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Chair: Mr. Scott Simms



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• (1305)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.)): Welcome, everyone, this is the opening of our new study, but before we get to that I just wanted to say thank you. I understand that we're still waiting on one member, but we're going to start relatively on time. We've done our sound checks as required and now we're moving on.

Today we have two designated hours. The first hour is to launch our new study, and the second hour will be for committee business. Let's not forget that we have a different password for the committee business section. I can remind you of that again a little later, but for now we're all logged in and ready to go. Our study begins on challenges and issues faced by the arts, culture, heritage and sport sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As usual we start with departmental officials. We have with us today Madame H el ene Laurendeau, deputy minister of the Department of Canadian Heritage; David Dendooven, assistant deputy minister, strategic policy and corporate affairs; and Jean-St eph en Pich e, senior assistant deputy minister, cultural affairs. I hope I've done some justice to your names and not managed to foul this up, but I hope you will correct me in the subsequent round if necessary.

Just as a quick reminder to everyone, the way this works is that if you're listening to us on ParlVU, welcome along. We have three witnesses who will be given five minutes for their opening statements. The witnesses have provided the committee and the chair with a copy of their statements in advance. Thank you.

Following that, six minutes will be allocated for the first questioner and then each party as follows: in round one, we'll have the Conservative Party, Liberal Party, Bloc Qu eb ecois, New Democratic Party. For the second and subsequent rounds, we'll get to that when we get there. In the meantime I have a question for Madame Laurendeau.

Is that five minutes just for you, or would you like to share it minutes with the other witnesses as well?

Ms. H el ene Laurendeau (Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage): I will make the opening statement on behalf of the department for all of us and then we will be open to questions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

That being the case what I can do is that if you go over the five minutes, I'll be rather generous in policing it.

For the opening statement, Madam Laurendeau, the floor is yours.

Ms. H el ene Laurendeau: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to apologize for my technical problems. We will have those fixed for our future appearances.

[Translation]

I'm speaking to you from Gatineau, Quebec. I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional Algonquin Anishinabe territory.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for inviting us here today to talk about this important initiative—the COVID-19 emergency support fund for cultural, heritage and sport organizations.

The focus today is on the cultural, heritage and sports sectors, which collectively employ 750,000 Canadians, contribute \$61.9 billion annually to the national GDP, and whose products—arts, books, music and participation in sports—have provided Canadians with the comfort, community and sense of common identity that are so important in these turbulent times.

As you know, the cultural, heritage and sports sectors were among the first to suffer widespread closures, cancellations and associated losses due to the pandemic, and of course, public health guidelines, which imposed instantaneous containment on the entertainment and sports sectors from the outset of the pandemic. These sectors were among the first to experience the impact of the pandemic, and will likely be among the last to suffer. These sectors are already highly vulnerable, due to being overwhelmingly comprised of small-to-medium organizations, heavily reliant on not-for-profit models of operations. As a result, they have suffered severe damage.

Real GDP in the arts, entertainment and recreation sub-sector stood at \$7.3 billion in July 2020 against \$15.6 billion in February 2020. This is a decrease of more than 50% in just four months.

The total labour force in the performing arts, sports, entertainment and related industries decreased by 19.2% in September 2020 compared to September 2019.

The current situation demonstrates the fragility of sectors that are particularly vulnerable to the impact of this pandemic. Without financial assistance, many organizations would have ceased operations already, and many are still at risk.

• (1310)

[English]

As the pandemic unfolded, the government responded on April 17, 2020, when the Prime Minister announced \$500 million to establish a new COVID-19 emergency support fund for cultural, heritage and sport organizations.

Very quickly after this announcement, the department went on to design the fund to complement the government's existing COVID-19 support measures, the Canada emergency response benefit and the Canada emergency wage subsidy. The department designed this to make sure that gaps left by those benefits would be addressed.

The key principles, besides the emergency support funding, were that the funds had to flow as quickly as possible, as time was of the essence, that the process be streamlined wherever possible and that applicants who are not normally recipients of PCH program funding be included in the disbursement of funds.

The emergency support funding built on pre-existing measures announced on March 25 to simplify the process for submitting and processing requests for 2020-21 funding for the Canada book fund and the Canada periodical fund, which allowed eligible beneficiaries to complete applications and access financial assistance much more quickly than usual.

The department also accelerated the distribution of its regular funding to eligible recipients in order to provide support quickly.

