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REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
CROWN CORPORATIONS

Victoria

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

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JOHN RUSTAD, MLA, CHAIR

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**SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
CROWN CORPORATIONS**

Victoria
Wednesday, February 6, 2008

Chair: * John Rustad (Prince George–Omineca L)

Deputy Chair: * Guy Gentner (Delta North NDP)

Members:

- * Iain Black (Port Moody–Westwood L)
- * Ron Cantelon (Nanaimo–Parksville L)
- * Joan McIntyre (West Vancouver–Garibaldi L)
- * Dennis MacKay (Bulkley Valley–Stikine L)
- * John Yap (Richmond–Steveston L)
- Corky Evans (Nelson–Creston NDP)
- * John Horgan (Malahat–Juan de Fuca NDP)
- * Chuck Puchmayr (New Westminster NDP)

** denotes member present*

Clerk: Craig James

Committee Staff: Jonathan Fershau (Committee Research Analyst)

Witnesses:

- Tracey Herbert (Executive Director, First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council)
- Chief Tyrone McNeil (Chair, Board of Directors, First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council)

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MINUTES

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN CORPORATIONS



Wednesday, February 6, 2008
10 a.m.
Douglas Fir Committee Room
Parliament Buildings, Victoria

Present: John Rustad, MLA (Chair); Guy Gentner, MLA (Deputy Chair); Iain Black, MLA; Ron Cantelon, MLA; John Horgan, MLA; Dennis MacKay, MLA; Joan McIntyre, MLA; Chuck Puchmayr, MLA; John Yap, MLA

Unavoidably Absent: Corky Evans, MLA

1. The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.
2. Pursuant to its terms of reference, the Committee reviewed the First Peoples' Heritage, Language, and Culture Council.

Witnesses:

- Tyrone McNeil, Chair, Board of Directors
- Tracey Herbert, Executive Director

3. The Committee met *in camera* to consider its review of the First Peoples' Heritage, Language, and Culture Council and its draft report to the House.
4. The Committee met in public session.
5. **Resolved**, that the Committee adopt its draft report as subject to final edits by the Chair and Deputy Chair.
6. **Resolved**, that the Chair table the Report in the House as soon as practicable.
7. The Committee adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

John Rustad, MLA
Chair

Craig James
Clerk Assistant and
Clerk of Committees

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2008

The committee met at 10:08 a.m.

[J. Rustad in the chair.]

J. Rustad (Chair): I'd like to call this meeting of the Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations to order. First of all, I'd like to thank everybody for coming, particularly the witnesses, Tyrone and Tracey. I'd like to apologize for not being there in person. Unfortunately, there's a nasty cold going around, and it has made me unable to travel.

What I'd like to do is just outline a little bit about what our agenda is for today and then pass it over to members to introduce themselves and then have an opportunity for the witnesses to introduce themselves. Then I'm going to pass the meeting over to Chuck to chair, particularly for the question-and-answer period and going into the in-camera portion.

The meeting is to review the First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council — to review their service plan and the work that they've been doing — then to go in camera to do some further analysis of the council as well as to consider our draft report to the House, which is due when the House prorogues here, coming up on the 12th of February. After that, we'll adjourn from being in camera and go into any other business.

With that, my name is John Rustad. I'm the MLA for Prince George–Omineca and the Chair of Crown Corporations. I'll leave it up to the committee members to introduce themselves.

I. Black: My name is Iain Black. I'm the MLA for Port Moody–Westwood.

R. Cantelon: Ron Cantelon, MLA for Nanaimo-Parksville.

J. McIntyre: Joan McIntyre, MLA for West Vancouver-Garibaldi.

D. MacKay: Dennis MacKay, the MLA for Bulkley Valley–Stikine.

J. Yap: John Yap, the MLA for Richmond-Steveston.

J. Horgan: John Horgan, MLA, Malahat–Juan de Fuca.

C. Puchmayr: I'm Chuck Puchmayr, MLA for New Westminster.

J. Rustad (Chair): Maybe we could now have our guests introduce themselves, and then we'll turn it over to them for an opportunity for their presentation.

[1010]

T. McNeil: *Ey latelh si:ya:m el si:yo:ye.* Good morning, everyone. *Yalh yexw kw'as hoy ey kwe'se xwe'i.* Thank you for the invitation to be before you today.

