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The Honourable Rob Moore

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC)): We will get started. Monsieur Nantel, do you have a point of order?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Chair, I would like to speak, please.

[English]

The Chair: We have to follow our agenda, Monsieur Nantel, and that is to hear from our witnesses first. Everyone will get their turn as soon as we hear from our witnesses.

Welcome, Mr. Gregory and Mr. Maisonneuve, representatives from Operation Husky 2013. Welcome to our study of significant aspects of Canadian history. You are our first witnesses for this study and we appreciate your being here with us.

The way this committee works is that we have time for 10 minutes of opening remarks from our witnesses, then we go into a period of questions and hopefully answers. We look forward to that as well.

We will begin with your opening remarks. You can apportion it however you like, but for about 10 minutes. Thank you.

[Translation]

Lieutenant-General (Retired) Michel Maisonneuve (Representative, Operation HUSKY 2013): Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you very much.

First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting us to talk to you about Operation HUSKY 2013.

As a former general in the Canadian Forces, in which I served for 35 years, and as the director of studies of this jewel, the Saint-Jean Royal Military College—I have in fact circulated information documents about the college and I would invite you to read them—I feel that one of my roles is to make the future leaders of our Canadian Forces and the general public aware of the brilliant exploits of my predecessors. This is why I gladly agreed to help organize the commemoration of the 1943 Sicilian campaign.

[English]

Seventy years ago, most of the 26,000 Canadian soldiers involved in the campaign landed on Bark West beach near Pachino, on the southern tip of Sicily, the so-called “soft underbelly” of Europe on July 10, 1943. This was the beginning of Operation Husky, the start of the liberation of Italy by British, American, and Canadian forces. The campaign in Sicily would last just over four weeks, during

which Canadians from coast to coast would battle through hundreds of kilometres of difficult mountainous country.

The landing was the largest to date of the war and remains one of the largest in history with nearly 3,000 Allied ships and landing crafts. The troops from the 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade, commanded by General Guy Simonds, travelled from the U.K. to Sicily, and three of our ships carrying our troops and equipment were sunk by enemy submarines before the landing.

[Translation]

From Pachino Beach, our troops fought as they advanced. While constantly being slowed down by the German troops hiding in the almost impregnable hills and valleys, the Canadians formed the left flank of the British troops under the command of General Montgomery. To our left were the soldiers of the Seventh United States Army under the command of General Patton. My regiment, the 12th Canadian Armoured Regiment, which at that time was called the Three Rivers Regiment, because it came from the city of Trois-Rivières, fought for the duration of the campaign side by side with regiments such as the Royal 22nd Regiment, the Haystings & Prince Edward Regiment, the Royal Canadian Regiment and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

[English]

I cannot emphasize enough the skill, daring, and courage of the Canadians who fought through this extremely difficult terrain, which greatly favoured the German and Italian defenders. You will be aware that Canadians had been bloodied at Dieppe the year previous. A victory was important for Canada at that time.

In all, 562 Canadians lost their lives in Sicily, and more than 2,300 were wounded. The problem is that few Canadians and allies know that Canada was involved in this 28-day campaign, and fewer still know of our victory. This is where Operation Husky 2013 comes in.

I will let Mr. Gregory, the founder of Operation Husky 2013, give more details presently, but let me just say that this civilian-led initiative aims to commemorate the campaign, to publicize Canadian gallantry, and to leave a lasting legacy for future generations to remember.

We aim to bring 562 Canadians to Sicily from July 10 to 30 this year to honour the 562 men we lost, and to celebrate those who came back victorious. Mr. Gregory will lead a group that will retrace on foot the route taken by Canadian troops and they will commemorate each location where we lost soldiers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gregory has given me the task of liaising with the Canadian Forces and supporting the operation in every possible way. Today, some 65 days prior to the operation, we have already contacted all of the units that fought in Sicily or those individuals who are in these units today.

We have received moral support from hundreds of Canadians. We have received assistance from many regions of the country and we have developed a series of events in Sicily for the campaign. Several fundraising activities have been organized and we have also received assistance from Veterans Affairs Canada in order to produce educational material for students. Our ambassador in Italy and his military attaché have provided a great deal of support in organizing our campaign. Officer cadets from the Saint-Jean Royal Military College have used operation Husky 2013 as a way to integrate the skills they are learning, and, with the support of the Royal Military Colleges Club of Canada Foundation, four of them will be able to support the coordination of activities in Sicily from July 10 to early August. In summary, we are very proud to have this opportunity to talk to you about this Canadian citizen-led initiative.

Mr. Steve Gregory is a businessman from Montreal. He is not a former military man, but his passion for our Sicilian campaign and his everyday support for our Canadian Forces make him one of the citizens most committed to ensuring that his fellow citizens are aware of our heritage. I am very proud to include him as one of my best friends and I will be happy to travel across Sicily with him in order to commemorate Operation Husky 2013.

We have left a commemorative item on your table.

[*English*]

We also left you a pin, which represents Operation Husky. I'm going to let Steve describe these, and why they're so important.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you very much.

Mr. Gregory, the floor is yours.

• (1540)

Mr. Steve Gregory (Founder, Operation HUSKY 2013): Mr. Chair, committee members, like Lieutenant-General Maisonneuve, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to talk about our project with you.

[*English*]

I'd like to take this chance to tell you about what we're planning for this summer in Sicily, and of course what we hope to leave behind. Perhaps you'd also like to know who is expected to participate.

Before I begin, you may be interested in knowing how all this came about. In the fall of 2005 my mother, then a spry 80-year-old widow, brought a handsome, charming guest to a Saturday family dinner. At our prodding, Charles Hunter, bombardier, original 39er, regaled my family with his stories as a young gunner in the Royal Canadian Artillery during World War II. My dad had served in the air force during the war and spoke little of it, as was customary for most Canadian veterans after the war. Charles, now 83, let loose a

salvo of information at that dinner that rocked our house. We, or should I say I, had never heard of the Canadians in Sicily. Each town from Pachino to Adrano has its own story of pain, sacrifice, and triumph.

Two weeks later my fine son, then all of 11, announced that his grade 6 history project would be about the Battle of Assoro. What a fine tribute, I thought; Charles would be honoured. After weeks of searching Erik was disappointed at turning up very little in the way of written testimony to any Canadian presence in Sicily. As parents do, dad got involved, scouring the Internet. Libraries and bookstores yielded a troubling impression. The British and Americans had liberated Sicily. At most, the presence of Canadians was mentioned only as a footnote.

I'm sure no malice was intended by any of the authors. Patton's U. S. Army considered us merely as a colony of Britain. Montgomery and his 8th Army saw us as part of their Commonwealth, and for all intents and purposes, at least for the occasion, as British. Proud of our heritage and eager to serve the King, we made no effort to correct these misperceptions. As a result of this self-effacing manner, a 23,000-square-foot museum stands in Catania, Sicily, dedicated to the Allied landing of 1943, and it has not a single mention of Canada and only two Canadian artifacts, smaller than the size of your fist.

That brings us to today and to Operation Husky 2013, a civilian project led by Canadians. It is a project dedicated to sons, firstly my son, who innocently selected this topic for his history assignment and by doing so provided the catalyst for this commemoration. The 562 brave Canadian men who died on the hills of Sicily were also sons. Most of their parents never read much in the papers about Sicily and the sacrifices of their sons. Most never heard about their sons' experiences in Sicily and any story near the account of history, as will be described in the book that our project is preparing. Most, if not all, were never able to visit the site of their sons' graves.

In the summer of 2013, 70 years after the battle for Sicily, we will walk the path taken by these brave men, mark the place of the fallen, and remember those lost on all sides. Our mission is to honour the memory of those Canadians who fought and those who died in Sicily by organizing, as Michel said, the return of 562 Canadians this summer. We want to raise awareness among Canadians and leave a legacy that makes it near impossible for Canadian educators to exclude mention of these events in their curriculum.

Our project has one main event and several supporting activities. An opening event at Pachino on July 10 marks the beginning of the campaign. It is expected that about 50 Canadians and local dignitaries will attend the event. We will unveil a 3-metre-high monument that we're building at the site of the landing. U.S. and Italian servicemen will be in attendance. The main event, in Agira, on July 30, consists of a morning roll call in the cemetery at Agira, followed by an evening recreation of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada pipe band concert that was actually broadcast on the CBC only days after the town fell in 1943. It was the first ever concert in a live theatre of war. It rallied our allies.

