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—
Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

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[English]

● (0845)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC)): I call the meeting to order. I would like to welcome everyone to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I'll be filling in for our chair, Ms. Fry, for a while anyway. This is the 63rd meeting of our committee in the 42nd Parliament.

Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), we are considering the main estimates 2017-18: vote 1 under Canada Council for the Arts; votes 1, 5, and 10 under Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; vote 1 under the Canadian Museum for Human Rights; vote 1 under Canadian Museum of History; vote 1 under Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21; vote 1 under Canadian Museum of Nature; vote 1 under Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission; votes 1 and 5 under Department of Canadian Heritage; votes 1 and 5 under Library and Archives of Canada; vote 1 under National Arts Centre Corporation; votes 1 and 5 under National Capital Commission; vote 1 under the National Film Board; votes 1 and 5 under the National Gallery of Canada; vote 1 under National Museum of Science and Technology; vote 1 under Telefilm Canada; and vote 1 under the National Battlefields Commission, referred to the committee on Thursday, February 23, 2017.

Appearing with us this morning is Minister Joly. With her is the deputy minister, Graham Flack, and the chief financial officer, Andrew Francis. Welcome and thank you for being here this morning.

I want to provide the minister with an opportunity for opening remarks, and then we'll get into the questions right after that.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Chair, thank you for leading this session that Ms. Fry, the chair, usually does.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen members of the committee, thank you for asking me to appear before your committee.

I am joined by Mr. Graham Flack, Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage, and Mr. Andrew Francis, the department's Chief Financial Officer.

The work that you do is very important, and your studies in areas like the impact of digital technology on media consumption, the state of Canadian museums and the future of the CBC, directly relate to some of the portfolio initiatives that I will speak to today.

As committee members know, our government places a high priority on Canada's arts and culture. In budget 2016 we made a historic investment in the arts and culture sector: \$1.9 billion over five years. This was the largest investment in the sector in three decades, and we're still the only G7 country having invested so much in the field.

Communities large and small continue to reap the benefits of programs, infrastructure, and initiatives that are helping to build a strong economy and a diverse and inclusive society. This has never been so important, particularly this year, Canada 150.

Since I last met with you in November, we have launched our year-long celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The activities continue all year, giving Canadians a chance to come together, to reflect on our past, and to envision a future full of possibilities.

Over the past year it has been my great privilege to travel to all communities big and small across our country, to hear Canadians talk about their vision and ideas for the future of Canadian culture and content in our digital world, and about the importance of strengthening services in official language minority communities. I take my responsibility to each of them and to our government very seriously.

● (0850)

[Translation]

The digital shift has transformed our world; the lines between content creator, broadcaster and consumer are blurring. Canadians access content through different channels. We can no longer ignore it.

New international actors such as the big digital platforms have become prominent figures in the digital landscape. This is a unique opportunity for our creators to conquer new international markets. I look forward to presenting the first Canadian cultural export strategy that will help them to do so.

I also look forward to presenting my vision for our new cultural policy tool kit this year.

[English]

As for today, I will share a few examples of what we have accomplished so far, and what the 2017-18 main estimates will help us accomplish in the coming year. Our department is seeking \$1.4 billion, an increase of \$150.2 million, or 11.6%, from the previous fiscal year. Included in this amount are \$1.2 billion in grants and contributions, \$208.8 million in operating expenditures, and \$25.8 million in statutory authorities. Let me highlight some specific initiatives that we have planned for this fiscal year to support our mandate.

[Translation]

The most significant increase in the main estimates is an allocation of \$84.1 million to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. This funding is vital to help support Canadian creators and the expression of their creativity within our communities, in appropriate infrastructures. By providing this support, we will also strengthen the prosperity of our society and our economy.

[English]

Indigenous languages are an integral part of our Canadian identity. As such, the 2017-18 main estimates include \$17.6 million to increase French and indigenous language services in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut.

[Translation]

Our government is also an ardent advocate for Canada's official languages. I have listened to minority official language communities since I arrived in this position in November 2015. We organized 22 round tables, and more than 7,000 Canadians took part in this consultation process.

The priorities of these communities are not only my own, but also those of our government. We are currently working on the action plan that will set out our government's vision and our strategy to ensure the vitality of our two official languages, and increase the level of bilingualism in the country. In this regard, we have had several successes in the official languages area that you are already familiar with.

A few weeks ago, our Prime Minister had the pleasure of proposing the candidacy of Madeleine Meilleur for the position of Commissioner of Official Languages. Our government is proud of the rigorous merit-based process that led to the selection of this candidate for this officer of Parliament position, a nomination that must be validated by the elected representatives of the House of Commons and the members of the Senate.