Yalh yexw kw'as hoy ye mekw xwelmeqw Esquimalt qas Songhees ey kwe'se xwe'i te xaxa Temexw tlo'wayel. I'm just giving thanks to my relatives the Songhees and the Esquimalt for having us within their territory and recognizing whose territory it is today.

Yo:ya:stel tel skwix. Telitsel qwa Sq'ewqel. Tsel cha Stó:lo. My name is Tyrone McNeil. I'm a tribal chief of the Stó:lō Tribal Council. Hence, I'm Stó:lō by birth. I'm currently chair of the First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council.

T. Herbert: *Weyt-k.* Tracey Herbert. I'm from St'uxwtews, otherwise known as the Bonaparte band, in the interior of British Columbia, part of the Shuswap Nation.

I have the privilege of residing in the Songhees and the Esquimalt territories. I love it here in Victoria. I've been here since '98 and haven't gone back. I have the privilege of being the executive director for First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council and have been now for four years.

C. Puchmayr: The gentleman doing the presentation?

A. Wadsworth: I'm Alex Wadsworth. I'm the First Peoples techie. I'm here to run the presentation.

C. Puchmayr: All right. You may begin.

First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council

T. Herbert: As I said, I am Tracey Herbert, the executive director for First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council, and I have the privilege of working with Tribal Chief Tyrone McNeil, who is the chair of our board of directors.

I'll just pass it over to Tyrone. We're going to tag-team this presentation and do different pieces.

T. McNeil: We have a PowerPoint presentation on the screen, and you should have it in your package as well. We'll walk you through the presentation. It's our hope that we've developed and presented this in such a way that it properly responds to why we're here before the standing committee this morning.

It's good to be with you today to help you better understand the work of the First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council and our progress in fulfilling our mandate. The image on this slide is from a print by Richard Hunt called *Gathering of Elders*. It represents all the B.C. first nations coming together to talk about revitalizing our languages and cultures. It reflects the mandate of First Peoples.

I'll kind of bounce back and forth between First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council, which is really long, and First Peoples and First Peoples Council. They're all speaking of us.

Here's a road map to help guide you through our presentation today. We'll get into detail on each of the main areas. First Peoples Council is a first nations-

governed Crown agency. It was established in 1990 through legislation designed to protect B.C. indigenous languages, arts and cultures from extinction.

Briefly, our mandate is to provide funding to cultural and language programs; to support and advise government and first nations leadership on initiatives, programs and services related to first nations arts, languages and cultures; to provide services and resources for revitalization of B.C. first nations languages, arts and cultures; and to advocate for those B.C. first nations languages, arts and cultures.

In other words, the council provides funding to first nations communities to achieve their dreams for language, arts and cultural revitalization while developing partnerships for resourcing and common understanding. The First Peoples Council has an advisory committee which is the base of the governance model and is made up of representatives from tribal councils in B.C., who come together once a year at the AGM.

However, not all first nations are represented as not all first nations are members of tribal councils. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation appoints three members to the board of directors, who are usually first nations representatives, and appoints another nine people who have been recommended by the advisory committee. The advisory committee is comprised of the 24 tribal councils.

British Columbia is home to over 60 percent of Canada's indigenous languages. Our stakeholders are the 203 indigenous communities throughout the province, which is about one-third of the indigenous communities nationally, all trying to undertake their own small language initiatives with limited resources stretched between many different communities and language groups.

[1015]

We consider that every language is of equal importance and encourage all language groups to access the funding we administer. While language documentation is the most important pursuit, as mandated, First Peoples Council also supports arts and culture organizations and individual artists. Our diversity is our strength.

Now I'll ask Tracey to explain in more detail the specific programs and services.

T. Herbert: This is a list of our programs and services. I'll go into detail on each one for you.

The B.C. language initiative is one of our main programs. In '06-07, which is the annual report that we are going over, we received 78 funding requests totalling \$1.7 million and provided a little more than \$900,000 for 47 projects across British Columbia. So 119 B.C. communities were served, and 22 of those first nations communities were receiving language funding for the first time. There were 31 projects that could not be funded.

This program provides the funding for communities to do initiatives like curriculum development, archiving, teaching and special projects bringing elders in to teach in various immersion environments.