Between the 11th and the 29th this small group of participants will retrace the steps of the Canadian infantry regiments. They will walk 323 kilometres, and in all, will plant over 600 markers to the dead along our way. Each one of these markers is made by schoolchildren in Canada and in Sicily.

• (1545)

We'll perform 24 ceremonies, including six large ceremonies. A mobile museum will support our citizen outreach in Sicily and four regimental plaques will be unveiled in special ceremonies.

We will also open the new Canadian exhibit at the Museo dello Sbarco in Catania on July 31. The Ministers of Defence, Veterans Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Canadian Heritage have been informed of the project. Lieutenant-General Devlin, Canadian Army Commander, has been briefed on the project. All of these leaders have offered their encouragement.

In addition, we'll leave as a legacy a network of Italian and Sicilian historians and educators who will be fully equipped to keep the memory of our men alive. A new book, and bilingual web-based materials, funded in large part by Veterans Affairs, will be available to tour operators and teachers, as well as students from across the country. The Teletatino Network has offered to produce a 90-minute documentary, of course, in Italian.

What are we still working on? We're still trying to raise enough money to fund documentaries in both English and French. We have funded the film crew, but don't have sufficient funds for post-production. We have a distributor, but no broadcaster at this moment. We have teamed up with former Senator Consiglio Di Nino to help build a monument to the Canadians who fell in Italy and Sicily, which would be in Toronto. That monument could be a reality as early as next year.

If you don't mind my being so bold, how can you help? Our success rests in large part upon the media that we'll be able to attract to these events. If you can help us get the Seaforth Highlanders concert on the airwaves of the CBC and Radio-Canada, we have the chance to attract the attention of every Canadian, as well as our allies, so that they may become aware of the tremendous contribution and sacrifices of our men. Any media coverage will also help us attract a broadcaster for the documentaries and this will help us fulfill our quest to get this amazing story into the hands of Canadian educators.

Lastly, of course, we would welcome your participation, any one of you, or all of you. We are still short Canadians for the roll call at the cemetery. Please join us.

In conclusion, few Canadians are aware that close to 100,000 Canadians fought in Italy, with over 26,000 casualties. Close to 6,000 men died. Per capita, that is more than any of our allies. Canadians from all over our land came together to fight in Sicily for what we asked of them in 1943. They fought for freedom against tyranny. They did and they punched above their weight.

They went unrecognized at the time, nor is Operation Husky common knowledge in Canada today. This project of commemoration may help us change that. You can help us spread the word.

My son's innocent questions were the catalyst for this project, but your influence can help us reclaim our history and honour the souls of the Canadian sons who fought and those who died in Sicily, so that their sacrifice will live on with us.

Thank you for having us today.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gregory.

Thank you Lieutenant-General Maisonneuve. We appreciate your presence here, and thank you for telling us a bit about Operation Husky 2013.

We'll begin our question and answer time, beginning with Mr. Calandra, for seven minutes.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to both our witnesses. I appreciate your coming here.

As you know, this is a very interesting study we're undertaking. As has been suggested in some quarters, it's not about telling our provincial partners what they should teach or how they should teach, but it's about how the federal government treats it and how we can get a better understanding out there. So thank you both for coming here.

I wonder if I might ask something more specific about the campaign. I'm an Italian Canadian and my parents came to Canada from Calabria, not too far from Sicily, and I know the Canadian troops followed through. What did the Canadians face when they actually landed in Sicily? What kind of conditions did they face?

I'm just going to let you talk, but I've been told a couple of things. First, the conditions were extreme, but second, the accomplishments of the Canadians and the speed at which they worked left not only our Allies impressed, but also the enemies at the time were impressed with the skill of the Canadians.

I wonder if you could give us a bit more of a description of what they faced, some of the key battles, and how they did.

• (1550)

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: I'll start and then hand it over to my friend Steve, who's been to Sicily several times.

Essentially, this was not a fighting landing that they did, i.e., there was not that much great defence on the beaches and so forth, but a few days inland they started getting really heavy resistance. Obviously, the resistance they were getting was not just from leftover troops. There were strong German shock troops propping up the Italian troops that were there as well.

Of course, probably as difficult as the enemy were the conditions there. Think of July, 45-degree heat, sun beating down on you while you were carrying heavy gear. You'd be walking on roads that were not prepared and so on, and you'd actually be fighting the enemy. It was amazing. The other thing was that the terrain, of course, was very hilly. The Canadians who fought through there and the speed at which they advanced were amazing. Canada had been bloodied at Dieppe, but essentially this was the first time that Canada fought as a nation, as a group, in the Second World War.

So it was a very important campaign, and I dare say it kind of set up Canada for the victory of the future during the Second World War.

Steve.

Mr. Steve Gregory: On the day of the landing, July 10, there were 10 Canadian casualties at the beach. So as Michel said, it wasn't a tremendous battle. They moved inland very quickly, and I should mention that they moved inland on foot. The three ships that were carrying our trucks were sunk, and this is why we will be retracing on foot. They suffered, and we think we can show the world that we can suffer.

The first three days were difficult walking, but relatively speaking, it was an easy slope. It wasn't until the second week that things got really difficult. The Canadians engaged the Hermann Göring division, and they were absolutely ferocious in their—I don't know what you call it in military terms—defensive withdrawal. What was unknown to the Americans and the English at the time was that the major German defences had moved inland toward the spine of mountains north of the Catanian plain, directly in our path.

The book that is being produced for this project by UNB and printed by Laurier University will produce new information that has been discovered in the Italian and German archives, which says that the Canadians really did much more than was previously known. So the terrain was difficult and the fighting was amazing.

That said, the veterans, as well as the Sicilians I have met on numerous trips back, tell stories of the Canadian soldiers not eating while they gave the food rations that they had to the townsfolk, in Modica in particular. So it was pretty spectacular. I think the Canadians did much more than was expected of them.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you.

I just want to be careful with my time. How much do I have?

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Perfect.

This is not a criticism, but with respect to how National Defence allows these stories to get out there, obviously, it wasn't easy for your son to access these stories through the Internet. I wonder if you have any suggestions. This is an extraordinary start, obviously. You can see that some media have joined us today, because I'm sure they're

excited to hear about this operation. How easy was it to get resources from the Government of Canada websites on this?

Mr. Steve Gregory: There is just not much written about the Canadian involvement in Sicily. You might remember Farley Mowat. Farley Mowat actually was in the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment. He was at the Battle of Assoro. He, as well as Lord Tweedsmuir, wrote more about it than anyone else did. Some Canadian authors have produced some material, but really, quite frankly, I don't think the government could do anything. There's just nothing written about it. The only people who have written about this are people the likes of Granatstein, Terry Copp, Dr. Windsor, and Mark Zuehlke. But this is the work of historians at universities and colleges, not of our government.

I can only tell you the experience that we've had with Veterans Affairs, Foreign Affairs in particular, and National Defence. We didn't ask for anything, first of all. We wanted this to be a civilian project. We weren't coming to the government for anything, but it was pretty obvious that producing the book was going to be outside of our means and would fit within the Veterans Affairs' mandate. We undertook a request for funding a few years back, and they were phenomenal. They were exceptional.

• (1555)

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: Sicily was a 28-day campaign. Of course it's very important for us, because of the things I said in terms of it being the first very successful campaign of the Second World War. But when you look at it in the context of the entire war, it's tiny. By the time the war ended, we had the third largest navy in the world. We had a million people under arms, whereas this was a campaign with 26,000 Canadians. We lost 562; in the entire war we lost 47,000. So understanding that Husky itself is not well-known, we think it's worth telling the story.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

Next, for seven minutes, we have Mr. Nantel.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): I would like to thank you very much for sharing information about a battle that is not well known.

A while earlier, our neighbours opposite said that we were criticizing the study. What we are criticizing is an issue that I will not delve into out of respect for everything that you represent and all the sacrifices that the people you represent have made. We will have our conversation during the second part of this committee meeting.

In your opinion, how is it that even veterans are not more knowledgeable about this battle at Pachino? I am thinking, for example, of my former neighbour, who is now nearly 92 years old, and a participant in the Second World War. We have discussed the war at great length, but he never talked about this battle. How do you explain this silence that exists even within the military corps?