I want to remind you that the nomination process for the position of Commissioner of Official Languages was open to all Canadians. Right from the outset, the position was posted on the website of the Governor in Council, and was accessible to everyone.

The candidate had to meet very strict criteria regarding education and work experience, and had to demonstrate that he or she had the knowledge, skills and capacities necessary to staunchly defend our two official languages.

A third party, the Boyden Executive Search firm, assessed the 72 candidacies received, using the criteria set out in the position description.

The selection committee, made up of a majority of public servants, did an in-depth analysis of the files and chose 12 candidates who would move on to the next step, that of the interviews.

I want to specify that the selection committee worked on a consensus basis and that the opinions of all of its members were given equal weight.

In light of the interviews conducted by the selection committee, fewer than 10 candidates were chosen to move on to the next step, that of psychometric evaluations and reference checks.

Following these evaluations, the committee submitted its short list of candidates from the final selection to me.

● (0855)

[English]

As Minister of Canadian Heritage and minister responsible for official languages, I conducted interviews with each of the short-listed finalists. While it is not required, I thought it was important at this stage to take the extra step of consulting with my opposition critics, Madam Boucher from the Conservative Party, and Monsieur Choquette from the NDP, on the preferred candidate. Madam Meilleur's superior qualifications, expertise, and experience were acknowledged. Following these discussions, a formal letter of consultation from the Prime Minister was sent to the leaders of the opposition parties in the House of Commons and the Senate.

[Translation]

Ms. Meilleur's candidacy clearly stood out from the rest, because of her career and track record in defending and promoting the language rights of the Franco-Ontarian community. Her unique and specific expertise regarding official languages placed her at the top of the list of candidates following this process. I can mention her experience on the Ottawa municipal council, where Ms. Meilleur worked with her colleagues to create a bilingualism policy for the city.

This commitment to encouraging the inclusion of the francophone community of Ottawa in municipal life was also evident in Ms. Meilleur's intensive participation in the campaign to prevent the closure of the Monfort Hospital, the Franco-Ontarian hospital of Ottawa.

May I also point out that during her mandate as Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs in Ontario, Ms. Meilleur supervised the creation of the position of French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario, and ensured the independence of that office.

Our priority was to recruit the most competent person to head the Office of the Commissioner, and to ensure the respect of the Official Languages Act. Ms. Meilleur is obviously that person, and her track record speaks for itself. I am proud to propose a candidate who will fight for official languages with the same strength and the same rigour as she has done all through her career.

[English]

Budget 2017 includes funding for initiatives that foster indigenous languages and cultures. I would like to point out three key initiatives: \$69 million over three years to enhance aboriginal language initiatives to support community-based projects and activities focused on preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages; \$14.9 million for Library and Archives for its ongoing work to digitize existing indigenous language and cultural materials; and \$6 million for the National Research Council Canada, which is working with indigenous stakeholders as it develops information technology to help preserve oral histories.

Of course, we will seek additional funding through the supplementary estimates for budget 2017 initiatives once these funds are approved.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Thank you very much, Madam Minister.

We will begin the questioning with seven-minute rounds, followed by a five-minute round as time allows. I would remind my colleagues on the committee that we are sitting for one hour.

We will begin with Mr. Breton.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Madam Minister, and Mr. Flack and Mr. Francis, for being here with us.

Madam Minister, concerning Canada 150, we are already in the fifth month of our celebration. I must commend you for your leadership and your vision in this file. The people of my riding are very proud to be able to participate in the celebration of our 150th anniversary.

Could you give us an update on the funding requests that were submitted to the program as a whole, from all over Canada, as well as the opportunities that exist?

Could you also tell us where Canadians may attend festivities, at this time and in the future?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you for the question.

Indeed, we launched the Canada 150 celebrations on December 31, in 19 cities across the country. There are four themes that frame the celebration: environment, youth, diversity and inclusion, and reconciliation with aboriginal peoples. We have a \$200 million fund to support programming for this celebration. We received project requests of about \$1.7 billion, so as you can see there is a lot of interest.

I in fact had the opportunity of making an announcement with you at the Granby Zoo last week for an interesting community project. We awarded \$148,000 to support an environmental project for the

purpose of developing environmental awareness among the people of the regions of Montérégie and the Eastern Townships.

In the context of Canada 150, there are several events that will be announced shortly. We are going to celebrate four holidays in particular. The first is National Aboriginal Day, which is held on June 21; the second is the Quebec National Holiday, and the holiday of all francophones, which is held on June 24; the third is Canadian Multiculturalism Day, held on June 26; and finally Canada Day, which will be held as usual on July 1. Throughout these festivities, 19 cities will participate. In order to ensure that we have a good representation and support in the 19 cities, Canada Day will be celebrated in those 19 cities.