The aboriginal language initiative comes from the Department of Canadian Heritage, and it represents 1/10 of the funds distributed to the province, even though

60 percent of aboriginal languages are here in British Columbia. This funding amount has not changed in seven years. Again, it is a special initiative that supports community and regional projects to maintain, revitalize and promote their languages.

In '06-07 we received 45 proposals totalling \$470,000. We were able to provide \$209,000 for 21 projects. Again, that's the federal initiative, which we administer.

FirstVoices is a set of web-based language tools and services developed for indigenous people by indigenous people. This project originated in a small first nation on Vancouver Island, and with the support of the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and the Department of Canadian Heritage, it blossomed into a worldwide initiative.

In 2006-07 access, training and support services were provided in seven new British Columbia communities, bringing the total of B.C. aboriginal languages documented to 26. Funding for this was provided through partnerships with NetWork B.C. and the First Nations Technology Council. We were able to leverage their contributions into a \$250,000 grant this fiscal year, in '07-08, from the new relationship trust.

Two recent FirstVoices developments include the ability to download language to an iPod and an interactive language tutor system. FirstVoices is gaining international attention. As one example, we were invited to present FirstVoices as a model of indigenous language protection at the world forum on technology in Botswana last year.

Currently we have trained 200 B.C. language champions. We're in the process of documenting 26 B.C. languages. We're not finished documenting 26 languages. It's going to take a few years to have complete documentation.

There are 42 software keyboards that are downloadable and available on line. Anyone can access those. It's just a fantastic tool for writing in the language. This fiscal year we have 18 first nations archives under development.

This is just an example of some of the things that are available on the on-line tool: community portals, which are just like a community-based website; alphabet sheets; dictionaries; phrases; stories, songs and games, both for preschool and older children; grammar; punctuation; and teacher resources. In some months we see about 350,000 hits on our website.

[1020]

Firstvoiceskids.com is a complement to FirstVoices. It's a set of language activities developed especially for pre-readers. The FirstVoices Kids interface is low on text and rich in multimedia to provide access to language content for young children. FirstVoices Kids provides an example of how a new resource developed under contract to the Health Canada Head Start program can result in an excellent tool through a partnership.

Head Start wanted to provide access to language resources to their growing client base of young indigenous Canadians. Once developed, the resource immediately became available to young learners everywhere.

This shared access to a new FirstVoices feature makes for a cost-effective way to focus on developmental dollars to maximum benefit for all. Anything that

we develop on this dynamic web-based tool is also then available to any of the other bands and communities that are already using it.

This is just showing the interactive audio dictionary. The children react better to the pictures instead of the text. The picture dictionary collection for one language archive was developed by a 14-year-old girl who recorded her six-year-old brother with the support of her parents, who are linguists. This young language archivist proves the capabilities of the younger generation to develop excellent quality language-learning material.

This quote is an example of the kind of feedback we get that encourages us to continue this important work. We recently got this e-mail that says: "Thank you for the children's songs and stories that were recently added to the FirstVoices website. My granddaughter and I have added these to our Kwak'wala play. You are doing such important and good work."

FirstVoices crosses the border. In 2006-07 we reached an important milestone in the expansion of FirstVoices across B.C. FirstVoices offered language documentation service on request to Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia, California and the Yukon. This required no B.C. funding. Each jurisdiction paid a fee for the services, and this much-needed funding helped us to expand FirstVoices, as we do not have permanent funding for the FirstVoices program.

The aboriginal development awards. We deliver this program through a longstanding partnership with the B.C. Arts Council and a strategic investment from the 2010 Legacies Now for organizational development. This program assists artists and arts organizations with professional and artistic development. In 2006-07 we received 70 proposals for over \$742,000. Forty recipients were awarded, for a total of \$298,000. This program benefits individual artists, collectives, groups and also organizations like cultural centres.

This is just an example of some of the work that is sent in by the artists that receive support from the program. We have a large network of B.C. and aboriginal artists. We have an arts coordinator who provides referral and a map to the resources that we have and all resources related to arts and culture in B.C. and Canada. This past year we responded to an identified need and provided an arts outreach program and workshops throughout the province.

The aboriginal arts and cultural mapping initiative is a key component of our art outreach activities. It has proven to be a very positive experience for those who have taken part. Cultural mapping involves a community identifying and documenting local cultural relationships and resources, then initiating a range of community activities or projects to record, conserve and use these elements. Cultural mapping helps communities recognize, celebrate and support the cultural diversity for economic, social and regional development. It's really focusing on the resources we have and how to best use them.