[Translation]

The emergency funding began in May 2020, and was disbursed in two phases—a first phase took advantage of existing funding mechanisms to advance approximately \$307 million in temporary additional funding to recipients already benefiting from program funding, via a number of departmental funding programs and from the Canada Council For the Arts and Telefilm Canada.

Phase II funding was disbursed based on gaps identified after phase I, related to program coverage, diversity/equity and regional distribution—it included \$45 million for special measures in support of journalism under the Canada periodical fund, \$25 million for independent broadcasters investing in news and community broadcasts, and \$52.1 million to arts and culture organizations that were not previously eligible for funding from regular Canadian Heritage programs.

In the distribution of these funds, the department was able to rely on the support of its partners, in particular the Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm Canada, the Canada Media Fund, as well as FACTOR and Musicaction, for their assistance in distributing the funds through a streamlined process that facilitated the rapid distri-

bution of funding in a consistent and equitable manner across organizations.

Apart from the COVID-19 emergency support fund, the government supported broadcasters by flowing funding to the CRTC to enable the waiving of part I licence fees for the 2020-21 fiscal year. The government also earmarked \$25.7 million for national museums and the National Battlefields Commission to enable them to maintain their operations and offer some tours during the summer.

As the COVID-19 emergency support fund winds down, we are administering a survey to recipients of the emergency support fund to help assess the effectiveness of the funding in terms of financial relief, employment impacts and various social impacts. The results of this survey are currently being compiled.

Already, phase 1 COVID-19 emergency support fund recipients responded in high numbers to the survey and 77% of respondents said the fund helped them stay in operation to a large or moderate extent.

• (1315)

[English]

Just to wrap up and to give you an idea of the speed at which this all occurred, the Prime Minister made his announcement on April 17. Minister Guilbeault announced the launch of the program proper on May 8. Other measures I referred to were rolled out in parallel with the emergency support fund in the summer. Over 96% of the funding—which is \$482 million—was distributed by the government-wide deadline of September 30. The remainder will be distributed by December 31. We're talking about approximately \$18 million that is left to distribute between us and other partners.

The department is well aware that more needs to be done to support the sector during and following this pandemic. We are currently developing policy options regarding recovery. These options will be informed by the results of a series of 22 town halls and round tables that were conducted by Minister Guilbeault with stakeholders. These round tables occurred in September and October, and they highlighted the vulnerable state of the sector and potential areas to be acted upon going forward.

I'd like to thank the committee. This completes my opening remarks. I hope the sound was palatable. We would be happy to take your questions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Laurendeau, for that presentation.

Just before we get into it, folks, I have a couple of pointers.

Because our witnesses are not in the room itself—as a matter of fact, the vast majority of us are not in the meeting room—I have some advice. If there's a specific question to a specific person, please say that person's name before you ask the question. It sometimes can be a little awkward when we can't see who exactly we're talking to.

Otherwise, I can assume, Madame Laurendeau, that you will probably be taking the questions and referring them to your ADMs or senior ADMs if you so please.

That said, we're going to begin with Monsieur Blaney, for six minutes.

Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador are together for this meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Good afternoon, Ms. Laurendeau. I am happy to see you in this unusual context. I listened to your presentation and I heard you say that 96% of the announced amount had been disbursed. Congratulations. Perhaps it's a bit like the decor around you: it seems like you've been on a big construction site over the past few months. That's one way of expressing our appreciation, because the federal public service has risen to the challenge before it.

You mentioned that there have been two \$500-million announcements, one in April and a more concrete one in May. I had spoken with the minister and asked him for more details, as did my colleague Alain Rayes. I think that you have nevertheless succeeded in supporting the central agencies that are the usual partners of Canadian Heritage. Twice in your presentation, you mentioned that you had sought to broaden your support somewhat. You mentioned amounts, and I'd like to hear more about that.

For example, an organization in my riding, the Festival jazz etcetera Lévis, is a partner of Canadian Heritage. It was very pleased and grateful to be able to count on you. However, there are organizations that are not necessarily part of the organization chart or structure. How have you been able to help these organizations?

I'm going to ask my second question right now. You are indeed helping the core organizations, but the effects are not being felt in the communities. The consumer may not have seen them because of the cancellation of events.

How can we maintain cultural vitality and see its effects? Sometimes organizations raise funds, but their event does not take place and the funds are not used. How do you see this playing out?