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: I think that the first reason is, as I explained earlier, the size of the battle and the duration of the campaign. Sicily is an island, and as a result, the campaign as such lasted only 28 days and only 26,000 Canadians participated. I say “only”, but that is still a big number. We lost 562 Canadians, but during the Second World War, a million Canadians were enlisted. Furthermore, we lost 47,000 Canadians during the Second World War. So there is a difference in the size. Nevertheless we believe that Operation Husky 2013 is important because it was this battle that really tested Canadians. We had committed an entire division and a full brigade of Canadians, an armoured brigade. For the first time, Canadians fought together after making a landing. Later on, there would be the landing in Normandy. I feel that this is quite significant. We feel that this story needs to be told.

Mr. Steve Gregory: I am thinking about my father's experience. My father did not talk to us about anything. He did not talk about his exploits, about his experiences. I think that this is, to some extent, what characterize these men. In addition, there was the age factor. Indeed, those who served in Sicily had been deployed in England in 1939, whereas many more Canadians joined the army after 1939. If they were there in 1941, 1942, 1943, they were not in Sicily. So, in my opinion, the First Canadian Infantry Division was three years old and was worthy of this deployment. I am not a historian,

[English]

but that's what I think.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Since the election, we often meet with the Royal Canadian Legions and it is a pleasure to meet these people who have given so much. It is also a pleasure to see that, generally speaking, they take on the responsibility themselves to raise money and make contacts with organizations involving much younger people, often teens and youths. Just like grandparents who offer a symbolic gift, their goal is really to strike up a conversation with the young person to make him or her aware of what happened so that this hard-won freedom is not taken for granted.

So I am wondering about internal communications with respect to Veterans Affairs. Indeed, I am always surprised to see how the sections are fragmented and divided. For example, were you able to promote your concern for Operation Husky 2013 in the Royal Canadian Legions?

• (1600)

Mr. Steve Gregory: Yes, but that was not our objective, Mr. Nantel. For us, this is a civic project, a project led by Canadian citizens. We definitely did not want this to be about soldiers thanking

other soldiers for the sacrifices made by other soldiers. We want to make the public, my son, my daughter and their friends aware of the sacrifices made by these men.

[English]

In English, our national anthem says, “We stand on guard for thee”.

[Translation]

I sing it, but at the Bell Centre.

[English]

I don't stand on guard for thee. These men did. All we want to do is hopefully bring Canadians to see the sacrifice that these men undertook on our behalf.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

However, I did in fact hear Mr. Maisonneuve say earlier that, when all is said and done, this is not something that the government can do. This is the work of historians. I would like you to tell us—

Mr. Steve Gregory: I was talking about citizens.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: —a little bit more about this.

Mr. Steve Gregory: I cannot imagine our society functioning without citizens getting involved.

[English]

As far as I'm concerned, it really is an issue for our historians and our museums to continue to promote these notions and ideas. Certainly, the people who were of the greatest help to me and my projects were authors like Mark Zuehlke, for instance, a private sector author, and Lee Windsor from the University of New Brunswick, and all of his researchers. They were the ones that, as far as I'm concerned, gave us the best effort.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: Mr. Nantel, I would like to add something about the Royal Canadian Legion.

You talked about people's involvement. Certainly, we would have liked to bring over some of these veterans who fought, but the problem is that they are 90 years old, and the conditions I was talking about earlier, namely 45 degrees Celsius temperatures, the heat and so on, make it nearly impossible. Some of them are still in good health. We held fundraisers and galas to honour them in Canada. Steve organized one last month in Toronto. There was also one last year in June, in Montreal. There were two or three veterans who had fought in Sicily. We try to honour them and the Royal Canadian Legions are part of that.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Simms, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): I want to thank our guests for coming.

There's a gentleman who lived in my riding who helped liberate France. He received the highest honour and it was a very moving ceremony. The ambassador of France came to Newfoundland and Labrador. The gentleman's name was Frank Borland, but we all called him "Jiggs" Borland for several reasons. I won't go into that because I only have a few minutes. He was an entertaining individual to say the least. He had the most vivid stories of the liberation of France. They were just phenomenal.

About a year before he died I had discussions with a company that was going to do a documentary. We were going to take him to France, the town he liberated, and document this with a camera. It would just be a documentary from his point of view. We never got that opportunity and we feel it's probably one of the—it's hard to describe—lost treasures. That's what it was.

He told his stories to other soldiers and to people like me. I was a cadet at the time. But people in a classroom, or people looking at this study... One of the good aspects of this study is that we can see illustrations of this and best practices. It's unfortunate he never got that chance.

You mentioned film and documentaries. I think it's probably one of the best ways we have today because it's so accessible. You don't have to tune in at nine o'clock Sunday night, 9:30 in Newfoundland, and watch it. I mean you can actually download it because it's completely accessible.

Where is that right now? In this case, like with Operation Husky, you're saying this took place like the first concert in the theatre of war.

• (1605)

Mr. Steve Gregory: We want to tell them that story. Just imagine, the third brigade was comprised of the western regiments, specifically the Seaforth Highlanders. They were badly mauled on a hill in Nissoria on the 29th. They pulled them out of the battle. They formed up their pipe band in the main piazza of the square in Agira and they played a concert. They played *Caber Feidh*, mocking their enemy as they retreated. Peter Stursberg of the CBC was there and recorded this on one disc. They shipped that back and it was broadcast only a couple of days later, and picked up by the BBC. We are going to recreate that concert.

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: The Seaforth Highlanders are going to be back there to do that—the same regiment.

Mr. Steve Gregory: We have a couple of holes in our project. The biggest hole is attracting the CBC and Radio-Canada. Can you imagine their being there to record, 70 years to the day, the same concert? We have the chance—one time only. The British ambassador and the American ambassador have told us that they are doing nothing for Sicily—nothing; it's ours. We have worked on this for seven years.

Mr. Scott Simms: Is it just a lack of resources for them, when they say these things?

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: It's a lack of interest.

Mr. Scott Simms: Oh, is it really?

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: Yes.

Mr. Steve Gregory: It's a lack of interest.

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: When you compare it with the rest of Italy... That was fighting up the boot. It was incredibly difficult. Sicily, as I said, is not that significant for them. So they're not doing anything specifically for Sicily.

Mr. Scott Simms: I always thought, through many episodes in history, that a lot of it was overlooked. But we always felt there weren't enough resources to be able to tell the story.

In the area I'm from, Beaumont-Hamel is a story that could be done on film and documented that way.

Mr. Steve Gregory: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Scott Simms: I think it is the most tangible, accessible way, even for schools. This is why we're here. We're talking about history courses and the like. I find that part very interesting. But right now, do you think most of the resources are going to different types of media?

Mr. Steve Gregory: I can only tell you what we're trying to produce. We have spent money on *Canadian Geographic* to get it into the hands of 88,000 students and teachers. We will have 50,000 words.

[Translation]

It's currently being translated. That's really a first, because in French, it's even less so. It's interesting because in the Royal 22nd Regiment alone, 49 people died.

[English]

They had 49 dead.

Everyone across the country participated in this. I can tell you that we're going to leave a decent amount of printed material and web-based material. TLN will do a 90-minute documentary in Italian. We're going to be sharing our film with them. As I said, we have funded the film crew.

We just don't have enough money yet, and we're hoping—

Mr. Scott Simms: Is there an idea of a co-production, or something like that?

Mr. Steve Gregory: In fact, they're going to be co-producing. We're going to be giving them the film and sharing some of the cost of the resources.

Mr. Scott Simms: I find this very inspiring, in the sense that there are a lot of battles that don't get much attention, such as Beaumont-Hamel and others.

The other aspect of it is this. You're a retired lieutenant-general; you're very active as well. I find it very inspiring that more of our retired military, especially generals and colonels—the executive—are becoming more involved.

One thing that tends to be overlooked in this country is this subject, but also peacekeeping and what we have done in peacekeeping. We've done such phenomenal things around the world for so many years, although it's not documented enough for us to see, in some cases.

One such case is that of my colleague Roméo Dallaire, as I'm sure you would agree.

I thank you for being here today and doing this.

But I would like to move a motion, sir, if I may, about peacekeeping and how we can, in this study, talk about not just this but also the elements of peacekeeping and what we have done as peacekeepers with NATO during the Cold War.

