing that community for the visitor experience. Alma probably wouldn't have been the pilot if it weren't for the new seven wonders competition.

We have product people on the ground. Terri also plays a big roll, too, working with our industry to ensure that they know about the Bay of Fundy and are trained about the Bay of Fundy. A known fact in the tourism business is that people need four hours of activity for every hour they drive. If they drive an hour and don't have four hours of activity, they're going to think, "What am I doing here? It wasn't worth the trip". That's one of the things that I know we're both working very hard to do—and Stacey can tell you more about Nova Scotia.

We have two full-time people working along the Bay of Fundy with the operators to enhance their programming. It often isn't about big bucks and bricks and mortar; it's just about programming, the idea of having things for people to do.

The Chair: Thank you.

I haven't been too strict, but we try to keep a relative amount of time. If there are things you want to say, we'll have a bit of a wrap up.

Mr. Young.

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

Thank you for coming here today and for your excellent presentation. Congratulations on getting into the top 28. Everybody here wishes you the best of luck.

Just hearing your comment a minute ago, I realize now what I've been doing wrong on motor trips. I've been driving too much and not having enough activity.

Terri and Stacey, could you please take a minute each and tell people what unique regional activities visitors and travellers can do when they arrive in the region?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: I only have one minute? Oh, dear.

I'll take my favourites, then. One, for me, is walking on the ocean floor. It's a rare opportunity that we have to be 53 feet below sea level. You do not need scuba gear for this. The tides recede—and where I live, they actually go out five kilometres—and fully expose the ocean floor, with the ecology that ensues. This can be done for free; it can be done by children. It's one of the most extraordinary things you can expose your children to at a young age, to be able to see nature in its entirety in that regard. It's a rare opportunity.

I guess my second favourite thing to do would be sea-kayaking at high tide over the same spot where I was just walking on the ocean floor.

Those would be my top two.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: We took Measha Brueggergosman and our premier on a tidal bore rafting trip just outside Truro, Nova Scotia. If you haven't experienced that, it's the most thrilling ride of

your life and the most fun you'll ever have. The tide comes in and mixes with the current, creating these ten-foot standing waves that you ride into on a raft. It is a thrilling adventure.

We talk about the products we have. We have fantastic product in Nova Scotia. This campaign is about highlighting those. That's just one example.

I went to Hopewell Rocks. I'm usually on the Nova Scotia side, because that's my job, but I stood and looked at Hopewell Rocks. They took my breath away. Seeing those rock formations that have formed over hundreds of years and a beautiful archway called the Lover's Arch is truly breathtaking.

• (0940)

Mr. Terence Young: That is very persuasive. Thank you.

You mentioned the UNESCO-designated sites. Could you please tell the committee about what they are and what a geopark is?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: I can give you an overview of the UNESCO sites.

There are two biosphere reserves on the Bay of Fundy. One is in southwest Nova at the southern tip of the Bay of Fundy on the Nova Scotia side. There's also a UNESCO biosphere reserve in the upper Bay of Fundy on the New Brunswick side; it stretches from the New Brunswick-Nova Scotia border down to St. Martins, outside of Saint John.

We also have the Joggins fossil cliffs, which are also a UNESCO world heritage site. The Grand Pré National Historic Site is in the very final stages—within a month or so, I think—of being declared a world heritage site as well.

Helen Jean, I'll let you describe a geopark.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: A geopark is a designated area. There are none in North America at this time other than the one in New Brunswick. There are 160 in the world.

These are areas in the world that have a unique and fascinating geological history but that also provide an opportunity for potential economic development in terms of tourism around their geological history.

Called Stonehammer Geopark, the first one was designated, as I mentioned, at a conference in Greece last spring. It's the first one to qualify. There's a rigorous process to go through to have that designation. It is not a UNESCO designation but is recognized by UNESCO. It includes the area around Saint John; it goes to Lepreau Falls and down to St. Martins.

If you look at the Bay of Fundy on both sides, the first part of the Bay of Fundy is very much the marine part of it, as we call it, which is where you have the whales, the birds, et cetera. Then, further down the bay is the geological side of it, where you have the really unusual rock formations and cliffs. When you get to the end of the bay you see the tides, which is where you can do rafting in the tidal bore and walk on the ocean floor.