In summary, can you talk about helping organizations that are not in your usual matrix, and then what happens next?

● (1320)

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Thank you very much, Mr. Blaney.

First of all, there are two things. As for unusual organizations, they were mostly small organizations, such as museums, but there were others as well. With the help of our colleagues at Shared Ser-

vices Canada, and building on the portal that had been created for the emergency funds at Human Resources Development Canada, we set up a portal for people to apply for the second phase. This allowed them to tell us who they were and how we could contact them to talk to them to determine what funding they were eligible for under the second phase of the \$500-million fund.

I would say we had a fairly high success rate. In fact, we've been able to make contact with organizations that were not covered by our regular programs.

With respect to other organizations and the work that needs to be done for the recovery, I'm going to ask Mr. Piché to share with you some ideas about the impact on the entertainment sector, both in terms of our emergency measures and the ideas we are considering following Minister Guilbeault's round tables.

With your permission, Mr. Chair, I'm going to give the floor to Mr. Piché.

Mr. Jean-Stéphane Piché (Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Deputy Minister.

Thank you for your very pertinent question. As you know, at the beginning of the pandemic, the first reflex was to help clients known to Canadian Heritage, that is, those who were already benefiting from its programs. At the beginning of the pandemic, we made GDP projections for each category of the cultural industry to see which ones would be most affected.

For example, we knew that the sector that encompasses the performing arts and everything else related to entertainment would suffer enormously. Some of these components were already clients of Canadian Heritage, while others were not. So our first instinct was to work with our known clientele and make sure the money came out quickly.

Very quickly, we identified communities or arts groups that were more vulnerable, such as those involved in live music performances. We support music production in the department, but we didn't have a program that supported live music venues. So in the second phase, we earmarked about \$20 million specifically for the live music sector.

Also, with respect to our existing client base, some of the organizations renew their applications for our programs from year to year, but not all are successful every year. In the second phase, we have therefore decided to provide additional support to those who did not get funding this year.

We have done the same by working with Telefilm Canada, the Canada Media Fund and the Canada Council for the Arts. All three have expanded the accessibility of programs to allow a broader group of stakeholders to participate.

I have only given you an overview, but there are examples in all areas.

• (1325)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

As a reminder to my colleagues, I'm fairly strict on time, but I will be lenient with witnesses who wish to go over time so they can complete their thoughts and testimony.

Mr. Louis, for six minutes, please.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here, and please thank your departments for stepping up. It's amazing to see the response from so many people in so many departments helping out Canadians. It truly was inspirational.

What I was even more proud to hear was how, when you talked about supporting our arts, you used the words consistent, rapid and simple, helping existing programs already with pipelines and helping people who weren't helped.

Monsieur Piché talked about the performing artists and how much they suffered immediately. I'll speak from experience, because until about a year ago, almost to the day, I had been a performing artist my entire life. Artists are used to being on the downturn—they're the first to be let go and the last to come back from downturns—but this happened all of a sudden and all at once. These are people who usually are self-reliant. There are a lot of self-employed and small businesses that just hustle in that gig economy itself.

These very artists are the ones we turn to. Everyone turned to these artists to get us through when we were in isolation. I know that besides my office being hit with many, many requests for support, my personal cellphone just exploded. I had a husband and wife who worked for the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony together and now all of a sudden entire seasons have been blown out, with musicians who have no place to perform.

Can you explain to me in simple terms how much the CERB helped artists, especially in that kind of an area where it wouldn't normally apply? Also, with regard to the wage subsidy, I've talked to a number of the smallest of theatres and brick and mortar places who said that maybe the stage was dark, but they were able to keep their staff online and look toward the future.

Can you explain how that helped the arts in general, before we even get into other programs?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Thank you very much for that very important question.

I will give a partial answer and I will turn again to Mr. Piché for the interplay between CERB and the wage subsidy.

What I should mention is that you will remember that very early on the definition for CERB eligibility really emulated that set for people who were eligible for employment insurance, which you know very well doesn't necessarily address very well the reality of

people who are self-employed or, as you mentioned in particular, in the gig economy.

We were very seized with that very early on and spent a fair amount of time explaining internally to our colleagues that it was very important that we either extended CERB or provided complementary measures.

I'm proud to say that we were successful on both fronts. We wanted to be very clear that all of the \$500 million should not overlap or duplicate the wage subsidy or the CERB, but should be complementary, with elements that would go to organizations to help maintain the employment of people as much as possible.