Strategic plan for languages. This was developed by the First Peoples Council and the First Nations Education Steering Committee. The strategic plan for

languages recognizes that language loss is not a natural phenomenon. If this knowledge is lost forever, it is lost not only to first nations but also to B.C. and to the world.

[1025]

The strategic plan has six goals: to ensure that no B.C. first nation language becomes extinct; to access sustainable financial resources to support local plans for language revitalization; to collaborate within and among language groups in B.C. so resources are used efficiently; to develop the capacity to teach our languages to all first nations people, including those living off reserve; to have first nations languages used fluently and to be visible in every aspect of community life; to receive local, provincial and federal acknowledgment of the value of first nations languages as the original languages of B.C.

In summary, the First Peoples Council supports communities and organizations through capacity-building, resources and training to help them succeed in their language, arts and cultural revitalization projects. We make the playing field as level as possible by reaching out in person and on line to those who have not been successful with their applications. We help our partners to learn how to develop winning proposals and, in some cases, where to find other funding. Finally, the First Peoples Council shares its expertise by offering advice, consultation and referrals on first nations arts and culture matters to government, to leadership of first nations and to non-first nations organizations.

T. McNeil: The First Peoples Council is contributing to the B.C. government's goals by promoting and supporting fluency and literacy in first nations languages and by promoting the connection between cultural recovery and the ability for rejuvenated communities to reclaim their financial and social independence, leading to new jobs and growth and improved quality of life.

Revitalizing first nations communities, languages and cultures leads to community healing and improved support systems for families, resulting in a better quality of life, including educational opportunities and development of special skills through improved literacy, use of technology and e-learning, complementing sustainable land management involving first nations territories through integration of language, culture and land-based knowledge.

The First Peoples Council also contributes to the new relation goals by documenting B.C. first nations languages; funding community projects to assist language champions and cultural advocates in providing programming; advocating for resources for communities for arts, culture and language preservation and revitalization; supporting and facilitating the transfer of traditional knowledge and the documentation of language and cultural information; supporting local experts in identifying land use, resource use and traditional laws and in sharing and documenting traditional stories related to those traditional lands; working with communities to ensure that the first nations arts,

culture and heritage are preserved and revitalized, especially through language programs to increase fluency and through the support of first nations arts and arts organizations, including the creation of advocacy tools.

Our shareholders' letter of expectation instructs the First Peoples Council to preserve, restore and revitalize first nations heritage, languages, arts and cultures; to increase understanding and sharing of knowledge within both the first nations and non-first nations communities; to heighten the appreciation and acceptance of the wealth of the cultural diversity amongst all British Columbians; to provide funding to B.C. first nations for arts, cultural and language programs; to create new initiatives, programs, resources and services related to first nations heritage, language, arts and cultures; to advise government on the preservation and fostering of first nations heritage, language, arts and cultures; and to work in partnership with first nations communities to revitalize and achieve first nations culture and languages and restore literacy and fluency in first nations languages to ensure that no first nation language becomes extinct.

T. Herbert: I'm going to now take you through a summary of the service plan and annual report. Certainly all the detail that's in the service plan and annual report isn't reflected on the PowerPoint, but we did our best to try to summarize all the work we're doing.

One of our key objectives is to create awareness of the issues relevant to first nations language, arts and culture in B.C. Our accomplishments were to develop hundreds of new references and links added to the website. In one month we had 55,000 hits and 492 downloads. So many people are using that as a main resource. Community people, researchers and people around the world that want to learn more about first nations are using that website.

[1030]

We're using technology to create awareness of the issues around first nations languages, arts and culture. We have the website; we also have our e-mail network. We have been distributing newsletters, and of course we do use our annual reports and service plans to advise B.C. first nations leadership and communities about what our plans are and what we're up to. We also have developed an on-line map of first nations languages and are currently collecting data on first nations arts, cultures and also the local champions — wanting to feature them on the maps.

Continuing with that objective of creating awareness. In order to maximize our resources and reduce duplication, we have a strong policy of collaboration with other organizations that are doing similar work. We've collaborated with the B.C. Arts Council, the B.C. Association of Friendship Centres, the provincial youth conference and the Indigenous Arts Service Organization, which develop mini-festivals around the province.