Mr. Terence Young: There are 12 species of whales in the Bay of Fundy. Is that right?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: Yes.

Mr. Terence Young: You mentioned one that was rare, with only 350 of them left in the world. Could you please tell me how important whale watching tourism is and what is unique about that whale, if anything?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: Whale watching is very important to the area, but I want to stress that it is done with great respect. There is a code of ethics in place for all the whale watchers on the Bay of Fundy. There is a great deal of whale research being done. In fact, companies in the region and whale people were instrumental in having the shipping lanes going into the Bay of Fundy changed to protect the whales, because they found that many of the whales that were dying were doing so as a result of damage by boats.

That has led to an increase in the rare right whale. The right whale is the rare one; it was almost extinct, because it was the most highly sought-after whale. The reason was that it floated to the surface very quickly; that's why it was called the right whale. When people were out whale hunting, they were going for the right whale.

Another whale that we have in the Bay of Fundy is the humpback whale. It is one of the largest whales. It's called the clown of the sea. These are whales that love to play. If you're out whale watching in mating season with the humpbacks, it is spectacular to see them break.

Don't ask me to name the other species. There's minke; there's finback, but....

Mr. Terence Young: Could you please name all the species?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Terence Young: If the Bay of Fundy wins a place in the top seven, what impact do you think there will be on local infrastructure, with the potential increase in tourism? Is the infrastructure adequate? Are you adding to it, or do you feel it's in great shape for the growth in tourism?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: There are two answers to the question.

On the New Brunswick side, as I mentioned, there's certainly still lots of capacity. We have hotel rooms and whatnot with a lot of capacity. We are also investing in infrastructure in partnership with ACOA and some of our federal partners in Geopark in the Saint John area. We're working to complete the Fundy Trail, a phenomenal parkway, which you can drive as well as hike or bike or walk, along the Bay of Fundy. And this past July, a major aquarium opened in Saint Andrews, the Fundy Discovery Aquarium.

We realize there will be implications from winning this, so we certainly have our eye, within the fiscal environment we're all working in, on how to make sure that we are ready to provide the best possible experience for people who come.

● (0945)

Mr. Terence Young: What environmental impact might you expect from an increase in tourism?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We think the environmental impact can be carefully managed by virtue of the fact that the people who go

to see the seven wonders will be the right type of people. We'll have to make sure, and are making sure, that we have the regulations in place.

We'll use another New Brunswick example, and then I'll stop. The Bouctouche dunes are an incredible sight. The numbers of tourists became a bit high there, and so the officials basically limited the numbers there because they wanted to protect the piping plovers. They put programs in place so that only so many people a day were allowed. But it was handled in such a way that it didn't annoy people; they understood, because of the sensitivity of the area.

We will have and we do have those sorts of plans in place.

Mr. Terence Young: Twice a day 100-billion tonnes of water is moved by the tides. What potential is there for hydroelectric power?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: It's an exciting opportunity and one that Nova Scotia has been working to develop with much excitement. We're doing a lot of research to make sure that we harness those tides, and in the most respectful way. There is significant opportunity for the province.

Mr. Terence Young: Thanks again.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Young.

You certainly referred to a diversity of whales and there were a diversity of questions, which you guys are handling very well.

Next up we have Mr. Rousseau. Now we're to have five-minute rounds.

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Thank you very much for your presentation.

November 11 is coming up very soon; it's in three weeks. What kinds of marketing tools do you have for the final run? Can we do something else as a responsible government, since I'm concerned with tourism, to help you?

Is there any marketing stunt for cash? My colleague talked about stars mud fighting.

Are any political leaders going to see the place?

We need something very fast, within three weeks.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: It's a great opportunity. The timing is right. Next week, we're going to be releasing that celebrity video, and it's going to be a viral campaign. We'll be looking to everyone to share that video via their social media contacts. It's one of those very funny videos that we hope will be shareable.

We've had a full PR and marketing campaign that we're continuing to roll out as we go along. We have the CTV partnership, so we've been doing closed captioning; we have online media buys that are going on right now—in our competition's destinations, for instance, so that when you're looking for the Grand Canyon and voting for them, you'll see the Bay of Fundy there. VIA Rail is rolling out now; and our Air Canada partnership....