So we have two big pillars: the CERB and the wage subsidy. On top of that we designed the distribution of the \$500 million for organizations so they would have a little bit more and something more specific to their reality, particularly because they are, by and large, non-profit organizations that are supporting artists who are self-employed.

The way we did that was by requiring every applicant to attest to the fact that the funding would not duplicate either the wage subsidy or, in the case of individuals, the CERB.

Jean-Stéphén, do you want to add something?

He spent a lot of time on that, and I would like to congratulate him because he was the mastermind behind that idea.

Monsieur Piché.

• (1330)

Mr. Jean-Stéphén Piché: Yes, thank you, Deputy, and thank you, Chair.

The issue of flexibility was paramount. As you know, there were flexibilities introduced into CERB to allow classes of artists to have access, such that temporary workers were now eligible. The wage subsidy was hugely helpful. Even the business loans were helpful. But we were very clear in our parameters that we had to be consistent with those measures and could not duplicate the application of measures.

As the deputy mentioned, the issue of working on an attestation really fast-tracked things by adding flexibilities in the civil service to be able to manage this process without compromising accountability. That is always a tricky situation, but I think we have a very good story to account for. We have a record base; this is all a very much documented process. That has really helped.

I think the cultural organizations have appreciated that flexibility. CERB has helped a lot on the employment front. Our measures have helped to maintain the structural integrity of organizations as they were undergoing very difficult times, so that they will be ready when we discuss recovery issues are ready to “relaunch” the economy, as we call it, while not forgetting that throughout this period the creative sector has been extremely innovative in trying to provide artistic expression while the pandemic is taking place..

I think we've acted on multiple fronts and, of course, we're not the only actors in that. There have been contributions from the provinces and municipalities as well. They have contributed significantly also, so it has really been a joint effort.

Mr. Tim Louis: Thank you very much. I can assure you that the artists are ready to get out there as soon as possible. Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Louis.

Folks, I have a quick technical update. Because we had some technical issues at the beginning, we're going to extend this meeting from 2 o'clock to 2:05 Eastern time before we break to go into committee business.

Monsieur Champoux, please, for six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Champoux, you have six minutes.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I too would like to thank the witnesses for their availability.

The Department of Canadian Heritage has shown a real willingness to help artists, artisans and the cultural community during the crisis. Indeed, we must salute the speed with which you put the programs in place. You allocated \$500 million in assistance to them in two phases, as you explained. You also took advantage of the fact that there were already well-structured organizations in place to distribute the aid to the most affected sectors.

I would like to know how you made sure that the money that was distributed was disbursed in a structured and intelligent way, according to the needs of each sector.

Did you attach accountability requirements to programs and money to allow you to track the progress of the assistance that was delivered?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Thank you very much for your question. The simple answer is yes, but let me tell you more.

First, for the first phase, we have relied heavily on our existing programs, including the infrastructure of our existing contribution agreements. By maximizing existing authorities, we ensured that all accountability mechanisms were maintained. Of course, this has been quite straightforward for our larger partners, such as Telefilm Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts. However, even in the case of individuals, although we accelerated the process, we kept our control and accountability framework in place to ensure that it was going to apply.

You should also know that throughout the first phase, we were dealing with partners we knew and used to check periodically. So we were able to evaluate the cost of the applications fairly accurately, because we knew their financial situation very well. However, we still wanted to make sure, with respect to the attestations, that we were aware of some of the accountability elements that we don't control, that is, whether these same organizations had accessed other government programs, to avoid overlap, as we explained earlier.

It was the same for the partners we knew a little less. We still had the attestation in place and we did some checking before issuing payments to make sure that they were existing organizations that were entitled to operate in Canada.

Given the circumstances, because we built on our existing accountability structure and added certain measures to ensure that there was no overlap, I would say to you very humbly that I am confident that we are capable of ensuring accountability down to the last detail.

• (1335)

Mr. Martin Champoux: I know that you've helped the print media sector a great deal. These media outlets have received a significant amount of assistance. We know that they were already going through a fairly major crisis even before the pandemic. Regional media outlets in particular are dealing with the reality of advertising. This is obviously a major crisis. Local businesses can barely afford to buy advertising anymore, since many businesses are closed.