I'd like to move to invite my colleague and honourable friend, retired Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire.

• (1610)

The Chair: Mr. Simms has a motion....

Just one second.

Mr. Simms, we can discuss this matter at committee business. But we have dealt with this issue as a committee; therefore, your motion is inadmissible.

Mr. Scott Simms: I don't think so, because—

The Chair: That's the ruling of the chair.

Mr. Scott Simms: Let me interject on a point of order.

What we talked about was the juxtaposition, since you brought it up, of Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire with Vimy Ridge. That was my thing.

This time, thanks to the testimony that I've heard here and through other material, I want to talk about peacekeeping. I can't think of any individual....

It didn't succeed last time because there was no direct connection to Vimy Ridge. I certainly feel that there's a connection here with our efforts in peacekeeping for the 50 years. Even though the person in particular, Roméo Dallaire, remains the same, the subject has changed. It's not Vimy Ridge now; it's peacekeeping. I think Roméo Dallaire is a national hero.

The Chair: Mr. Simms, there's no argument there, but your motion is out of order so we have to move on. I think Mr. Simms is out of time.

Mr. Scott Simms: Can I challenge this, sir?

The Chair: Yes, you can challenge the chair.

Mr. Scott Simms: I would really like to challenge this because I think it's very important. I like what Monsieur Maisonneuve has brought to us today. In order to study our history, we have to bring in the people who are right in the middle of this. I can't think of someone greater who has more credentials documented both on film and everywhere than Lieutenant-General, Senator Roméo Dallaire. I'm astounded.

The Chair: Mr. Simms is challenging the ruling of the chair. It's just on the advice of the clerk that the motion is out of order.

Mr. Scott Simms: Can I get a recorded vote, sir?

The Chair: Sure. but your motion is out of order. So this isn't on the motion, it would be on your challenge to the chair. We have a speaker's list.

Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and with the greatest respect to our guests here, first of all, I'm not sure if we can divulge what exactly was discussed during an in-camera meeting.

The Chair: There's a lot that we can't talk about in an open session. On the challenge of the chair, it's just basically that we vote whether to uphold my ruling. We don't debate it or discuss it.

Mr. Simms has challenged my ruling that your motion is inadmissible. It's not that the subject can never come up again.

You've heard Mr. Simms has challenged the chair.

Mr. Andrew Cash: I guess we can't debate on this particular issue, we have to go to a vote first. So let's do the vote.

The Chair: On the challenge to the chair, those who agree that the chair's decision be sustained? Those opposed?

Mr. Scott Simms: I'd like a recorded vote, sir.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 6; nays 5)

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

The Chair: We have Mr. Calandra on a point of order.

• (1615)

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Chair, we would have no problem entertaining the motion. I guess that's one of the difficulties when motions are table-dropped without sufficient notice, but we would have no problem entertaining this motion.

The Chair: That's a point of debate. As I mentioned in my ruling, it has nothing to do with the substance of the matter. It's that the motion is out of order, and there's not much I can do about that.

Mr. Simms, you have 15 seconds left.

Mr. Scott Simms: Suffice it to say, I want to wish you all the best, especially in documenting your material on film, which would be accessible on the Internet. I adore these concerts in the park that you're recreating. I think that's going to be a fantastic recreation.

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: I hope you're there.

Mr. Scott Simms: The challenge is on so I have to be there now.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: Now we're into five-minute rounds.

Mr. Sweet.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr. Chair.

First, I want express my gratitude to General Maisonneuve and Mr. Gregory for the work they're doing. I'm glad you're here today. It began with a quick phone call. I'm glad we can get you this exposure.

Chair, I would hope that we can forward the minutes of this portion of the meeting to the Dominion Institute, which is currently doing a digital history of individual lives in the Second World War. They may see this battle as one that would be of specific interest to record digitally. Of course that would be their decision, but we can get them this testimony that I'm certain will interest them greatly.

I'm so glad you're doing this project. I know about the Italian campaign, to the degree that one of my sons is named Lucian, after Lucian Truscott. I love my son and I love the name, but now I have almost a little regret, because I should have been able to find a Canadian general who drove in this campaign as well. Lucian Truscott's life was very impressive and he was a general's general to his soldiers, and that was one of the reasons why I wanted to give my son that name.

Now we take a look at this campaign with 560 who died, 23,000 who were wounded, and you said three ships were sunk. Were they sunk by enemy artillery on the way in?

Mr. Steve Gregory: They were sunk by U-boats.

Mr. David Sweet: Is the death toll on those ships part of the 560?

Mr. Steve Gregory: There were 52 who died, and yes, it is.

Mr. David Sweet: General, in this campaign you mentioned 45 degrees a couple of times. I walked to work today and was perspiring just with the sun we have today. What would it have been like in a tank in that battle?

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: It would have been even worse than outside, because in those days the tanks weren't like the ones I served in, the kind we have today.

I'm a tanker myself, and nowadays we have air conditioning in tanks, which is really required in these hot climates. It would have been even hotter, and I dare say that everything was hot. The water you drank, the food you ate, you wouldn't even need to heat it, it would have been heated already.

Very often they would put their cans of meat on the engines, and that would warm them. It was very uncomfortable. You would have to drink gallons of water every day. First, you would have to acclimatize yourself to these conditions. Our troops in Afghanistan now, and those who fought there during the combat phase, went through the same very difficult conditions.

The weariness at the end of the day is unbelievable. You have the stress of the enemy, you're extremely tired, and you're sweating profusely. Guys would lose many pounds. If you want to lose weight, it's one way of doing it. It's very difficult.

• (1620)

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Gregory, you mentioned that at the same time, they were giving away their rations. How impoverished were these people?

Mr. Steve Gregory: They were starving.

Mr. David Sweet: Was this a similar situation to the Netherlands, where our troops were going—

Mr. Steve Gregory: Absolutely.

The German and Italian troops had pretty much eaten everything there was to eat in Sicily. Sherry Atkinson, the lieutenant who took

the surrender of Modica, told us two weeks ago at our fundraiser that when their trucks pulled in the soldiers didn't feel like they could eat. They just gave away their rations.

Charles Hunter, the bombardier who inspired this story, who is on his last legs like your old friend Jiggs—and I'll have the honour of carrying his ashes if he doesn't make it—tells a story.

He was looking up at an embankment and saw two children watching him. He realized they were looking for food. He went to the canteen, had a peanut butter sandwich, made one for each of the kids, and brought them to the two children. The little boy started to eat his sandwich, but the little girl carefully broke her sandwich in two, put half in her pocket, and ate the other half. Charles told her to go ahead and eat. The girl said, "No. Momma". They were starving.

It's not just my Canadian brethren who were this compassionate. What's unknown is that after they moved on, the Canadian ships arrived days later and brought in tonnes of food and fed the Sicilian population in the provinces of Syracuse and Enna.

As the Germans were retreating they salted the fields. That tactic was designed to destroy the society's ability to regenerate. The historians in our little book will hopefully prove that some of the basic strategies we use in peacekeeping today were applied back then in 1943, as the Sicilian population was engaged to support the Canadians and our allies.

Mr. David Sweet: So it was really a chemical scorched earth policy they were doing in this regard.

Mr. Steve Gregory: Specifically around Trapani.

Mr. David Sweet: I'll try to make this very concise. Without blaming anybody, particularly Operation Husky, there are a number of these battles, as one of the colleagues on the other side was mentioning, that historians haven't picked up on. How do we close the gap?

We're trying to do this study right now on the history of Canada. How do we close the gap so that we can make sure that these kinds of battles, these kinds of instances where Canadians go above and beyond the call of duty.... Particularly here where you would easily perish simply because of the environment, let alone being shot at by the enemy, how do we assure that those kinds of things are recorded for the future?

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: One of the things we do is exactly what you're doing now, and I commend the committee for calling us forward to talk about this particular campaign. I'm sure there are a number of initiatives, such as this one, and I encourage you to call witnesses, particularly Canadian historians. The interesting thing is that military historians in Canada are not well known. There are not that many of them, first of all, but there are a few who are extremely well known. At the *Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean* I have a number of excellent military historians. We'd be happy to come or send a few of them here, so that's a good start.

The Chair: We're scheduled to go until half-past the hour. Mr. Cash, you'll have the last round of questions.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you, Chair.