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: We have a calendar with a whole successive wave, and as Stacey said, a big focus is with the online world. Are you going to see big ads in *The Globe and Mail*, *The Gazette* in Montreal, the *Calgary Herald*, *The Vancouver Sun*? No. We wish we could, but the reality of the fiscal environment is that we're being strategic with other methods that we use.

We have something planned from a media and PR perspective for every week, but there is no big stunt, other than the celebrity video. We really think it's going to have some magic.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: CTC is currently running a contest that covers the U.S. market for us. There's a free trip to the Bay of Fundy, if you vote for the Bay of Fundy. We're doing the same thing right now with CTV. So far I think we have 9,000 entries. Is that right?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It's 44,000.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: It's 44,000. Correction, that's a big number. I think there are 8,000 unique entries. There are things that are happening.

We would be happy to facilitate a mud fight on Parliament Hill. I have a jar of Fundy mud that I can bring to the Hill.

• (0950)

Mr. Jean Rousseau: I'll participate in that. I'll be glad to do it.

You should focus on the waves, because there was an orange wave here a couple of months ago.

What percentage of the vote do you think we will need to win this?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: It's difficult to know, because we don't know where we are in the standings at any given time.

We only know where we're trending. In the last trending information that was sent, the Bay of Fundy was trending upwards, but we really don't know. That's why it's so important to get as many votes as possible.

Mr. Jean Rousseau: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rousseau.

Mr. Gill.

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

I want to thank the witnesses, first of all, for taking the time to be here and provide this very important information. I think it's a very proud moment for all Canadians. You're doing an amazing job of promoting Canada on the world stage.

I liked your presentation.

One of the things I'd like to ask is this. You mentioned promoting this in the mainstream media, as in major corporations and others. Has any effort been made with the ethnic media? Politicians, especially the ones who come from some of the major cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, will tell you about the importance of ethnic media.

I will not hesitate to admit that since I joined the committee and came to Ottawa, this is the first time I've heard about this initiative. I'd like to hear your thoughts on it.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: It's a really good question. I think a lot of our time was first spent on getting our own region really excited about the campaign and to reach out to a larger audience. Our focus was then on national media exposure so that we could reach the most people in Canada.

From my marketing and communication perspective, I know that in reaching an audience like Toronto, it's very important to utilize those channels. As for your point, reaching out to those channels is something that we should look at as we count down the 23 days. I thank you for that suggestion.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: I also think it's a bit hard too, because the ethnic media is certainly receiving the information.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Absolutely.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: The challenge, I think, is for them to see the relevance of their carrying the stories or promoting it. We are blitzing all media channels across the country.

I know we actually had some journalists in the province this summer. I can't remember which media it was, but it represented the ethnic media out of Toronto.

Mr. Parm Gill: When it comes to the ethnic media, I think it's not so much about the dollar amount as the personal relationships. We politicians or parliamentarians can definitely help in that respect within our local regions, if efforts are made to reach out to different members of Parliament. We can encourage them to promote it in their own ridings and through the ethnic media.

We were all elected for a reason. I'm sure all politicians are liked by the ethnic media and the outlets in their neighbourhoods. I think it could be huge.

We're obviously going to do that. I am definitely going to take up this challenge. If you have ways to get the word out to other parts of the world and other members, be they provincial, municipal, or federal, I think it would help.

Those are the recommendations that I'd like to make.

I have some other questions. Can you elaborate on the relationship with the federal government and how it is helping in this cause? It seems that your partnership with Minister Moore is pretty good, because his name came up a couple of times in the presentation. Could you highlight some of those things?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: We've had a great partnership with ACOA. Tourism Atlantic has been on board with the campaign from the very beginning. So the federal government has been a willing partner. It's been a really wonderful, unique partnership, with all of us working together on this common goal.

Our MPs across the board, across all parties, have been ready to promote the cause, especially as we count down the final 23 days. Now is when we'll be tapping them even more and broadening that reach out not just to our Atlantic Canadian MPs but also to all of our Canadian MPs. This is Canada's entry, and we need that support in order to be successful.

• (0955)

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: The Canadian Tourism Commission also—

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Absolutely.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: —has been a big partner with us, doing social media campaigns and profiling the initiative at events that they are doing around the world.

Mr. Parm Gill: What are some of the Fundy-based businesses that will be successful or that will benefit from this at the end of the day? Are you able to name any?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: There are a lot.