We also co-facilitated a mapping cultural ecology workshop at the National Aboriginal Arts Administra-

tors Gathering. In the previous year we in fact hosted that gathering. It was the first time that an aboriginal organization had hosted that National Aboriginal Arts Administrators Gathering, so we were quite proud of that.

We are also involved in planning the Victoria International Arts Symposium and encouraged aboriginal participation in that. We have a very close and ongoing partnership with FNEESC. We have regional conferences biannually with them for language champions and teachers.

Our second objective is around delivering funding to communities and to developing strategies, tools and resources to support the revitalization of B.C. first nations arts, culture and languages, including the development of fluent speakers.

Our accomplishments. We take a look at how many proposals we receive and if we're having an increase in those. We also have a whole needs assessment process with our applications, which allows us to collect data on the current status of the languages in the communities that do apply. Also, we do track new groups and try to encourage areas that haven't previously applied to apply.

We are constantly responding to the needs of the communities by consulting with our experts in the communities through meetings and conferences. We are also recording, again, the information through our granting process. Really, when we look at the number of communities benefiting, it's over a hundred a year. A project may cover multiple communities.

We're doing our best to carefully track the new groups applying, as it demonstrates our capacity-building efforts. We encourage proposals from communities that have not previously applied.

For our annual reports and our service plans, we're always trying to tighten up our goals and performance measures. For '07-08 we wanted to look at a target measure of improving the quality of proposals and also to start to measure the increase in the number of fluent speakers and to track the number of learners that are engaged in the projects.

Also new for '07-08 will be the targets for FirstVoices. We want to expand the archives by ten new archives, 70,000 new data entries — these could include audio or text — and also to increase the number of communities working together across the nation versus the fragmentation of first nations in the same language group not working together.

Again, for the objective to deliver funding to develop strategies, tools and resources. We have many communities that are developing language resources, including language curriculum, textbooks and dictionaries. We have a website with a language and arts toolkit that demonstrates the resources we have developed. Also, we have collected numerous resources. Communities and other language champions are very generous in sharing their materials and allowing us to put them on the toolkits.

We have tutorials for our application process and reporting forms and samples of proposals. We really feel it's not enough just to distribute funds. If we want

successful projects, we need to provide staff supports and tools.

[1035]

We have had two reviews of our program that aren't noted in the report. We had the first peoples language funding program review from 2000 to 2005, and we've done our best to implement the recommendations of that. We also did a review of the Aboriginal Arts Development Awards, and we're working really hard to implement the recommendations from those. For example, the AADA review made a recommendation to increase the funding, so we have done that. We have successfully been able to increase the funding by \$100,000.

Also, the outreach request came from that consultation. It was felt that a lot of the northern regions needed more outreach and information. Also, to formalize our network and to develop more promotional material for that program.... A lot of people know us for our language work, but they don't know what we're doing in arts and culture so much.

Again, these targets that you see here are around capacity-building. We're trying to shift from projects to planned development. We're encouraging communities to work across nations to develop long-term plans for the revitalization of their languages and cultures. Project data is tracked for accountability and reporting purposes. The website also tracks which tools are being downloaded.

For the language program, again, the recommendations that came out of the review that we have worked on are the networking. We've had a few more opportunities to bring people together to network around strategies for language revitalization. We've also developed more support materials, and we were successful in this fiscal year to have a special grant of \$1 million. Most of that went out to the communities. So we're very happy for that.

Training and mentoring is also another recommendation that we've been working on.

Objective 3, "Secure Sustainable and Stable Funding for the Revitalization of First Nations Arts, Cultures and Languages." We have increased cost-sharing for projects. The recipients of the language grants contributed up to 25 percent of their budgets for the projects in services, cash or infrastructure, and this comes to a value-added of about \$280,000 for '06-07. So communities themselves are contributing and are our partners.

Also, we received money from the 2010 Arts Now to cost-share the organizational capacity fund. This allows organizations to build their own capacity and strategic plans, to hire someone to write proposals in order to bring more money into their programs.

In this fiscal year, '07-08, we were also able to use the funds that the new relationship trust gave us, which was \$1 million, to then leverage another \$900,000 for language programs. So that was a wonderful incentive for us, and I think we did quite a good job of that.