It is important to note that there are many reasons why we on this side in the NDP oppose this study, and a lot of it has to do with the wording and the fact that education is a provincial jurisdiction. Out of respect for your visit here, we will be tabling a motion, the second half that speaks to our position.

I had the opportunity during Remembrance Day to screen an episode of a phenomenal documentary series called *War Story*. In fact, the episode that we screened here in Ottawa was the Battle of Ortona. It was a phenomenal piece of work and there were eight or nine, maybe a dozen vets there. After the screening, each one of them—and this wasn't scripted, this wasn't planned—got up and they made a declaration. I'd say about halfway through from this group of vets, there wasn't a dry eye in the place. They were crying and we were crying. It was a phenomenal moment. For me, as a Canadian, it was a moment of profound importance.

It's important for us as we carry on with this study, and we carry on the debate about what we're actually doing here in the heritage committee, to remember that we're trying to do our jobs as parliamentarians. That job is an important job about democracy, transparency, and accountability, and these are the values that we asked young men and women to serve and to fight for. It's the same values that we're asking young men and women, and actually older men and women, too, to fight for today.

That's why it's important for us to get to the bottom of why we do what we do here in Ottawa, why it's important to have transparency and accountability and an open democracy. I wanted to make that clear. I'll ask you now because you've said, and it's true, that Canadians need to hear these stories and not enough of them are being told. You reference the public broadcaster as a key medium, and you also say that this isn't a role for government. This is a role for historians, and it's a role for artists and documentary filmmakers. So it's incumbent upon us, I would think, to fight as hard as we can to make sure those resources are there so that these stories can be told, and not only told but that we create a culture in Canada where they're watched, where the shows are watched.

I'm wondering if you agree with some of these comments.

•(1625)

Mr. Steve Gregory: I'm a business guy from Montreal. If you had called me six years ago and asked me for money for a cancer campaign, I would have given you money. I went to fundraisers. Operation Husky gave me a chance to contribute to my country in a different way. I'm very grateful for the chance I have to pay my respects to men greater than I who paid the ultimate sacrifice. That's all I know. I just want my fellow Canadians to stand with me.

You, sir, stand with us at the cemetery, cry at the cemetery with all of us, over the loss of these men.

I'm just a business guy. I've never been involved in any political movement or any other charity than this one. This one I think is a worthy mission. We have one shot at this. In my view it's this year, 2013.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you for that. You have no argument from me. Your issue, your moment, and the thing that you're passionate about, I think you will find many Canadians as passionate about it as you are.

With respect, my preamble to this was not about your specific issue. It was about how we actually honour the story of Canada in a way that allows people to have open access to it. That's what I'm trying to get at.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cash.

I want to thank both of our witnesses. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here with us today. Thanks as well for the pins and the medallions. Thank you for handing those out to our committee members.

I understand you put in a request to some members for some Canadian pins and flags. We've been able to gather up 3,000 pins and 500 flags, I'm told. They're here somewhere, so you make sure you grab them before you leave.

Mr. Steve Gregory: Thank you.

The Chair: With that, we will suspend for a couple of minutes and bring in our next panel of witnesses.

LGen Michel Maisonneuve: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

•(1625)

(Pause)

•(1635)

The Chair: Good afternoon to our witnesses.

We'll resume our committee meeting.

Welcome to Chantal Amyot, from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, director of Canadian history hall project, research and exhibitions; as well as Xavier Gélinas, curator, Canadian political history.

Welcome to both of you. Thank you for taking part on shorter notice for our study.

You may not have been here for the previous witnesses, but we'll give you the floor for 10 minutes for your presentation. You can divide that up however you like for your opening remarks, and then we'll move to questions and answers.

With that, the floor is yours.

Ms. Chantal Amyot (Director, Canadian History Hall Project, Research and Exhibitions, Canadian Museum of Civilization): Thank you.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization—soon to become the Canadian Museum of History—is, with our sister institution, the Canadian War Museum, the country's national repository of historical knowledge. Last October the government announced a new name and mandate for the museum, which will enable us to better fulfill our role in researching and communicating Canadian history to the Canadian people and the world. It is a challenge we accept with excitement.

Chief among our plans is a major new exhibition hall dedicated to a comprehensive, narrative history of Canada. Historical knowledge is embodied in many things. We are a museum, so for us it includes, at the most basic level, our national collection of historic artifacts, including everything from Champlain's astrolabe to ancient stone arrowheads to Sir John A. Macdonald's desk. We have the country's only large and nationally representative historical collection. It is usually numbered at about 3.5 million objects, a figure that could easily mislead as many could be best considered as scientific samples rather than *objets d'art*.

Let's begin with a brief overview of best practices in acquiring, preserving, and protecting our historical collections. As museums change, so do the collections upon which they are based. New acquisitions bring different perspectives to existing collections, new areas of research and interpretation are initiated, and the capacity to represent a changing society is enhanced. At the same time, old collections can sometimes lose their meaning, as expertise shifts and the museum's role in a larger society evolves.

A major challenge for any museum is to determine what items it will collect and what items it will keep, how the collections will be organized, and how they will be preserved for future generations. The museums follow rigorous practices for selecting and accessioning material into the national collection. Relevance to the museums' mandates and documentary evidence to this are of primary importance. However, costs and capacity to preserve and protect are reality checks when weighing the merits of any acquisition. A responsible collection plan includes the careful comparative examination of existing holdings and the possible refinement of the collection, to ensure that only the most viable material is retained.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization is a cutting-edge preservation centre with a great capacity to control environments, and provide security access measures and accessibility to the collections for research and exhibitions. We have come a long way from the days of the substandard, warehouse-like, satellite repositories of the not-so-distant past. So, too, have our knowledge and techniques for ensuring the mitigation of risks associated with long-term storage, handling, exhibiting, and lending of the national collections.

[*Translation*]

As central to our mandate as they are, objects by themselves tell us nothing. We need to determine what they mean, and that is the museum's real job: we not only preserve and protect, we also research and communicate meaning. In other words, we use objects—and other assets like images, archival documents and sound recordings—to tell the story of our country. The museum employs about 25 research curators, normally with doctoral degrees in history, archeology and allied disciplines, to research the objects themselves and their historical contexts. These research curators then work with other specialists in interpreting and presenting this information to the public. We do this using a number of media and types of presentations.

● (1640)

[*English*]

As a museum, the most typical of these is the physical exhibition. They can be permanent exhibitions, which means they can last anywhere from 15 to 25 years, or temporary, for a few months.

As a key part of our recent name and mandate change from the government, the CMC is currently planning our biggest and most ambitious such exhibition since we opened at our present location 24 years ago. This is the new Canadian history hall. It will replace the current Canada Hall and Canadian Personalities Hall and encompass about 45,000 square feet of exhibition space. For the first time in Canadian museological history, we will tell the comprehensive story of Canada from beginning to now. Louis Riel will be there. The conscription crisis of 1917 will be there, Expo 67, Champlain, the first Viking visitors to our shores, and the arrival of the first human beings at the end of the last ice age.

We have put together research teams who are working on the storyline and finding and researching objects, images, and other exhibitable things. We have also engaged museologists and interpretive specialists to work with the curatorial team on messaging and thematic development to help make the content come alive. We want a result that will engage and enthrall our visitors, to communicate to Canadians and the world that Canadian history is vital and important.

At the heart of the development of these products are the various needs of the audience. Knowledge and understanding of these audiences helps determine the best means by which objects and research can be presented in an engaging and stimulating manner. Across a variety of projects, the museum regularly conducts audience research through surveys, interviews, product testing, and other visitor studies. The application of these studies combined with up-to-date learning theories help ensure that the museum delivers a powerful learning experience as part of the museum visit.

The new Canadian history hall project is an example of this principle in practice. In this case an extensive public engagement exercise has taken place across Canada and online, consulting thousands of Canadians about what they would like to see, experience, and access in the new Canadian Museum of History. Currently, the team responsible for the new permanent exhibition are collating and reviewing these findings, which will be applied directly to the development of the new museum. We are also consulting with history experts through various consultative committees and brainstorming sessions to ensure that we get the right content, that it is factual and balanced, and that it presents different perspectives on complicated issues.