Ms. Terri McCulloch: There are, I think, over 1,200 tourism-related businesses in the Bay of Fundy region interprovincially. So it's quite a big industry for us.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It's a big area.

Ms. Terri McCulloch: Yes.

Some of the nature sites are obviously the key sites. Any others with international accolades already, I think, will be appealing to this market—at least as lure sites—such as Hopewell Rocks, the Joggins fossil cliffs, the Fundy Geological Museum, and the new aquarium in St. Andrews.

Whale-watching is also a big growth industry in our region, particularly with the successive years of good whales to watch and a really good visitor experience. As Helen Jean said, part of my job on the product side is to monitor the whale-watching experience. We're extremely tightly monitored, probably the most tightly monitored in the country.

These are the types of things that I think will stand to benefit, the natural experiences—and obviously the accommodations, the food, and everything else you need to go with that.

The Chair: Thank you for the questions and the responses.

Madame Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): I'm going to ask my questions in French. I have three questions and two comments, so I will try to speak quickly.

First, I have been to the Bay of Fundy several times and I really enjoyed it. I have gone camping there. Do not forget to promote Saint Andrews. It is a very pretty town, particularly the beautiful but tiny church.

Second, I voted twice, and I've already mentioned this to the committee. The first time I voted using one of my addresses, for one reason or another, I went back and I noticed that my choices were different; my choices had been changed. So, I was played that time, my vote did not go to the Bay of Fundy. So I went and voted a second time. I don't know why it happened, but you could look at this, in case there are any problems.

As for my questions, Mr. Young took the words somewhat out of my mouth. One of them concerns environmental protection, including the human environment. I come from an archeological background. You talked about Sainte-Croix Island—you called it something else—where Samuel de Champlain and Pierre de Gua de Monts went. I know that no one can go there; however, will people one day be able to visit the island? If so, will there be protection for

the archeological sites? Will some archeological sites, which need protection, be promoted?

[*English*]

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: I know that St. Croix Island—Dochet's Island—is jointly viewed by both the U.S. and the Canadian side, and certainly the intention is that it not be visited, as there are other ways for the story to be told. During the celebration in 2004, there were boat tours and certain interpretations. There is a national historic site, a location where you can view the island and hear the stories, those sorts of things. So the intention is certainly never to have that island overrun in order to have that story told.

On the Nova Scotia side, around Grand-Pré and Port-Royal, protections are equally in place.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: There is an old fort too. I can no longer remember what side it was on. I forget the name of the fort, but a fort has been rebuilt.

[*English*]

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: Are you talking about Port Royal? There are several.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Perhaps it's the one at Port-Royal, but it is not the Louisbourg one.

[*English*]

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: That's the beauty of having so many provincial and national historic sites around the bay. You have places like Port Royal. You have places like Grand Pré. You have the Martello Tower. When you look at it, there's a lot of it that is already very, very protected.

● (1000)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Yes, I am afraid that some of these sites will be destroyed by tourism. You'll have to be very careful.

You talked about Jean-François Breau, who is the Quebec spokesperson. Other than that, what promotional work are you doing in French? Quebecers haven't heard a lot about this.

[*English*]

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: Actually, New Brunswick was very aggressive in the Quebec market. We actually worked with Jean-François and a public relations company out of Montreal to get the message out. Is it as good as we would like it to be? No, because we had a great deal of difficulty in getting the media to pick up the story. They just didn't pick it up.

We offered to arrange interviews with Bernard Werber, who was born in Montreal. And, quite honestly, we just had some real challenges getting the story to take traction. But when Jean-François and his girlfriend recently released a new album, I think on September 20, he mentioned it. He has tweeted about it and when he is on various shows he's mentioned it.

Put it this way: more is better for all of us.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: And he will be part of the celebrity video release. When we release that celebrity video next week, we'll be rolling out a number of other videos after that main one, and one of them will be Jean-François Breau, and there's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. So we'll have that one major blast of the celebrity video and then subsequent celebrities will be onboard after that.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: In French?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Yes.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Do I have any time left?

[English]

The Chair: Eight seconds, seven, six....

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: One of the documents I read talks about upgrading the labour force. What exactly are we talking about?

[English]

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: I'm sorry, can you repeat the question?

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: It concerns upgrading the labour force. A document from the Library of Parliament refers to this. I don't know what is being referred to.