Those who would like further information may consult the website. There is also a mobile app, Passport 2017. I invite all of the members here, and the senators, to download the mobile app. People can have access to the information thanks to this mobile app.

• (0900)

Mr. Pierre Breton: Thank you.

My second question concerns the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. The program budget for that fund was increased in the last budget, and we are pleased about that.

Could you tell us where or through which programs municipal organizations or non-profit organizations can apply for those funds? In short, could you give us an update on that important file?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: The budget proposes investing \$1.8 billion over 10 years, as of 2018-2019, to strengthen the cultural and recreational infrastructure. Out of this amount, \$1.3 billion will be allocated to bilateral agreements between the provinces or territories and the federal government, \$300 million over 10 years will be awarded to the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, which is directly managed by Canadian Heritage, and \$80 million over 10 years will be used for the creation of educational infrastructures in minority official language communities.

Of course, the various non-profit organizations everywhere in Canada may present requests to obtain funds from the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund that is managed by Canadian Heritage. The same thing applies to funds for community infrastructures for official language communities.

As for the bilateral agreements with municipalities, and to answer your question more specifically, discussions have to take place with the provinces, of course. Normally, these requests come from the municipalities and provinces. The federal government will be able to discuss them and then approve them. The best thing is of course to ensure that there is a good discussion with the provinces, particularly with Quebec, with whom there is an agreement. Under chapter M-30, we must ensure that we discuss things with the Quebec government from the outset.

That said, I think that this is excellent news. These will be historic investments in cultural infrastructures. Our government has been the first in 10 years that has managed to change the criteria of bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories to allow for the funding of cultural infrastructures. Not only were we able to change the criteria of past programs, but regarding the new programs, we can ensure funding for cultural and recreational infrastructures. The Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Carla Qualtrough, and myself are very pleased with these new announcements regarding the content of the budget.

• (0905)

Mr. Pierre Breton: Thank you for this update.

Mr. Chair, do I have any speaking time left?

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): You have 20 seconds.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Breton: Very well. I will stop here.

Thank you.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): We'll go to our second questioner, Mr. Van Loan.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Chair, it's great to see you here.

It's great to have you here, Minister, as well.

I want to talk a bit about what I think was a great mistake by the Government of Canada, which as part of its war on history chose to exclude history and Confederation as themes for the 150th anniversary of Confederation. What's becoming apparent now is that is creating a real disconnect between where Canadians—Canadian society at large—are and where the government is, and it is sort of painting the government as being elite and out of touch.

I want to show to you that despite the government's decision to exclude history and Confederation, there's an enormous grassroots community-based sentiment out there that is asserting those themes despite the government's stubborn, bloody-minded refusal to do so. I'll give you some examples from some organizations.

The Canadian Press, for example, has been running its series "Canada 150: History of a nation". There's a different feature every week on Canadian history.

The Canada Games Council's website features a photo of the Fathers of Confederation on its home page, and the theme of the 2017 Games in Winnipeg is 50 years of the Canada Games, 150 years of Confederation.

St. Andrew's Church in Toronto had an event "Singing Our History: A Canada 150 Celebration".

The students at Waterdown District High School have prepared an exhibit that looks at local history and then connects it to the larger Canadian story.

The Toronto International Film Festival has been running an exhibition "150 Essential Works in Canadian Cinema History".

You see that from organizations like that as well as from the universities and the academic sector in Canada. The University of Regina, for example, has been having a lecture series, "The Making of Canada Series", which focuses on Confederation. York University is holding a conference "150 Ideas that Shaped Canada". Simon Fraser University has been having a lecture series "Canada 150: Confederation in Question" which examines various aspects of Canadian history.

Then there are communities, of course, that are spontaneously doing this. Mine, Georgina, has focused on history. Brockville is celebrating 150 years of history in 150 days for Canada 150. Okotoks, Alberta, is celebrating "Our Place in History", a community history since Confederation. Nanaimo is celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary with stories that intersect local and national history. Whitchurch-Stouffville is having historical lectures and a Jane's walk of pre-Confederation homes, tying it back to our history. Sault Ste. Marie is holding a number of events. My favourite is a Confederation lobster lunch to pay tribute to the original Confederation conference.

The disconnect between the sort of elite approach of the government to ignore history and where ordinary Canadians are is so bad that The Beaverton ran a satirical article saying that 75% of the Canada 150 budget has been spent on hiding the worst parts of natural history. When you can get satire like that, I think that tells you how great the disconnect is between what Canadians intuitively understand the 150th anniversary of Confederation to be about—it's about celebrating our history and Confederation—and the bloody-minded refusal of the government to include that as a theme.