[*Translation*]

In the 21st century, a great deal more is expected of museums than the traditional physical exhibition. But even that has changed. Where 50 years ago a history exhibition might consist of a group of important objects with some accompanying text, we now seek a much more ambitious storyline, something approaching three-dimensional journalism. For the new Canadian History Hall, we remain dedicated to the physical exhibition as still central to our mandate. Only here can a visitor see, directly and personally, the “real thing”. Not an image of the real thing, but the actual first Maple Leaf flag to fly over Parliament Hill in 1965, or the handgun that shot D'Arcy McGee.

Our dedication to the “real thing”, however, is not absolute, and in a digital age so much more is possible. With smart phones and apps like Augmented Reality, we can program in a great deal of additional information that the visitor can access at will. We are already experimenting with digital applications at the museum, and you can expect to see a great deal of them in the new Canadian History Hall.

For example, the museum owns a small wooden carving found in an Inuit archeological site on Baffin Island. Carved in a typical Inuit style, this artifact, which is approximately 650 years old, depicts what is evidently a European, presumably a Norseman or Viking, wearing a surcoat or robe, with a cross faintly incised on the chest. Therefore, it suggests that there was direct contact between the Inuit and Europeans.

Visually this object is extremely unimpressive, not much more than 2 inches tall. Some of its meaning, its significance, can be communicated through text, of course, but with digital applications we can now do so much more. We can program in a brief interview with a subject expert, insert a film clip, add a map to show where it was found, or photos of the archeological site. We can allow the visitor to digitally manipulate the object or the image of the object, flip it around and see what it looks like from every angle. We can also allow the visitor to log comments or email a photo of the object to herself at home. And that's just what we can do now. By the time we open the new History Hall in 2017, who knows what may be possible.

● (1645)

[*English*]

A slightly older medium of presentation that has become standard is the website. CMC has a large and ambitious website featuring all kinds of information, including archived exhibitions. We also host digital exhibitions that go straight to the web, of which the largest recent example is the “Virtual Museum of New France”. It is just being finished and encompasses about 45 sections or chapters and 300 images, generally in colour. Many of these offerings are produced with the support of the Virtual Museum of Canada project at Canadian Heritage.

Another Heritage ministry program we took maximum advantage of was Canadian culture online, which allowed us to make available online many thousands of historic objects from our collection. Much of our collection is now available online to scholars, first nations, and the general public.

For the new history hall project we anticipate a comprehensive and interactive supporting web program, although we must admit we haven't begun to plan it yet.

Cyberspace isn't our only frontier. We also send exhibitions to other public museums, particularly in Canada, but also around the world. At any given moment we usually have about a dozen exhibitions touring the country, the largest and most important travelling exhibition program in the country. We also share expertise and provide loans to Canadian museums and international partners, and are actively involved in developing the Heritage ministry network of Canadian history museums.

For the new history hall we will also be working with educators to develop and provide content for school curricula. The Canadian Museum of Civilization offers a wide range of school programs that meet provincial guidelines and curricula. They are available for students from preschool through secondary school and offer interactive educational experiences in fields of study ranging from geography and citizenship to history and cultural studies. The programs enable students to learn about the people, places, and events that helped shape our country and the world. Programs, tours, and special event days attract over 40,000 students to the museum each year.

This represents a very fast and basic overview of what the Canadian Museum of History is already doing and will continue to do to preserve, protect, and enhance Canadian history at the level of a national museum. Thank you for your attention

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation and now we will begin our questions and answers. For seven minutes, we have Mr. Richards.

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thank you for being here today. I have several questions. I'll just throw the questions out and let the two of you decide who's best qualified to answer them.

I'm going to try to save about a minute of my time at the end to share with my friend, Mr. Calandra, so I'll try to get through my questions as quickly as I can and feel free to answer them in whatever detail you feel is necessary.

What I'd like to do first of all is ask you a little bit... I know without doubt that you would have far more exhibits and artifacts in your possession than could ever be displayed at one time. I wonder if you could give me some idea in terms of what proportion of those artifacts are currently on display and how many of them are actually in storage somewhere?

Ms. Chantal Amyot: It's a difficult question to answer because of the 3.5 million artifacts that we have, the vast majority of them are archeological samples. So I would say we have half a million objects of different natures. So if you look at percentages, it would be a very low percentage for that reason.

What we're trying to do with the new hall is to put as many artifacts on display as possible.

Mr. Blake Richards: I also understand the minister's expressed interest in sharing some of those exhibits and artifacts with other museums across Canada. I know there's going to be a lot of interest in that from museums all across Canada without question.

I wonder if you could tell me about plans that might be in place to increase the sharing of those artifacts and enable them to be displayed in other museums, and how you might be able to achieve that objective.

•(1650)

Ms. Chantal Amyot: Currently we're building a network of Canadian museums. We're reaching out to museums across the country and developing a memorandum of understanding with them for privileged access to our collection. It's going to be a vice versa thing too. They will be able to present exhibitions in our spaces. It's an exchange.

We are reaching out to other museums across the country right now to let them know this is our objective, to make the collections available to all Canadians.

Mr. Blake Richards: Thank you.

We have the 150th anniversary celebration of our country coming up, I wonder if you could tell me what role the new Canadian Museum of History will play leading up to that celebration and during that celebration? Also what part will your sister museum, the Canadian War Museum, play in celebrating that special event?

Ms. Chantal Amyot: We're currently working on the program that is in line with the road to 2017, so we're developing a series of artifacts on Canadian history for the road to 2017. Exhibitions like those we're having on 1867 and the Empress of Ireland match exactly within that. At the War Museum they're going to open an exhibition on peace at the end of the month.

We're looking at building up to 2017. Of course the big exhibition in 2017 will be this new hall. There are also many programs that we offer that will be in line with those temporary exhibitions, or we might have some scholars coming to talk about Canadian history. This week there is an event at the War Museum for the great Canadian debates. These things all fit into the road to 2017.

Mr. Blake Richards: I'm wondering if there's anything more you'd like to tell the committee in terms of any other upcoming events that the museum is going to be a part of, or that you'll be promoting in order to promote the significant aspects of Canadian history. I know that there are many important dates coming up. Is there anything you'd like to share with us in terms of other initiatives?

Ms. Chantal Amyot: Right now, the planning for the exhibition program is not complete, but I think the next one is going to be an exhibition on the St. Lawrence River. I'm not sure if I'm answering your question perfectly. Right now we are in the planning, so some exhibitions are determined, signed, and already on their way, while others are still being talked about.

Mr. Blake Richards: What do I have for time, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Blake Richards: That's great.

I appreciate that answer. It was helpful, but obviously there's a number of other important and significant dates in the next little while and leading up to 2017. What I was seeking from you is whether there are any plans in place that you want to share with us today in terms of promoting some other important aspects of Canadian history.

Ms. Chantal Amyot: I think the next one would be on Champlain. We have a small display on Champlain.

[*Translation*]

Are there any others?

[*English*]

The royal proclamation...?

Dr. Xavier Gélinas (Curator, Canadian Political History, Canadian Museum of Civilization) There is also something that is so large and evident as to have escaped our attention. At the Canadian War Museum, which, as you rightly said, is our sister or brother institution, the anniversary of the First World War, of course, is imminent.

They have a whole series of commemorations devoted to this mega-event, including all the things that are of particular importance and are dear to Canadians, such as the Vimy Ridge battle and other elements, and not just in a narrowly, so to speak, patriotic angle but fully in the national angle as well. That will be for the war museum component of the CMCC.

Mr. Blake Richards: That's great. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I'm glad to hear that you're going to be working on that aspect. It's a very important part of our history.

Dr. Xavier Gélinas: Oh yes, we will be.

Mr. Blake Richards: I'll turn over my remaining time to Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: How much time do I have time, Mr. Chair?

•(1655)

The Chair: You have one minute.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Really quickly, I have both a thank you and a question.

First, about 500 metres from my home, a Wendat village—the Mantle site, as it is called—was found. It is a site that has completely changed our thinking about our first nations and the villages that we thought they lived in. The scope of this find is monstrous, and I know that the museum has played a leading role there, or in helping to preserve some of the collection, some of the artifacts, that were found there.

In essence, thank you from our community, because the excitement around this is truly remarkable. We've learned that this village's cornfields, for instance, were the size of Toronto, and that there were some 70 longhouses. The interest that it has sparked within our local community has been truly unbelievable. Thank you for doing that.