Last year, it was pointed out that the government invested almost \$52 million in digital advertising directly, or almost directly, through the GAFA group. This put small regional media outlets at a disadvantage. At the end of the day, the outlets were left with nothing but crumbs. You clearly wanted to review these practices.

During the pandemic crisis, have you had time to make some adjustments and to ensure that government advertising is placed more directly in regional media outlets, especially on their digital platforms, to prevent the web giants from becoming richer at the expense of our local media?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: I'll be perfectly honest with you. We've had to put a number of things on hold during the management of the pandemic. We've dedicated all our resources to the emergency funding. The reflection process hasn't been abandoned. Quite the contrary. However, if you ask me whether we're as far along as we could be, I can tell you that we aren't yet. Nevertheless, as we return to our usual activities, this reflection process is still taking place.

That said, government advertising is the responsibility of all the departments under Public Services and Procurement Canada and the Treasury Board. We're contributing to the reflection process. However, it would be misleading to suggest that the Department of Canadian Heritage could resolve this complex situation on its own.

The simple answer is that the reflection process remains ongoing.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I have one last quick question for Ms. Laurendeau.

A study is under way to assess needs based on the situation that you've observed in recent months. How much time do you think you need to assess the assistance required by the cultural industry?

In your opinion, how much time is needed to quickly implement assistance measures that exceed \$500 million?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: The work is being done.

Thank you for the question. I want to reassure you. The reflection process is ongoing.

As I said in my remarks, Minister Guilbeault has consulted extensively with stakeholders over the past two months. The department is developing options.

Of course, the Department of Canadian Heritage doesn't have control over all the investments. However, we're involved in the government's efforts to develop a number of options for recovery mechanisms. These mechanisms concern the arts, culture and heritage sectors, and also the amateur sports sector. We don't talk about it much, but the amateur sports sector has suffered as well. We've implemented some fairly special measures for this sector.

I can tell you that the work is being done as we speak.

• (1340)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. McPherson, you have six minutes, please.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for coming and sharing this information with us. It's very interesting.

I'm from Edmonton Strathcona. That's my riding. As many of you will know, it is sort of the heart of the theatre industry in Alberta. Certainly, we host the Edmonton fringe festival, which of course is the largest and oldest fringe festival in North America. In addition to the round tables that the minister did, I also did some round tables with theatre folks in my community. I was really impressed. They are very innovative. They've used technology to produce shows, and to find ways to have smaller live audiences that are safe, and to follow protocol.

But in every case, it was more of a way the artists saw themselves getting by or reminding audiences that they still exist. It's not a solution to their financial problems. It's not going to save these cultural organizations, of course. They're grateful for the funding they received through the COVID-19 emergency support fund, but

the funding won't be enough. We were initially planning on this going until maybe the fall. We're now looking at it going again into the summer and for who knows how long.

Will there be another round of emergency funding so that these theatre organizations can survive? If so, when, and can you show us any details about that?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: You are quite right that we are at the moment when many of the emergency measures are getting to their limits and the needs, particularly with the resurgence of wave two, remain. The dilemma right now is to determine whether we jump into the relaunch or maintain the current type of support. I am not in a position to tell you exactly when, but I am in a position to tell you that we are looking at those two sets of options. Do we need to reconduct this momentarily while we work on the relaunch, or do we actually have to jump and get into what would be the relaunch of the economy?

One thing that is clear for all of us is that the impact has not resolved itself, particularly since the capacity to gather publicly remains fairly limited and will be for a fair amount of time. That being said, though, as you mentioned and as we totally agree, we can trust creators to be creative. Elements of a new type of business are emerging that will probably sustain the test of time. They deserve to be looked at and supported as being different or as alternatives to the existing more traditional business models.

Collectively as a team, with David and Jean-Stéphen, we are quite aware of the fact that we will have to embed into these elements of relaunching the economy a space for those new business models that are currently emerging. It would be disappointing to see that innovation go backwards if we were to just try to recreate the status quo. I think the activity that we see demonstrates that there will be different alternatives to arts, and to arts business models, that will deserve our attention.

Ms. Heather McPherson: That brings me to my next question.

I appreciate what you're saying about innovative ways of doing things. We have seen these within the museum sector as well: they are now doing tours online and whatnot.

Museums, as you know, have been very hard hit. Will the museums assistance program be expanded to provide long-term funding to make sure that museums can pivot to provide different types of programming, and also to survive the pandemic—particularly those that are not the larger national ones?