I have no problems with the themes you have, but will you acknowledge that it was a mistake to exclude history and Confederation as themes of the 150th anniversary of Confederation?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Chair, I would just like to correct the record here.

Of course, we're extremely happy to be celebrating the 150th anniversary of Confederation. One of the key elements we'll be inaugurating on July 1 is a major renovation at the Canadian Museum of History, the History Hall, which will be presenting the history of Canada. That will be one of the key legacies of our government.

We've also been involved in funding many of the history-based projects, one of which was mentioned by my colleague and has been presented by the Toronto International Film Festival, TIFF. I just want to make sure my colleague understands that this was funded by Canadian Heritage.

I would like to provide you with other examples. One is Equal Voice's Daughters of the Vote project celebrating the 100th anniversary of women being able to vote. Of course, we were all there and saw 338 beautiful young women sitting in our seats. That was a great moment in our Parliament.

To give you some other examples, there is the monument that will celebrate the Stanley Cup's 100th anniversary, and the Vimy Foundation's project, the First World War in colour, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Vimy and Passchendaele battles.

On Prince Edward Island, which my parliamentary secretary is very fond of, there is the commemoration of the Charlottetown Conference of 1864. We gave \$5 million to the project Celebrate the Creation of Our Nation, 2014-2017.

I know that my colleague Mr. Van Loan is very interested in museums, especially museums that present history projects, which I'm very fond of. I would like to give him examples of projects that we have funded to support the importance of history.

The Waterloo Region Museum has received nearly \$200,000 for its exhibition presenting the impacts of women on Canadian society from Confederation up to now. There's an exhibition at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery called "A Story of Canadian Art" to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Confederation, and at the Musée maritime du Québec, an exhibition called "*Sur les traces de Franklin*", which talks about the great quest of Franklin in the context of his travels across the Canadian Arctic.

There is another project that my colleague Mr. O'Regan would really like, because it's at Memorial University in Newfoundland, at the Grenfell Campus Art Gallery. It's called "Architecture and National Identity: The Centennial Projects 50 Years On".

I could go on. I would also like to say that for my part, coming from Montreal, I was there for the launch of the 375th anniversary of the city, which was on May 17. I really hope that in the context of the 150th anniversary, we take this opportunity to reflect on our past, but also envision a future full of possibilities.

• (0910)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): I'm going to have to move on.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: If I could, I appreciate that you acknowledge many of the projects that were initiated under our government and that continued under your government, but I will take it as an acknowledgement that it was perhaps a mistake to exclude history, and many groups have been declined funding, as you know, for their projects because of that.

There are other examples where you see people stepping up and celebrating history.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): We'll have to move on.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Okay, I guess I'll have to wait until the next round.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Mr. Nantel.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Minister, Mr. Flack and Mr. Francis for being here.

I want to say right from the outset that considerations regarding Ms. Meilleur are not my main concern. There is no doubt at all that she has defended the interests of francophones. I won't speak on

behalf of my colleague Mr. Choquette, but it is clear that the non-partisan nomination announced during pleasant, perhaps sunny, campaigns, and so on, all of that is a bit awkward. It forces you to skate over thin ice, and you have all my sympathy. Although she is a good candidate, the process has been somewhat flawed.

Personally, I would like to raise a topic that seems much more imperative and urgent. I am referring to the upcoming catastrophe in our media. With a great deal of courage, you undertook an important review of our programs and policies. However, you took

[English]

a bite bigger than you can chew.

[Translation]

I can speak to you about this, since we, the members of the committee, are experiencing a similar situation in our study of the media. It is such a vast area that it becomes difficult to find solutions.

As I said to your deputy minister when I arrived, I understand the situation, but I hope there is something "in the pipeline" at this time. Indeed, the more time passes, the worse the situation gets. In the meantime, we need to ensure that the big players in the media environment are not coming up with two-bit solutions, as the CRTC just did.

Here is my first question.

Are you going to send back the decisions the CRTC made last May 15 so that they may be reviewed, and will you ask for new hearings?

Section 28 of the Broadcasting Act allows you to do that. A lot of groups are asking that you do this. You told me yesterday that people in the industry had only to speak out. They have done so. Over the past two weeks, they have been asking you to take these measures.

Are you going to send back the CRTC decisions to have them reviewed?

• (0915)

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you.

You know, of course, that technological changes currently being experienced by the media, entertainment and Canadian culture sectors have enormous impacts on the industries and also on the country's broadcasting network. I am anxious to read your study on the media since this is a very broad and complex issue. That is why we launched public consultations last year. Close to 30,000 people took part in them.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Madam Minister, with all due respect, I must point out that I have already heard all of this.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: I am getting to it, Mr. Nantel.