The building feasibility study that you see there was announced by Premier Campbell at the First Citizens Forum on education and language, and it is completed. This year the steering committee for that has developed some very exciting plans to take the

next steps for the project. We'll keep you posted on that. That project is looking at providing some infrastructure for our organization in order for us to meet the full scope of our mandate.

Objective 4. We wanted to raise the profile of our organization to increase opportunities for leadership partnering and collaboration. We took a communications approach to that. We have a number of audiences. One of them is our advisory committee. We developed a communications package for them, and they committed to making presentations within their communities. So they're a key link for us directly to first nations communities.

We also developed a comprehensive communications plan, which will include MLA kits, and we're going to be sending those out to you and your colleagues in a month or so. But you've got a good head start there with your packages.

Much of this information and many of our publications are available on the website, but we do, for those communities that might not have access to the Internet, ensure that we do a lot of mailouts and provide information on a regular basis. We also like to report back to first nations leadership.

[1040]

Some other programs that we've had.... Raising the profile of the organization. A key accomplishment for us — I'm not sure if many of you know about it — was the three-year collaboration with the Vancouver Opera for *The Magic Flute* production. That production was set in a first nations Coast Salish setting. It also incorporated Hul'qumi'num language. Many first nations artists were able to work on the project, and it was just an overall great success.

We're also an adviser to the B.C. Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art and described our processes and worked very well with them. We also have been advising with the National Film Board of Canada, who are very interested in creating new first nations film-makers and providing opportunities for them.

We have a memorandum of understanding with the B.C. cultural centres and are always trying to work collaboratively with stakeholders doing similar work. We have a partnership with the Ministry of Education and NetWork B.C. on some web-based projects.

Our objective 5 is to further develop First Peoples as a strategic, results-based organization. We have developed systems for tracking projects and application process. Reporting these assists us to report back to our funders how funds we receive are used. We report on time, and I can say with confidence that we are in good standing with our funders. Organizations — such as the new relationship trust, the National Film Board, and we were recently approached by Royal Roads University — are now coming to us for an opportunity to partner.

We are always seeking feedback on our administrative processes and our programs from the peer review committees, which make the decisions around the funding; also our advisory committee, who are representatives from first nations communities; and at conferences and meetings.

The First Peoples Council measures our performance management through formal program reviews. I mentioned those two reviews that we've done on the AADA program — the Aboriginal Arts Development program and the language program. These are conducted by independent experts. The policy committee reviews the board, administration and program policies annually. We have ongoing feedback from our advisory committee. We have the collection and analysis of statistics on client use of services. We also have focus groups, when funds allow, and annual performance reviews.

I touched on some of these already, but with the financial support of the new relationship trust and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, in 2007 the First Peoples Council is supporting four new programs identified by first nations as priorities through the language strategic plan that we developed with FNECS, the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

The first is language and cultural authorities to certify speakers, review curriculum, create new vocabulary, address orthography issues and develop long-term language and cultural revitalization plans. The second is language and culture camps where first nations families, elders, youth and children are immersed in their languages and cultures. Third is languageness or immersion environments to help preschool children and their parents to become more fluent in their original languages. The fourth is a master apprentice program where elders partner with committed learners in developing fluent speakers of B.C. first nations languages. These are very new programs, and we're very excited about them.

Our challenges? Our focus has been primarily language revitalization, and there is some urgency to do this work. We have a limited window of opportunity. We recognize the urgent need to document and archive language knowledge before our fluent speakers — our elders — are gone. Already eight of B.C.'s 40 first nations languages are extinct. There are no remaining fluent speakers. The other 32 are endangered, and time is running out. There are thousands of endangered cultural practices and traditional art forms unique to British Columbia and found nowhere else in the world.

[1045]

We didn't receive a planned increase in federal government funding, but provincial ministries have come to the table. There's been a lot of interministerial investment helping us out.

There remains a prevailing lack of knowledge and understanding among the public about first nations arts, culture, language and heritage revitalization and a lack of first nations management of our cultural resources.

Our growing success is straining our operational capacity to meet the demands of first nations communities and stakeholder organizations.

Communities have entrusted First Peoples Council with their cultural material, and the council has built an international reputation with the FirstVoices program without ongoing funding support. The viabil-

ity of this program is in jeopardy from year to year. I'm referring to the FirstVoices program.