• (1345)

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: All options are on the table. That's pretty much what I can tell you right now. I am not in a position to tell you specifically whether it will be a redirection or something else, but all options remain on the table.

I would add that the popularity of the museums assistance program in the form we experimented with throughout the emergency funding of phase two is something on that we will go back to the stakeholders on through our survey, once we have finished distributing the funds—which we have just completed—to find out what really worked and what would be of interest for the future.

I mentioned that we have surveyed the recipients for phase one, and we are currently in the process of surveying the recipients for phase two, which would capture the bulk of the recipients of the emergency funding through the museums assistance program.

You're quite right. A lot of very interesting innovation has occurred on that front that also supports....

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. McPherson.

We're now into our second round.

I believe Mr. Shields is in the room.

You have five minutes, please.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Thank you.

This is the second round. I'm assuming that will be all. Do we have time for a third round?

The Chair: I suspect not, given the time constraints.

Mr. Martin Shields: I will, then, split my time with Mr. Waugh.

The Chair: Do you want two and a half minutes each, or would you like to hand it to him yourself?

Mr. Martin Shields: I will do two and a half minutes, and I'm going to go quickly.

The Chair: Very good.

Mr. Martin Shields: Deputy Minister, it's great to see you.

I'm going to go quickly. I'm looking for some answers to questions that you can probably respond to later.

When you do later surveys on the building communities through arts and heritage program to find out what happened with the money, do you find that it basically just kept organizations alive, such as executive directors? Did it just keep the organizations alive, or where did the money go? In your follow-up, I hope you can find that information and are able to communicate that if the goal was to keep organizations alive, where did the money go? It would be great to find that out.

In regard to the Canada Council for the Arts, in the last Parliament a study was done, led by our colleague from Edmonton Centre, on where funds went in Canada. This is under Canadian Heritage. In Alberta, 50% less funding came in, under that study, which we ended. I would like to see, under this one, where the money went by province. I'm looking to you to supply that information for us.

The last question concerns funding streamed to arrest harms to local news production. This has been brought up, to some extent, by my colleague here in the room.

My print publication people tell me that if the government were to spend money in the print area rather than the digital, they could survive. Of the \$22.5 million, then, did it all go to print, or did the government spend money on social media and not print?

Those are the three questions I have for you. I'm sure you're going to have to go to find the answers somewhere else, but I would surely love to have them.

I really appreciate your being here. You are a good person whom we've had in our committees over the year, and we really appreciate your contribution to this heritage committee.

Thanks.

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Thank you for those three questions.

We have elements of answers. For the sake of time, I will ask Jean-Stéphen to cover the elements we have at our fingertips. We will undertake to provide you with what we can based on whatever we're not able to answer right away.

With your permission, I will turn to Monsieur Piché.

Mr. Jean-Stéphen Piché: On the first question, on BCTAH specifically—and this applies to all programs—we had very specific eligible costs, which could not derive much support from the regular programs of the department. These costs are not so much for administration as for fixed costs that the organizations needed to keep themselves alive. We can send you a list of our coverage of costs within that program. We'd be more than happy to do so.

Concerning representation, we can also send you the CCA representation breakdown by province, which is information that we have. I can't attest to the decline or rise, but around 6% or 7% of the funding from the Canada Council is attributed to Alberta.

I will caution on the overall numbers around representation. We could have a discussion just on that, but I will endeavour to find you the information.

• (1350)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Piché. I have to cut it there.

Mr. Waugh, you have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): I want to thank the departmental officials for coming, and for getting the money out as soon as you could. We still have \$18 million to send out in the next two months.

The first event that was cancelled was the Juno awards in my city, Saskatoon. March 15, a Sunday, was supposed to be the day for the Junos, and then everything collapsed on March 13.

The city lost more than \$9 million because it couldn't host the Junos. How is it going to recoup this money? It had put in over a year and a half of organization to host the Junos, and then the rug was pulled on the Friday night from this event.

I guess that question would go to the deputy minister.

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Thank you.

That is testament to the brutality of what happened when the pandemic came about.

To be perfectly clear, we do not offset lost revenue of that nature, at least not in the current state.

Are taking into consideration the recovery of costs that we have provided for various activities? We are. The department, however, does not directly fund the Junos per se, so those costs would not be captured in what we would be able to offset.

Jean-Stéphen, you know that system a bit better than I do. Is there anything else you want to add?