Following these public consultations, a report was published. This was in the spring. During 2017, I will have the opportunity of presenting my new vision of this area.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

Can you challenge the CRTC decision?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: The CRTC, which is an independent body, has issued a decision. I am studying its impacts in order to understand how it will affect the audiovisual area. Once I have completed this impact study, I will make a decision. I invite artists and content creators to make themselves heard. Since I am at this time still studying the impacts, I will limit my comments in this regard.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Very well.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: That said, I have also said several times that given the technological changes and the transformation that is occurring in the habits of our citizens and content consumers, it is clear that cultural protectionism in Canada is no longer sufficient. We have to make sure that we protect our culture, of course, but we also have to promote it. I hope, consequently, that our content creators are ready...

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I must interrupt you.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: ... to work on exporting content...

Mr. Pierre Nantel: You are living dangerously, Madam Minister.

Hon. Mélanie Joly:—so that they may, in the end, occupy digital platforms.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Expressing things in that way is dangerous. The entire milieu is expecting that you will protect the launching pad of our cultural expression. We can easily talk about exporting content—that is particularly true in Quebec—and do so as well, but we need our domestic market. We constantly hear about exporting, but we are talking here about a whole “millennial” digital technology. There is an industry made up of people who work in Quebec and who are devastated by the cancellation of series. And this is not only happening in Quebec.

[English]

Yesterday you invited artists and creators to make themselves heard, but they have been begging you for two weeks. ACTRA, the CMPA, the Directors Guild, and the Writers Guild all asked you to have the CRTC reconsider its decision. You can do that now. They've already told you what they want you to do. How long will it take for you to reconsider and report this decision to the CRTC?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Minister Joly.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: As I said in French, of course we are right now preparing to present our new vision, which will lead to different projects in line with how we can modernize our broadcasting and telecom systems. We said in budget 2017 that we would be modernizing the Broadcasting Act and Telecommunications Act. That's the first time in 30 years that we will be doing so for the Broadcasting Act.

Our entire tool kit is based on an analog era that is not in line with how people consume content and what their expectations are. I'm hearing what different stakeholders are saying. My team and I have had the chance to meet with them. We're in constant communication. Right now we're studying the impact of the decision from the CRTC that you're referring to, and I'll have a chance to present my vision later this year.

We believe in the arts and culture sector. We invested \$1.9 billion

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Yes, but I am not talking to you about fine arts.

[English]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Nantel, I must say, this is the most creator-focused government in 30 years.

● (0920)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Yes, but that takes time, Ms. Joly.

[English]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: I understand the importance of this decision, and that's why I'm studying the impacts. But let's just be clear here. We have clearly invested in and recognized the importance of the sector; therefore, they can really believe in the importance the government is giving to them because that's really the fact.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Thank you very much, Madam Minister. We'll have to move on.

We'll turn now to Ms. Dabrusin, for seven minutes.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you, Minister Joly, for being here today to speak with us.

I'm going to be sharing my time with MP Dan Vandal.

Last week I attended an Economic Club of Canada luncheon. Miranda Mulholland spoke very forcefully about what she has seen as some of the negative impacts of the digital shift on music creators. Even just over the weekend in my riding, I talked with local authors and creators who have raised issues, and a lot of them turn on the Copyright Act.

Because we're in 2017 now, what are the government's plans with respect to a review of the Copyright Act?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you, Julie.

I'm happy you were at the lunch with Miranda. I had a chance to discuss with her a couple of times the impact of music streaming, her capacity to live from her work, and the evolution over time in her career in terms of remuneration. That goes a bit to the point of Mr. Nantel.

Of course, I'm very concerned about the question of fairness to creators in the context of this digital disruption. That's exactly why I decided to launch an international conversation about the importance of cultural diversity and fairness to creators with digital platforms. I went to UNESCO to talk about it. I went to the World Economic Forum to talk about it. I went to the first G7 ministers of culture meeting to talk about it. I went to the heart of Silicon Valley to talk with digital platforms, namely, Google, Facebook, and Twitter. That was the first time they had heard from a minister of culture in the world to discuss these issues.

We know there's a parliamentary review of the Copyright Act coming. We'll be working on this, and certainly the importance of fairness to creators and protecting IP for creators is something we will be putting forward.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Mr. Vandal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Madam Minister, first I would like to thank Canada 150 for having subsidized a beautiful community celebration last Sunday. The Union nationale métisse was celebrating its 130th anniversary as a franco-Métis organization. It is the oldest Métis organization in Canada. The event was subsidized by Canada 150, and we want to thank you.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you, Mr. Vandal.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Vandal: I want to talk about indigenous languages, because I know there's funding in the budget for that. According to census 2011, there are over 60 indigenous languages in Canada, and three of them account for almost two-thirds of the population who have an indigenous language as their first language. Since this is an important issue going forward, I'm curious as to how your department will look at moving this issue forward. Will it be the languages that are used most often? Will it be done regionally? Will it be a mixture of the two? What is the fate of languages that are spoken less often, such as Michif in Manitoba and Saskatchewan?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Minister Joly.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you for the question. This is a very exciting initiative we're working on.