[English]

People learning...jobs...something about....

No, it doesn't mean anything?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: No, sorry.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: No? Okay.

The Chair: Okay, we'll go on to our next questioner.

Mr. Hillyer, for five minutes.

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

Actually, I just have one question. We talk about what we need to do from here, because that's all we can do; we can't go back into the past. However, we hope and expect that this won't be the last time we have a chance for the country to rally around something with such unity. So with 23 days left, as you're scrambling to do whatever it takes to get this done, if you could go back in time, what would you do differently? That will help us learn for the next time we have something neat like this.

Ms. Terri McCulloch: We've been so busy looking forward, we haven't had a chance to look back.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: And I think it will be important for us, at the end of this competition, to really take a good look back and put together a full report so that we can learn from what we did right and what we could have done better.

But it has been a very long campaign. As you saw in the video, from 2007, we have gone from 440 to 220 to 77. But we feel really confident about the plan that we have in place, and as we march into the last 23 days we're excited about the momentum and excited about being here today on Parliament Hill. We really have a chance, but we need everyone to come together to make it happen.

Mr. Jim Hillyer: Have you ever thought, though, along the way that if only this had happened, or if only these people had been on board...?

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: There is one thing. From when New7Wonders announced that we were one of the top 28, we worked aggressively and very hard to get some corporate sponsors. The New7Wonders foundation, somewhat like the Olympics or the world soccer championship, has a lot of rules and regulations about sponsorship and partners.

We spent a lot of time and energy working with Tim Hortons, with Canadian Tire, with car companies, and bicycle companies. We had a list of about 20 major corporations, and, unfortunately, when the top 28 were announced, it didn't fit within the planning cycles of those major corporations. It would have been amazing if we could have had two or three major corporations on board, a Tim Hortons, a Canadian Tire, or someone like that working with us and partnering with us through all of their amazing channels and points of sale. We looked at Loblaws. We looked at Sobeys. It wasn't that these people were not passionate about it and very engaged in it; it just didn't work in their planning cycles, because they were planning much further out than the window we were able to offer them when we found out.

That would be one thing we could have done better. If we could have done better, it would have been to have more corporate sponsors—and always, money. But it was beyond our control.

•(1005)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hillyer.

That completes our second round of questioning. Is it the will of the committee to continue questioning?

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Chair, I have one quick question.

The Chair: Sure. You're up, so go ahead.

Is it the will of the committee to continue after Mr. Benskin's question?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I could ask a couple of questions.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): I think we have one more.

The Chair: Okay. We'll do one more round, then.

Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: This might seem like a very lame question. We have been talking a lot about people being in the Bay of Fundy. I have a question about getting there. I remember my rather harrowing experience getting out of St. John's after the Junos two years ago. It took me two days to get out of St. John's. I'm not kidding.

I mean, people were flying in from all over the world and in from parts of Canada. How does one get there?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Halifax has one of the finest airports, I would suggest. We are best in customer service, so I guarantee that when you fly into Halifax, we service a lot of airlines, and we're growing all the time.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: The main hub is Halifax.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Or you can go to Fredericton or St. John.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: You can also go by train. VIA has a train that takes you right down to Moncton, and you can hop off.

From my back door in Fredericton to my daughter's house in Guelph is about 14 hours by car, all of it on four lanes. You literally can get to the Bay of Fundy on a four-lane highway, with the exception of maybe about two hours on a little strip through Quebec, which as of 2014 will be four lanes. Then from Fredericton to St. John, or from Fredericton down to St. Andrews, would be another hour or hour and a half. Then of course there is the Nova Scotia side. From the perspective of flying, driving, or going by train, it really is quite easy to get to, with a number of options being available.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: And just—

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It is St. John, not St. John's.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Sorry, I know. I go back to elementary school, and I can hear my teacher yelling at me.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It is also served by Air Canada, WestJet, and Porter—and from the Nova Scotia perspective, by a number of international flights. We have flights from the U.S., Europe, and so on.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Those flights are growing all the time.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Just to follow up on the infrastructure question one of my colleagues asked earlier, are you quite confident that any dramatic increase in tourism can be handled?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Absolutely. From the Nova Scotia perspective, the product development side of the tourism division is always working with our operators to develop those accommodations, those experiences. There is room at the inn, no question, and we feel confident that we can handle that influx.