What you're describing is true of other activities that happened and of the brutality of the impact that was felt all across the arts and live music sectors and other endeavours of that nature. There were also sports events that suffered the same or a similar impact, particularly events that were in preparation for the Olympics that didn't happen. We don't have a contribution agreement to offset those impacts, at this stage.

Jean-Stéphen, do you want to add something very briefly, because time is of the essence?

Mr. Jean-Stéphen Piché: Yes. Thank you.

What has happened is absolutely tragic. Many festivals and cultural events were cancelled. There has been revenue loss across the board.

That is why a fund such as the music fund—the regular fund, \$36 million—was advanced early in the pandemic to help organizations and the industry itself find ways to address some of

those issues. From ESF, the emergency funds, \$32.6 million was given to the music fund, including to studios and also the live music environment, which as a grouping has at least helped keep that industry going.

That is not going to replace the losses for the event that was supposed to take place in your city, but we're trying to find ways to compensate through the support we give to the industry.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Piché.

Madame Bessette is next, for five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lyne Bessette (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for joining us and for their presentations.

As an athlete, I know the importance of a healthy lifestyle. I've been fortunate enough to participate in the Olympics. I know that many Canadians train daily to compete at high levels. As a result of the pandemic, many events have been cancelled. Despite this situation beyond our control, several organizations have been able to demonstrate innovation in hundreds of communities across Canada.

In my constituency of Brome—Missisquoi, the equestrian sports community has shown creativity in doing so. A four-star Olympic-level qualifying event was held this fall in full compliance with health measures. The equestrian community pulled together from coast to coast to hold the event. We must acknowledge the community's excellent work in terms of social distancing measures. The whole event was broadcast. This success story couldn't have happened without the government's support.

Ms. Laurendeau, can you tell us how Olympic organizations have been affected and how your department supports Canadian Olympic athletes?

• (1355)

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: Thank you, Ms. Bessette.

You're addressing a very important issue. Mr. Dendooven can get the figures for you while I respond. Our emergency funding for amateur sports served the same purpose as the funding for the arts, culture and heritage. To put it plainly, a percentage of the emergency funding was given to organizations. This funding was also allocated to sports organizations through our usual mechanisms and partners, such as the federations or the provinces we work with to distribute the money.

We also increased funding for the athlete assistance program. As you so rightly pointed out, the work of Olympic athletes is the work of a lifetime, which culminates in an Olympic year. The pandemic struck when these athletes were at their peak. The postponement by one year has resulted in a double cohort. We couldn't start separating the wheat from the chaff by telling the people who missed the Olympics that they could continue, but the people who hoped to reach the Olympic level that they would pay the price.

We increased the funding for athlete assistance to take into account the additional constraints caused by the pandemic.

In terms of amateur sports, we wanted to maintain and even increase the funding to ensure the sustainability of the organizations, once again. That way, when things pick up again, everyone will be ready to continue.

Mr. Dendooven, were you able to find the total amount of funding for athlete assistance?

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: In the meantime, perhaps I could ask another question. I had four questions, but I'll ask you the last one, because it concerns a matter close to my heart.

The World Anti-Doping Agency is responsible for the World Anti-Doping Code, which was updated in 2020. The new code will come into force on January 1, 2021.

Is the current pandemic slowing down the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport's process of updating the policies to ensure that they reflect the new international framework?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: I'll need to provide a written response regarding this matter. I don't think so, but I don't want to mislead you. I'll send a written response to the committee.

Mr. David Dendooven (Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Corporate Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Chair, I can report that we allocated \$72 million to sports.

As the deputy minister noted, the purpose of this funding is to help athletes and also sports organizations across the country, including the Canadian Olympic Committee, cover the costs associated with the postponement of the Olympic Games.

Mrs. Lyne Bessette: Perfect. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two minutes and 30 seconds.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In 2008, after the economic crisis, the marquee tourism events program, or MTEP, was established. This program gave the tourism industry a major boost in its recovery from the crisis. Given the economic issues that sponsors were experiencing, they were unable to contribute to the same extent.

We're currently in a similar, if not worse, financial situation. The industry really appreciated this program. A number of people would be very happy to see it come back or to see a similar program.

Would you consider this model as a way to revitalize the tourism industry, festivals and events that fit in with the MTEP at the time?