The Prime Minister announced in December at the AFN that, as a government, we would be co-developing the first legislation in 150 years on the protection, enhancement, and promotion of indigenous languages. That will also be the first legislation co-developed with indigenous organizations in 150 years.

There are 90 different languages and dialects in Canada. This, of course, presents an opportunity, but also a lot of difficulties because the state of various indigenous languages is different. We'll be working on this important work with three important national organizations: the Métis, the Inuit, and the AFN. We would like to introduce legislation before the end of our mandate to make sure we have legislation to protect these important languages.

• (0925)

[*Translation*]

In the meantime, we also examined how we could create a bridge to ensure funding for various aboriginal languages. Several of them are in jeopardy. Their vitality is flagging.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): I'll ask you to wrap up, Madam Minister.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: We invested \$90 million over three years in the budget. We also made an agreement with Nunavut, Yukon and the Northwest Territories in order to increase funding for aboriginal languages.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Thank you.

Mr. Van Loan, you have five minutes.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: I want to continue on that theme of the Liberals' war on history, the refusal to have history. Confederation has themes of Canada 150, and how Canadians are—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Mr. Van Loan, I jumped the gun, sorry.

Mr. Vandal, you have two more minutes, if you'd like to go ahead. That was a seven-minute round. You and Julie were splitting that.

Would the two of you like to carry on or do you want to come back to it later?

Mr. Dan Vandal: I'll continue.

When you concluded, Minister, you talked about partnerships with the three provinces. Can you speak more on the partnerships with the north?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Yes. We were able to do an agreement with the three territories to support French and indigenous languages in Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. These territories have proclaimed some indigenous languages as part of their official languages. In that context, we agreed on the support of these indigenous languages. I think that indigenous organizations, and of course the territories, are extremely pleased with this new funding, which is \$17.8 million every year for indigenous languages.

I will have my deputy minister provide more information on these agreements.

Mr. Graham Flack (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): To give the scale, the existing funding for indigenous languages for the territories is \$3 million a year, plus the funding through Yukon, which is through self-governing agreements through INAC. With the new funding at a steady state, it will be an incremental \$8 million a year, plus an additional \$3 million through the self-governing agreements through Yukon. It's a very significant increase, well over double the current funding.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Thank you very much.

Mr. Van Loan, you have five minutes.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: As I was saying, there is this disconnect between the government's refusal to allow history and Confederation as themes of Canada 150 and what ordinary Canadians are doing in the communities. I went through a bunch of them.

It's happening in the private sector as well. Fitzhenry & Whiteside publishers are celebrating Canada 150 by profiling our books about Canadian history. Harbour Air Seaplanes in Vancouver has 38 Otters and Beavers. They are iconic in aviation and Canadian history. Some of them are being painted in special Canada 150 colours to show that. Moosehead Breweries has an advertisement on TV, "We are still pioneers", which shows a conveyor belt with bottles bearing labels all about Canada's history going by. CIBC is linking the bank's history to Canada's history. CP Rail has a transcontinental train initiative with 13 stops celebrating the first transcontinental train trip.

Then there's my favourite one. Clera Windows has this beautiful ad, "Even our founding fathers had beautiful windows. So can you! Happy 150th birthday, Canada!" Of course, it's the picture that we see up there that all of us know so well.

The private sector is doing it.

Another way in which the Liberal government has, I think, failed to honour the histories and traditions is the unfortunate decision to not have a medal honouring ordinary Canadians. We had medals in the Canada 125 year, in the Centennial year, honouring ordinary Canadians, and in the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation in 1927. Of course, there were medals in the Confederation year. That initiative, although well advanced under the previous government, was actually cancelled under the Liberal government.

People are stepping in. A lot of communities are going to have Canada Day celebrations where they honour their community leadership and give out awards. Bradford West Gwillimbury in my riding is one of them. In addition to communities like that, St. Francis Xavier's history department is starting a new tradition of issuing pins for their graduates in history.

Then believe it or not, you have the private sector stepping in with efforts to fill that gap. Molson is doing an initiative to seek nominations for significant community members across Canada. It's going to give 150 of them one of their red beer fridges.

There's a clear desire among Canadians to have that kind of recognition, but again, the Liberal government has failed by stepping back from it. Would you acknowledge that was a mistake and abandonment to the tradition that meant a great deal to Canadians? Is it something that you wish you had done differently if you could do it over again?