Ms. Terri McCulloch: Even in peak season, for example, most of our innkeepers are operating at between 60% to 75% capacity. That's an accommodation figure, and that's in peak season, so certainly in the shoulder season there is a lot of room for growth.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: I have just one more quick question, which ties somewhat into what my Liberal colleague was talking about. Are there any efforts to create an Atlantic travel package whereby other parts of Atlantic Canada would benefit from the Bay of Fundy experience? So you would fly into the Bay of Fundy and take a charter over to...and so on and so forth.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: That's what our contests are right now, actually.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: Our whole approach with the Bay of Fundy initiative is very much around the theory of a rising tide lifting all ships. It may start with the Bay of Fundy, but it goes out to Atlantic Canada and the rest of Canada. The four Atlantic provinces are working together very aggressively to develop these tour packages comprising all four provinces, or a variety of combinations. That happens all the time.

•(1010)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: I will pass the rest of my time on to my Liberal colleague, if any.

The Chair: You are done, Mr. Benskin?

We can do it that way, or we can go back.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I will jump out.

Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

You can sense the support around the table, and certainly right across party lines.

With regard to the corporate piece of this, I did note that when we were in South Africa, Table Mountain was very heavily supported by VISA and First Bank. There were some corporate players there. As you say, it's not just the cheque they write but that they are pros at it. This is what they do, and they have such great reach.

Just as a little note as you pull out all the stops going down the home stretch here, I see that that back home you have a pretty captive audience in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. All of these buildings have big Jumbotrons. You have a powerful piece with your promotion video. And they have in-house production capabilities. So if you could—

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: There is a little whisperer.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: —tap into that....

I know that on Friday night, the Mooseheads plan on putting the boots to the Saint Johns Sea Dogs.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: There will be 10,000 people cheering them on Friday night.

Again, I think that's a captive audience, and if you can tag it with the captains or a couple of players saying get out and vote, that is something that will propel you over the next little bit. All of the rinks have the big Jumbotrons.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: Absolutely, and we used them during the Canada Games, when Nova Scotia hosted the games. We played our video on the Jumbotron and had young people skating with the sevens on their backs. So, absolutely, it is a great idea.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It was also aired during the CIAU hockey championships that took place in Fredericton.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Yes, okay.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: TSN carried the video and those sorts of things. There have been numerous ways, but that is a good idea.

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: We will make sure we get you to ask the Eagles for an autograph.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: He got traded to the Mooseheads, so I hate the Eagles now.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Cuzner.

Mr. McColeman.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Thank you for being here as well. It has been very educational.

I am usually a visitor to this committee, but typically our committees are highly partisan, or are sometimes highly partisan. They used to be. I would mention, in all good collegiality, the comment that was made about the orange wave. There is the odd orange wave that comes down the ocean, but the ocean is blue.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: I guess it's a combination.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Rodger, I was trying to think of something red. All I can think about is lobsters. When they are cooked, they are red.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Just keep going.

Mr. Phil McColeman: It might have been covered, and forgive me if it has, but the process of getting to the final 28 was done by a panel of experts. Is that correct? Is that how they did the process?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: Yes, actually, there were three campaign phases prior to that. We started with 441 global sites that were nominated, and then by public voting it went to 220. These 220 sites included one from each country. There were also some international sites. At that time, after the 220, the Bay of Fundy was still in as Canada's top site. Niagara Falls was actually in as an international site because the United States and Canada had nominated that site together.

Then, when the top 77 sites went down to the 28, you are correct that it was determined by a panel of international experts. I can name a couple of people on that committee: Federico Mayor, the former chair of UNESCO; and Alexandra Cousteau. If you recognize the name Cousteau, yes, she is Jacques Cousteau's daughter. She is part of an international initiative over a five-year period to raise awareness of world water issues. Also on the committee was a gentleman from the United States who is known as the silent walker—I can't even remember his real name—because he has walked across the United States four times over a period of 15 years to raise global awareness of environmental issues. He wasn't silent by the time he was on the committee.

So there were a number of international experts, some renowned, who actually evaluated the sites based on their international merits and their world calibre accolades.

•(1015)

Mr. Phil McColeman: Just to go back to the public voting in that first round, which you had mentioned, was that voting process worldwide?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: Absolutely, yes, the campaign is a global campaign.