Partners who have worked with the council to date on strategic initiatives desire to move forward with concrete plans for real and lasting change and results.

The opportunities. Although we have challenges, we have many opportunities that encourage our work and our passion for success. The 2006 Premier's First Citizens Forum identified priority areas for investment — areas that align with the B.C. strategic plan for languages and that present opportunities for further support and collaboration with the First Peoples Council. The new relationship trust is providing additional funding this fiscal that we have allocated to FirstVoices, to the B.C. language initiative and to the four new programs.

Increased usability and availability of technology have made recording of cultural knowledge accessible and efficient, even for the smallest of communities.

We are aware that there are increasing numbers of first nations individuals and organizations with skills and experience in first nations arts, language and cultural revitalization who can provide role models, leadership and technical expertise. We have the unanimous and welcome support from the B.C. first nations leadership. We have the experience and skills to provide leadership and to increase collaboration with partners with diverse stakeholders.

Planning is underway to increase our capacity through enhancements to staff and operational funds. We also recognize that the potential exists for us to lead at a national and international level by modelling innovation and best practices in culture and language revitalization.

This chart for the 2006-07 year demonstrates our funding sources. You can see that most of our funding for this year came from the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. This year was very special because we did get an additional \$1 million grant. In comparison, this current year we have more funding coming from other sources, and MARR is contributing about 40 percent, which is still very good. I believe the total revenue is \$2.9 million for '06-07.

In the area of expenditures, the bulk of our funds is in language programming. Most of the money goes out to communities in the form of grants. We are doing our best to keep our overhead low while providing administrative and community development support for our programs to be successful. For the language program, about \$1.2 million was spent. In comparison, for the arts program, which was also a very good year, it was \$490,000, in comparison to the previous year, which I believe was around \$170,000.

First Peoples Council currently employs nine full-time people. I believe that in the fiscal year that we were talking about, before FirstVoices came over to the council, we had seven staff. Seven of the staff are first nations. Each feels a significant dedication to all of the communities we serve. First Peoples Council is seen as an aboriginal employer of choice.

The two staff that we have who are not aboriginal have been given native names by the Nuu-chah-nulth in recognition of their work with them.

T. McNeil: The First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council is an enduring organization. With the support of the provincial government, we've existed for 17 years. During that time, dedicated and committed staff and boards of directors have developed a reputation of professionalism that has helped the council achieve great things with limited resources.

We are working toward a future in which First Peoples Council is the go-to organization for information, support and advice for government, first nations, business and funding agencies on matters of aboriginal languages, cultures and arts.

[1050]

The First Peoples Council is committed to ensuring that no more B.C. first nations languages go extinct. It is vital to first nations, to the province and, indeed, to the world. We work with dedication because our mandate impacts the quality of life for first nations in B.C. and protects the future of first nations access to arts, languages and cultures. We are working to revitalize not only the languages of first nations in British Columbia but to revitalize the cultures, and that includes languages, arts, heritage and cultural practices. This revitalization can build from the past to a stronger future and has the potential to be a major contributor to reconciliation in every corner of British Columbia.

First nations across British Columbia sincerely appreciate the support provided by the Premier and the government. I'll read this quote by the Premier. "Let us not take timid and tentative steps. Let us take bold and decisive actions to bridge the gaps that have left aboriginal people behind for far too long. Let us seize this promising moment in our history to claim the full promise of Canada for all Canadians — aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike."

Now if you have any questions, we'd be happy to answer them. Thank you for your kind attention.

C. Puchmayr: Thank you for your presentation. We have a speakers list. I see John Horgan's hand up now. I'll take names for the questions. We'll start with John.

J. Horgan: Thank you very much, Tracey and Tyrone, for the presentation. I tapped her on the shoulder before we started and made reference to the Koksilah Elementary in the Cowichan Tribes area and the language program that they have started there and how successful it has been.

There was a large meeting last night in my constituency at the school. It was quite moving for other members to hear elders speak of their relationship with public schools through the residential school process and what they had to endure and to see not their children but their grandchildren reviving their language and to hear some of the middle parents — our generation — talking about learning their language from their children and their elders at the same time.

So I believe this is a tremendous time for hope and optimism with respect to your languages and first peoples languages. Yet, we have a situation in my community where those language programs may be in jeopardy.