Curatorially, how are you deciding what is going into the museums? What influences are you taking...? Do you have the independence that you need to make the right choices?

Ms. Chantal Amyot: We totally have the independence. We have a curatorial team of about 15 researchers working on the new hall. We're currently working on the storyline. We are going to start the storyline at 15,000 years ago and then go all the way up to today. It's a long storyline.

With the researchers, we are looking at the events and personalities that we would like to underline. We will talk to museologists. We're talking to all kinds of different specialists, along with an advisory committee of historians from across the country.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Nantel, you have seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

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

The witnesses are not unaware that they are appearing before a committee whose members do not always share the same opinion, about many things. I would like to remind you that we tabled a notice of motion. I would therefore like to debate the motion that we tabled, which I will read to you:

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage immediately halt its study on Canadian history considering the interference with provincial jurisdiction on education.

It seems important to me to remind you of our position on this issue. Since the very beginning, since this proposal was made, while respecting Canadian history and its many witnesses, this interference with an area of provincial jurisdiction has caused an outcry throughout Canada, particularly in Quebec. This interference seems entirely inappropriate to us.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Nantel, do you think this discussion on your motion is going to take the rest of the meeting? If so, I would let our witnesses—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I don't believe so. I think that we are entirely capable of discussing it briefly and then voting on it. Absolutely.

If other members of the committee wish to speak to it, then let's talk about it.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Nantel is asking for a vote on his motion, but we have a speakers list right now.

Mr. Cash is next.

Mr. Andrew Cash: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As referenced already, it seems the focus of this study is to understand what primary and post-secondary educational institutions in the provinces and territories are doing about history.

Let's leave aside the fact that secondary education isn't in here. It does seem as if the motion was drafted on the back of an envelope, Mr. Chair. This is a provincial jurisdiction, and we don't feel this line of study is germane to our committee. We have already heard a witness say that this is the work of historians in universities, not of our government.

We are very interested in the ways in which we tell our stories and the access Canadians have to them, and that's why we have been advocating that we look into the impact of cuts to the CBC, to the

LAC, to the NFB, to Telefilm, and in fact, the narrowing of the mandate of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

We feel that there is a lot of groundwork this committee doesn't get to because we keep embarking on these kinds of studies, and the government side tries to frame this as a debate between those who love the military and those who don't, which is an outrageous framing of the debate and is an insult to Canadians.

So Mr. Speaker, I support my colleague's motion and look forward to seeing some sense being brought to this committee.

• (1700)

The Chair: Next on the speakers list we have Madam Boutin-Sweet, and then Mr. Calandra.

Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Dubé.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Ms. Boutin-Sweet, I am sorry.

I would also like to support the motion put forward by my colleague, Mr. Nantel.

Indeed, I find this very interesting. In fact, I myself studied history and I am a member of the historical society in my riding. I am very familiar with the role that historians play. We heard witnesses, as Mr. Nantel already mentioned. There is one problem. It is not up to a government to decide what will be studied in history. We all have our own biases.

I think it is not up to us to decide. We have the proof when we look at the text of the first motion. There is no mention of first nations and no mention, unless I am mistaken, of Quebec, of the Quebec nation or of francophones outside of Quebec. It seems to me that when we talk about Canadian history, those are important elements to point out.

We see the problem. We are stuck with these decisions and we do not have the complete picture. If I had the opportunity to amend the motion and include the multitude of historical events that were not included in the examples provided, we would be here until tomorrow morning. I think that is proof that it is not up to politicians to decide on history, it is up to historians, for whom I have a great deal of respect, since I am one, actually.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: On just a quick note, now we have a speakers list with three more people on it. Mr. Nantel moved the motion and said he would like to get to a vote on it quickly. If we're going to take up too much time debating the motion, I'm going to dismiss the witnesses.

Hopefully we can keep our remarks short. If we want to speak longer, then I need to dismiss the witnesses.

Madam Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): This will be short and sweet.

I am an archeologist. Obviously I am interested in the archeological aspect. My colleagues are right: this is not an archeological study but a historical one, and teaching history is a provincial responsibility. We are reminded regularly in the House of Commons that we cannot deal with one subject or another because it falls under provincial jurisdiction. This subject is a provincial matter.

Moreover, this a very long study and a host of topics have been put forward. The Conservative government is hardly trying to hide that this is their way of punishing the opposition. It is childish! The Conservatives want to make sure they control what happens in committee. This means that we cannot present our own motions because this one could last for months on end.

There is something else in this motion that really displeases me. Indeed, most of the examples given are related to the military. History is not only military history, although this is an important aspect. There is no mention, for example, of the industrial revolution, which is an important part of Canadian history. There is hardly any mention of social development. There are biases that I do not like. If we were to study history, we would have to study much more than this and it would require many months. That is not what we are here for. We are not here to waste Canadians' money by undertaking studies to simply penalize the opposition.

[English]

The Chair: *Merci.*

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First off, let me just say that some of the motions that were passed here were passed with the support, I think, of a vast majority of the members of this committee.

Having said that, I think the motion speaks for itself. I know Mr. Simms brought up peacekeeping; the motion does talk about peacekeeping. I think we have committee business scheduled for Wednesday. I would suggest at Wednesday's committee meeting that potential witnesses be brought forward to speak about that, and we can then have a more fulsome debate on who we would like to bring. But the motion does talk about peacekeeping. The motion talks about pre-Confederation. Hopefully, we could talk about our first nations in the context of what happened here before Confederation. It talks about elements after Confederation. It talks about early 20th century, post-20th century.

I know on this side, we're not going to suggest what topics the members want to talk about. We're not here to tell the provinces what they should do. We're not here to interpret history. What we're here to try to do, like we had this morning in the earlier panel, is just get a sense of what resources are available to people to better understand their history. We will talk with our museums, the War Museum and the Museum of Civilization. I know we'd like to bring forward witnesses that included Library and Archives Canada. We would like to bring forward witnesses from other museums. We've talked about hopefully bringing forward CBC. We've talked about bringing forward the National Film Board of Canada. That's something we'll hopefully bring forward for future debate so committee members can discuss, if those are the people they want to hear from. We are not limiting ourselves to who we would talk to.

•(1705)

Mr. Andrew Cash: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Cash has a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Cash: My friend opposite seems to be under the impression that we passed several motions in this committee that have had widespread support among our party and also he seems—

The Chair: Mr. Cash, it's not a point of order. It's a matter of debate, so the floor is back to Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Just by reference to that, I think the study we just finished was the entertainment software study, which was actually Mr. Cash's motion, Mr. Chair.

Anyway, Mr. Chair, not to belabour this, if it would make it easier for the opposition, I would be more than inclined to seek the unanimous support of the committee to remove the first sentence of the study, which says:

A breakdown and comparison of relevant standards and courses of study offered in primary and post-secondary institutions in each of the provinces and territories;

If it would make it easier for the opposition, then we'd be willing to seek unanimous consent, something in the vein of, "Notwithstanding the motion that was passed, we would seek to eliminate the first sentence", so that we can get on track and get back to doing what we actually get paid to do.

The Chair: Mr. Calandra, you still have the floor, but we do have to deal with the motion of Mr. Nantel before we can deal with your proposal. Mr. Calandra is asking for unanimous consent to remove that first paragraph, but we do have a motion that we're vested with.

Is there anything else, Mr. Calandra?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I would make a friendly amendment to Mr. Nantel's motion. I don't know if it would be considered friendly, but it would be a big one. That is that we remove pretty much all of the wording of his motion, and it be replaced with all of the wording of our motion, with the exception of removing the sentence that I referenced earlier.

The Chair: I think we have to deal with Mr. Nantel's motion.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Sorry, I'm proposing an amendment to his motion.

The Chair: That would basically change the whole spirit of the motion. Amendments to motions are fine, but that might go a little beyond what we can do.

Are you done, Mr. Calandra?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I am, yes.

The Chair: Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms: With a friendly amendment like that, our Parliament would probably look more like the Ukraine.

I would start by saying this, and I'll try to make this very quick because I want to get to a vote. In the beginning when this was first brought up I didn't see merit whereas I have seen it over the last few days. I see this in some of the testimony we heard today and the potential testimony of the future.