• (0930)

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Yes, of course, in the context of Canada 150, hundreds of companies are involved in supporting Canada 150. Maybe CN, maybe Le Creuset, maybe Canadian Tire. I really see that the private sector has been extremely involved, extremely interested in making sure that this celebration is actually celebrated by all parts of our society. That's great news.

I would like to continue to present other projects that are presenting our history. In the context—

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Perhaps you could answer the question. The actual question I asked was about the Canada 150 medals.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Van Loan, I would just like to continue to answer. You had your time.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: I would like you to start to answer about the Canada 150 medals. Time is short.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: I would like to talk about the different other projects. I'll get to the medals as well.

The National Film Board actually is also supporting different documentaries explaining our history. I'll give you a couple of examples. There's the documentary *Apocalypse 10 Destins* on the First World War. Also, there's a French version of *John McCrae's War: In Flanders Fields*. There's an important NFB project to talk about 40 years of history and culture in Labrador from Inuit communities, which is called *Unikkausivut - Sharing Our Stories*.

Also, there is "Legacies 150", a collection of 14 interactive pictures exploring the themes of heritage in the context of Canada 150.

There's going to be a co-production about Louis Riel that will be presented at the National Arts Centre. I'm convinced that my colleague Mr. Vandal will be interested in that in one. We're supporting it.

There's the very important documentary *La Grande Traversée*, which will be presented by CBC/Radio-Canada and which talks about the first French settlers in Canada.

I hope that all of you have received your beautiful pins with the Canada 150 emblem, which also present the copper from the roof of our Parliament. They're beautiful symbols that can be given to key leaders—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Just shorten it up, Madam Minister.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: —of your communities. I hope that my colleague Mr. Van Loan will take this opportunity to celebrate the leaders in his own riding and community in the context of Canada 150.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Did you want to answer the question in regard to—

Hon. Peter Van Loan: It's not part of the systems of honours in Canada, which of course is what all the other medals were. A pin is nice; there are all kinds of nice pins, but we were discussing the notion of Canada's systems of honours. What I'm seeing here is kind of a half-baked acknowledgement that, "We kind of made a mistake, but we don't want to admit it." It's the same as all your other admissions that, "Here are things we funded on history even though we've excluded it as a theme."

I'm simply asking you to acknowledge that it was a mistake to make those decisions in the first place.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): The only thing I would ask is if, before we move on, Ms. Joly wants to answer the question regarding the medallions that was asked.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Yes, I did answer the question, which is that, basically, we have a great opportunity, all MPs and senators, to celebrate the leaders and the leadership in our own communities based on the four themes, which of course I'm reminding you are youth, environment, reconciliation with indigenous people, and diversity and inclusion.

There are great, beautiful pins that have been developed with the copper of the House of Commons roof. This is a symbol. This will be a legacy pin. I really hope you share them with the key leaders in your communities. I'm convinced that people will be happy to see this important symbol.

Thank you.

• (0935)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Mr. O'Regan, your time will be split with Mr. Samson.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Minister.

I followed your visit to California closely, and I was impressed by the quality of the participants, the technological giants you met. Could you give us an account of your trip and tell us what is new regarding Canadian content?

I have another question, and the two are related. Recently, concerns were expressed internationally regarding Canada's position on the neutrality of the Internet. Could you explain your position on this important issue?

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you for the question.

I had the opportunity of speaking briefly earlier to the importance of cultural diversity in response to a question from our colleague Ms. Dabrusin. Why is cultural diversity important? In fact, Canada is a signatory of the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. At the time when the convention was signed, Canada was really the leader in the development of that concept, which aimed essentially to protect the various national cultural legislative and regulatory measures. One hundred and forty signatories adhered to this convention. It is the reference in all major agreements regarding international trade, such as CETA.

I want to include this concept in discussions with digital platform representatives. That is why I went to speak to Unesco. I also went to the World Economic Forum, to the G7 Culture Summit with the ministers of Culture, and to Silicon Valley to speak about the concept of cultural diversity in the context of digital platforms, in the digital universe. That was a first.

In my discussions with Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and the giant Google, which of course includes YouTube, I presented five important principles.

[*English*]

I talked basically with these digital platforms about what the social contract is on the Internet. For me, it includes five things: first, the diversity of voices; second, being able to support local content; third, access to trusted news sources; fourth, countering cyberbullying

online and hate speech; and fifth, fairness to creators, which we talked about with colleagues Nantel and Dabrusin. It was a very interesting discussion.

We have to keep leading on this discussion, because Canada is usually the first export market to the U.S. That's why we feel the impact of digital platforms before many other countries do. We need to be playing that leadership role, meanwhile developing a policy that is adapted to the digital age.