Mr. Phil McColeman: So getting there is fantastic.

Is a private foundation putting up the money for all of this? How did they select the voting process versus a selection process? Can you can give us any insight as to how that was determined?

Ms. Terri McCulloch: It's our understanding that it's a non-profit association very similar in some ways to the Olympics. There is a component, as Helen Jean mentioned, or possibility of corporate sponsorships. In terms of any sorts of funds going over to the corporation, we paid a \$50 registration fee four years ago, and those are the only funds we've exchanged with the foundation.

I suppose their operational funds come from corporate sponsors. It hasn't been a huge sort of exercise, or a big money draw or anything like that. I know that was a concern for some people initially: how does this work; who are these people, and that type of thing? But they did run the previously successful campaign for the Built Wonders and worked with many of the international destination marketing organizations, the large cities of the world that had some

of those finalists and had a very good international reputation. We did do some homework, as well.

Mr. Phil McColeman: I have just one last quick question. You have a media connection with CTV, obviously. Was that something that just happened because there was synergy between the two groups, or did you approach all media and CTV was the only organization to jump in? How did that happen?

Ms. Stacey Jones-Oxner: This was part of the corporate strategy we developed to approach partners at all levels, and we were looking for a media partner as well. We did approach all of the major media partners in Canada. CTV was, I think, the one that felt passionate about it and were able to help us in a big way.

Ms. Helen Jean Newman: It took us several months and four meetings with major people at the table to get CTV to finally say they were in.

We talked about the coverage earlier. We have our fingers crossed that there's going to be something coming up with Peter Mansbridge on the news on the new seven wonders.

Mr. Phil McColeman: So it wasn't exclusive, in the sense that if one of the other media outlets in the country wanted to jump in at this point and help you with that final push it would not be available to them. That's fantastic.

Thank you again and I really appreciate your being here because we'll use all of our resources to help promote this and get the votes out that you're going to need.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McColeman.

Thank you to our witnesses, Helen Jean, Terri, Stacey. Thank you for taking the time to be here to tell us about this Canadian entry, which is something, I think you've heard around the table, that we are all keen to support. We all have our colleagues and network of friends and email lists and websites. You've issued a challenge to us as members of Parliament to do what we can, and we look forward to doing that.

We've been pleased as a government, as well, to partner with you through CTC and ACOA and the Atlantic Canada Tourism partnership. I'm a little biased because my riding is on the Bay of Fundy. I can appreciate some of that scenery and some of the benefits that will come to Canadian tourism if we're selected.

With that, you are dismissed. We have appreciated your appearance here. If there's anything you can think of in the next 23 days that you'd like to get into our hands so that we can hand it off to our colleagues, please feel free to do so, because I think everyone here is keen to help. Thank you.

Before we adjourn, Mr. Nantel, you had something to say?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: In fact this room would be ideal for Mr. James Moore's appearance and that meeting could be televised. What do we need to do to ensure that next Thursday's meeting is televised from this room?

[English]

The Chair: That's was late breaking. I know this committee required a lot of negotiation with some of your colleagues as well with the justice committee.

Mr. Calandra, do you want to speak to that at all?

• (1020)

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Chairman, only in the sense that I know that Minister Moore is always excited to talk about events leading up to Canada's 150th birthday celebrations. If we could do that in one of the televised TV rooms, absolutely. I know there's a lot of pressure on those rooms with some of the other hearings, but I know from our side, we're fine with it. As we did with this meeting, we would in essence need the permission of the two opposition parties to make that happen. I know that from our point of view we would be more than happy to have the minister appear on TV.

The Chair: I should speak to that, because I know the clerk and I spoke about this on Monday. We wanted this meeting to be televised, and we worked with opposition members to make sure that would happen. The clerk tells me that with just two days' notice, swapping

with someone else creates logistical challenges. There are two committee rooms that have television capabilities, right?

There is this one and one other.

Apparently we can televise two committees in the same slot.

So, number one, if it's the will of the committee, which it seems to be, then we can begin that process. But there are no guarantees; it would depend on what your colleagues and our colleagues are doing in the other committees that have those slots.

Is it the will of the committee that the clerk look into having Thursday's committee meeting televised?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay.

That's something to do for the next couple of days.

The meeting is adjourned.

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