• (1400)

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: A variation on the same theme is currently being considered. This program is the responsibility of our colleagues at the Department of Industry and the department responsible for tourism. However, as the member who spoke before you said, the impact on cultural festivals and sporting events,

among other events, also affects the tourism industry and local economic activities.

I said earlier that all options were on the table. Of course, we're looking at things that have been done in the past and wondering whether these things could be considered in the future. I can't tell you whether this program will be revived. However, it's certainly part of our reflection process.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I have a quick question regarding the assistance, which will be redefined based on the data that you're collecting.

Do you plan to ensure that support is provided for the last links in the chain, meaning the artists, creators, craftspeople and freelancers, for example, who aren't organizations per se and who depend on contracts?

Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that they receive the assistance meant for them?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: This is an ongoing concern. At the start of the pandemic, this prompted us to work with our colleagues in other departments and to tell them that specific measures were needed for the arts, culture and amateur sports sectors, for the very reasons that you brought up.

The simple answer to your question is yes. This issue will remain a key concern. Will we accomplish this through a combination of accountability measures for organizations or through direct support? This is yet to be seen. However, I can tell you that this issue will remain a key concern.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Ms. McPherson, you have two minutes and 30 seconds, please.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to follow up a little on what my colleague from the Bloc just brought up.

Edmonton Strathcona of course is home to a number of festivals. The Edmonton fringe festival is one of them, but we also have the Edmonton Heritage Festival, the street performers' festival, the art folks. All of them weren't able to go forward, and all of them have deep impacts across the community in terms their effect on restaurants and shops and all kinds of things.

You have given us some information about this subject, and I appreciate it. I would, however, press very hard the point that these festivals are vital for so much economic and cultural response in our communities.

One question I want to ask concerns venues. We have a large number of performance venues, both for-profit and non-profit. Because there were a number of issues with the CECRA, the rent program, many of those venues weren't able to access it and had to close. We have heard that others who have been hanging on just trying to get through until spring are now worried that they are on the verge of shutting down forever.

Can you talk about how you are planning to help venues with the current restrictions? We're asking them to stay closed for safety reasons. How can we make sure they are protected?

Ms. Hélène Laurendeau: For the sake of time, I will jump right away to Monsieur Piché on this one.

Monsieur Piché.

Mr. Jean-Stéphen Piché: Thank you for the question.

There is no silver bullet on this question. We're sharing information with the Canada Council as well as our own program, the Canada arts presentation fund, to look at organizations that own their own venues rather than occupy other buildings. Of course, those who own venues have suffered much more, because in covering all of the costs and not being able to operate, they suffer far more.

The impacts of our emergency funding have been uneven from that perspective, because those who own venues have suffered much more. As you mentioned, the rent program has had some issues as well.

There is also a discussion of the ingredients you need for a restart and how we're going to do it. It's a discussion about what we need to maintain while the closures are going on in order to maintain the infrastructure.

The other part of the answer is in the stimulus component. What kinds of infrastructure do we need, and how do we build into it the adaptation component, if we have a pandemic that lasts longer than this one has? How can we do a form of re-entry? How can we build some adaptation features into infrastructure to make those organizations more resilient in the face of issues such as those we are living through right now.

• (1405)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Piché, and thank you, Ms. McPherson, and of course thanks to everybody.

I want to thank specifically Madame Laurendeau, Mr. Dendooven, and of course Monsieur Piché for coming in today on this wide topic. It's a big topic to grapple with in just one hour. Nevertheless, we appreciate your coming in and providing the answers. Of course, I'm sure you will follow up in the cases that you said you would. We appreciate it. Thank you.

Committee members, we're going to break now to go in camera. There is a technical process for doing so, and it may take some time.

I'm going to ask the clerk how we are notified to come back after we break.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Thomas Bigelow): Thank you, sir.

We'll ask the members who are logged into Zoom to log out of this meeting. It should take only a few minutes to get the next meeting set up. Give the clerks perhaps a minute or two to log in.

Then, please follow the instructions you receive by email to log in to the second meeting—perhaps just a moment or two after you log out of this meeting. We should be set up relatively quickly. We'll get to the testing and all of that once we're in that meeting.

The Chair: Okay.

So we can log in after we log out from here. Of course, that requires a second password, as you know.

The Clerk: Apologies, sir, but if I may, I'm being told by IT that members should wait five minutes before logging in, if that's okay.

The Chair: Okay.

It is now 2:07 there. How about we log back in at 2:12?

Okay, everyone. Let's suspend.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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