That brings me to your second question about the importance of net neutrality. What is net neutrality? It is being able to treat all data equally. It's treating data on the Internet like how we treat electricity. You aren't charged based on the light bulb you are using; you are being charged based on the electricity you're using in general.

That is based on an economic policy and a social policy. It is economic, because you want to make sure that the Internet is an open and free space for start-ups and businesses to be able to develop new business models, new projects, that will ultimately push innovation and create growth. That's extremely important. It's a social policy because the Internet is a tool to access knowledge. It's the most powerful tool in human history. As a government, we want to make sure that even people with less income are able to access data, notwithstanding their capacity to pay for content. That's why net neutrality is an economic policy but also a social policy, and we'll be defending it.

We don't see a contradiction between net neutrality and cultural diversity. We think that by having an open and free Internet, we can also have a diversity of voices, of choice. Ultimately, you can't have real choice if you don't have diversity.

• (0940)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Thank you for your five minutes and 20 seconds, Mr. O'Regan and Madam Minister.

I'm going to Mr. Samson, as he had a question he wanted to ask as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for your presentation, Madam Minister, and for updating certain files.

My question is brief, but it is important. It concerns court challenges.

The previous government cancelled the Court Challenges Program. I can say that minority communities lost a lot of ground because of that. I know you believe in it because you restored the program. Can you tell us why this is so important to you, and what you are doing to rebuild the Court Challenges Program?

Thank you.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you, Mr. Samson.

Of course, protecting language rights in Canada is a priority. That is why the Minister of Justice and myself announced that funding would be restored for the Court Challenges Program, to support both language rights and fundamental rights protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The objective was to stabilize the funding and adopt a broader, more general approach, and ultimately to support the groups that defend language rights. The purpose is essentially to ensure that the federal government and all of the governments in our country respect their obligations.

We feel that the Court Challenges Program is a logical extension of the protection of the language rights that are included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and are thus in the Constitution, and are also present in the Official Languages Act, a quasi-constitutional act.

That is why I had the opportunity of making that announcement. We are at this time finalizing the various details to implement the Court Challenges Program. I hope that the groups that advocate for official languages in Canada will be able to mobilize and get organized in order to promote and defend language rights.

Mr. Darrell Samson: They have the tools, now they have to act.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Exactly.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): I want to thank the minister and her staff for being here today.

We have a number of main estimates to vote on. I will ask the indulgence of the committee as to whether they want to go through the main estimates line by line or whether I have unanimous consent to put the question on the estimates collectively. Otherwise it's a line-by-line process.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): I see agreement.

Mr. Nantel.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: What is the rush? She's done.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): That's fine. There are two and a half pages of lines to go through if you want to do it line by line.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: That means we can let the minister go, though.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Oh, yes. Pardon me.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Thank you very much.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Minister and staff, thank you very much for being here.

We have unanimous consent to put the question on the estimates collectively.

CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Vote 1—Payments to the Council.....\$257,347,387

(Vote 1 agreed to)

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$1,076,202,798

Vote 5—Working capital.....\$4,000,000

Vote 10—Capital expenditures.....\$107,821,000

(Votes 1, 5, and 10 agreed to)

CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Vote 1—Operating and capital expenditures.....\$24,865,000

(Vote 1 agreed to)

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY

Vote 1—Operating and capital expenditures.....\$71,600,477

(Vote 1 agreed to)

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF IMMIGRATION AT PIER 21

Vote 1—Operating and capital expenditures.....\$7,820,000

(Vote 1 agreed to)

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE

Vote 1—Operating and capital expenditures.....\$32,515,112

(Vote 1 agreed to)

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$5,040,595

(Vote 1 agreed to)

DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$208,821,920

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....\$1,210,058,005

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to)

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$92,746,852

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$12,153,065

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to)

NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE CORPORATION

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$140,034,681

(Vote 1 agreed to)

THE NATIONAL BATTLEFIELDS COMMISSION

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$7,520,761

(Vote 1 agreed to)

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$67,590,380

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$24,304,870

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to)

NATIONAL FILM BOARD

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$74,375,345

(Vote 1 agreed to)

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

Vote 1—Operating and capital expenditures.....\$46,203,410

Vote 5—Acquisition of objects for the collection and related costs.....\$8,000,000

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to)

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Vote 1—Operating and capital expenditures.....\$144,527,796

(Vote 1 agreed to)

TELEFILM CANADA

Vote 1—Payments to the corporation to be used for the purposes set out in the
Telefilm Canada Act.....\$100,453,551

(Vote 1 agreed to)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Shall the main estimates
2017-18 less the amounts granted in interim supply carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Shall I report the main
estimates 2017-18 to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Larry Maguire): Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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