I like the idea that the wording can be changed at the beginning if it takes away contentious issues. By way of example, when I go around and speak to health people—whether they're nurses, doctors, executives on hospital boards—a lot of these people cite the Kirby report, which was done in the Senate. The Kirby report was not something that was to force its way into provincial jurisdiction. It was something they use as a point of reference for all jurisdictions.

As I said before, there are no provincial equivalents per se to Heritage, maybe tourism and maybe some in Quebec.

It's hard for me to say right now whether we should halt this because it's provincial jurisdiction until we see what it is we're looking at by way of witnesses. Now granted my motion was not successful earlier, so as far as witnesses go, we're not off to a good start, in my opinion. However, I'm patient. I'm willing to see what is out there.... I hope we'll change our minds on that particular motion because I see there is merit in that, plus other issues.

Folks, first nations are not here. It's a huge one and I think there are other elements. If we are open to adding elements of our Canadian history that are not mentioned or that don't even resemble it, we should be open to seeing that. When the report comes out, then we make sure it's not prescriptive in nature or doesn't interfere in provincial jurisdictions. It should be one that is an information piece.

• (1710)

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Calandra, you may speak to Mr. Nantel's motion.

Mr. Paul Calandra: This would be a clarification. The list isn't meant to be prescriptive, as in that's all we will talk about.

On another point of clarification, we have committee business scheduled for Wednesday. What is the purpose of that?

The Chair: In the second hour on Wednesday we can discuss committee business. We can discuss motions. We can discuss witnesses.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Presumably we can bring witnesses. Okay, that's what I thought.

As I said, Mr. Chair, the list isn't meant to be prescriptive. If that were the case, then discussing pre-Confederation could take on anything. It could be our first nations; it could be anything. Just because someone isn't mentioned here.... I'm sure some of my Italian uncles would like me to talk about the history of immigration to Canada. I'd maybe like to have the chairperson of Pier 21 here.

It's not meant to be a list of the only things we're studying and that's the end of it, Mr. Chair. I think I made that pretty clear, but if I didn't then I apologize and perhaps if members.... But I think that gets fleshed out a little bit with the witnesses members decide to bring forward, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

Number one, as chair I have to say that we do have an hour scheduled on Wednesday for committee business, where it's appropriate to discuss motions, witnesses, or whatever. Now our speakers' list is growing again, so at this point I'm going to dismiss our two witnesses.

I'm sure you're not that interested in the workings of our committee. We do appreciate your testimony. If there is anything else you want to send to us on this, you're welcome to. We were able to ask some questions.

I'll dismiss you at this point, and we will go back to our speakers' list.

Thank you for your appearance here.

Mr. Nantel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: First of all, I think we are going to have to vote on the motion that we presented today.

I would like to point out that if a proposal is being made to amend the original motion, let's not kid ourselves that all this will be settled. We agree that the studies proposed are problematic. We also agree that the question of provincial and municipal jurisdictions pose a problem. We further agree that, as my colleague Ms. Boutin-Sweet mentioned, the lack of limits on this study presents a problem.

There needs to be a deadline and a certain number of meetings dedicated to this study before we can consider the question. That is my point and my opinion. However, I think we need to vote on the motion that we have just presented.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: I fully agree with my colleague.

In fact, a number of topics were mentioned. It has been pointed out that the history of Canada is a very broad subject. How much time will we dedicate to this study? Do we really want to spend all this time on this study? Or do we want to divide it up and work on sections of it from time to time?

There are many other subjects that we could study other than this one. We spent month after month on this study of Canada's 150th anniversary. Are we going to do the same thing again instead of studying other subjects that are so important to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage?

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. That is it for our speakers' list.

We have the motion in front of us. We are going to vote on it at this point. Those in favour of the motion of Mr. Nantel—

A voice: Can we have a recorded vote?

The Chair: Certainly.

(Motion negated: nays 7; yeas 4)

Our witnesses are not here anymore. We have committee business scheduled for Wednesday and we have witnesses for the first hour. I would encourage members—it makes committee work a lot better, I think—to do committee business within the confines of committee business, whether it concerns witnesses or our schedule or the work we're doing. I think it helps. That's why we schedule committee business. We schedule witnesses to hear witnesses; we schedule committee business to conduct our committee business. But, be that as it may, I'll hear Mr. Calandra.

● (1715)

Mr. Paul Calandra: I don't know whether it will please the committee, but I would seek unanimous consent, notwithstanding the earlier motion, to remove the first sentence:

A breakdown and comparison of relevant standards and courses of study offered in primary and post-secondary institutions in each of the provinces and territories;

Perhaps that would help.

The Chair: Mr. Calandra is asking for the unanimous consent of committee members to remove that first bullet point, which says, “A breakdown and comparison of relevant standards and courses of study offered in primary and post-secondary institutions in each of the provinces and territories”.

Is there unanimous consent to remove those words?

An hon. member: No.

There is not unanimous consent.

You could have a vote on it.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Yes. Let's just have a vote on it.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Nantel, would you like to speak to Mr. Calandra's motion?

Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

The fact that we are endeavouring to do studies that make sense is nothing new.

I have often mentioned that when I sat on other committees, we tried to work in the best interest of Canadians. One example is the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, where all the members present felt strongly about the fishermen's situation. Those MPs represented ridings where there were a lot of fishers.

I would like us to have healthy discussions on important subjects. I think it would be unfortunate if we were to undertake this study blindly without counting the number of weeks that it will require. It is a relevant subject, but it does not need all this much time. We should restrict our study to a certain number of weeks.

Mind you, I do appreciate Mr. Calandra withdrawing the first paragraph. I think many people gave their opinion on that point. I would also like him to consider limiting the scope of the second paragraph where it mentions a study. The text is only in English. I have never received it in French. And that poses a problem, there is no denying that.

I will quote the paragraph that I am referring to. You are withdrawing the following:

[*English*]

A breakdown and comparison of relevant standards and courses of study offered in primary and post-secondary institutions in each of the provinces and territories;

[*Translation*]

That is good, but we would like you to think about the amount of time that will be dedicated to this study and to consider removing the following words:

[*English*]

A review of federal, provincial and municipal programs designed to preserve our history and heritage;

[*Translation*]

We would like that to be withdrawn.

This would limit the question at the federal level.

I would like this to be limited to federal programs and for a timeframe to be put in place.

Mr. Calandra, I would like to know what you think about this. I appreciate what you have proposed for the first paragraph, but we believe that we need to reach a compromise.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra: A number of programs that the federal government undertakes are with our partners at municipal and provincial levels.

I just want to read something to you, Mr. Chair, as part of my comments. This is from one of our committee meetings:...I asked the teacher what the federal government could do to help them. She replied that certain federal institutions could be opened up to local schools and offer them free visits.

That was from Madame Boutin-Sweet. That was you when we had some officials from a museum, I think, at which you used to work.

The Chair: Mr. Calandra.

● (1720)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Could you repeat that, please?

Mr. Paul Calandra: I'll read from the statement:

I'd like to continue on the topic of education. That seems popular today. A few weeks ago, I went to visit a primary school. In my riding, Hochelaga, neither the schools nor the people are very rich. And so I asked the teacher what the federal government could do to help them. She replied that certain federal institutions could be opened up to local schools and offer them free visits.

Mr. Chair, again, we're not telling the schools that this is how you should interpret history, and we're not telling our municipal partners that. Here is an example of something we might have been able to learn.

I understand that the NDP have a difficulty with our discussing provincial and territorial schools, so we'll pull that from the motion, Mr. Chair. But I think the member for Hochelaga points out some of the areas in which the federal government can assist in this work, and I think that's the point of the committee too—especially as we approach Canada's 150th, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Nantel has proposed an amendment to Mr. Calandra's motion. Mr. Calandra's motion as I have it is that notwithstanding the motion adopted by committee on April 29th, 2013, that the following sentence be removed from said motion.... I won't read the sentence again. I think we all know which one it is. **Mr. Nantel's amendment would add the following bullet:** A review of federal, provincial, and municipal programs designed to preserve our history and heritage;

The question is on the amendment to the motion. Mr. Nantel has moved an amendment that we eliminate the second bullet.

(Amendment negated)

The Chair: The question is on the motion of Mr. Calandra.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It looks to be unanimous. That paragraph will be struck, then, from the motion.

The meeting is adjourned.

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