I'm wondering if you could explain to me how your entity interacts. You made reference to the Ministry of Education in your presentation. What's that relationship? Is there funding involved? Is it in an advisory capacity? How do you interact with the Ministry of Education with respect to language programs in the public school system?

T. Herbert: We have approached the Ministry of Education, and I do have one partnership project with them. It's the web-based on-line mapping project that we are developing. In terms of funding, communities that are supporting and working with public schools in developing curriculum are eligible to apply for our programs.

I do also believe that through enhancement agreements there is funding available for first nations languages. But from what I hear from our language champions, it is very much a struggle to have very effective and ongoing first nations language programs in schools just because it's always a challenge to have all the money that you need for schools, and it's one area that is seen as sort of the icing on the cake. You sort of have to have all your basics, and then if you have all those, you can bring in a language program. But I have talked to teachers, and some of them are volunteering in order to keep programs going, or they find themselves in a situation where they're only allowed to do maybe one day a week.

The program you're describing sounds like it was quite comprehensive, and teachers were coming in on a regular basis and doing quite a bit of work.

[1055]

We do have some examples of reserve-run schools which are actually focusing on immersion. Chief Atahm is one of them. They do a lot of their own fund-raising and are an independent school, and they are focused primarily just on immersion and will be, I think, expanding their program. They do the elementary years, I believe, from kindergarten to grade 7, and now they're going to be looking at expanding that program into high school.

They are also very challenged to find the funds to have that program on an ongoing basis. It's a yearly struggle to apply for money and run that program.

T. McNeil: But in terms of directly to that school, we have nothing in place right now that would really allow us to respond in any way, whether it's advocacy or support or resources. We don't have anything. We don't have any hard ties to public schools. Our relation is more through the communities.

J. Horgan: Just to follow up on that, you made reference to the new relationship trust as a funding possibility or that you've accessed those resources. Can

you quantify the moneys that are available to you and how much of that you've been able to secure specifically for language programs?

I know the arts issues are also important. Richard Hunt — I have at least a dozen prints in my dresser from sweatshirts and such. So in terms of the arts, there's an entrepreneurial component that first nations artists are grasping, and good on them. But with language.... It's hard to turn a dime on saving a language, unlike carving or other arts. So how much of the new relationship fund can you get, and how much of it is going toward language?

T. Herbert: I can answer that question. For the '07-08 fiscal we received \$250,000 for FirstVoices and \$250,000 for grants for the B.C. language initiative. So we have our own grant amount, and then that sort of topped that off. Then the other funds were used for the four new programs that I mentioned — the master apprentice, the cultural camp programs.

All of that money is grant money. It's one of the requirements of the new relationship trust. They want all of their funds to go out to communities. They recognized our capacity to administer funding and wanted to let us do that instead of creating a new administrative structure, so more money goes out to communities.

The upcoming fiscal.... We're still in negotiations with the new relationship trust. We're hoping that some of those funds will go out to some of the arts initiatives. I think it's equally important to have funding to ensure the transmission of B.C. first nations classical art forms. We have art forms here in British Columbia that are being practised by elders, which exist nowhere else in the world. To me it's equally important that our classical art forms are being transmitted to new learners and new artists as that our languages are being transferred from our elders to our new speakers.

T. McNeil: If I could add, as well, John. Tracey mentioned earlier the relations that First Peoples has with the First Nations Education Steering Committee. One of those relations is myself. I'm also president of that organization, and through that organization we've received resources from the new relationship trust that go specifically towards what is called the developmental standard term certificate teaching program for languages. That's in relation to the Ministry of Education.

It's a program that we first nations designed to build the fluency level on one side and teaching tools for individuals on the other side. We do have a fair amount of speakers out there, but we have very few teachers — people who have the ability to transfer that language in a group setting of 20 or 30 students or adults. So that program is ongoing. Whether your local community has accessed that, I couldn't really tell you that right now.

J. McIntyre: I just wanted to add my voice of thanks for your presentation today. It was very interesting to learn from the materials provided and from your very good presentation this morning about just an

understanding of some of your objectives and the successes that you're having to date.

[1100]

I'm very committed, as the government is, to narrowing some of the socioeconomic gaps that we have between aboriginals and non-aboriginals. I see this as a very important way and was gratified to learn, as I say, of some of the programs, especially for the youth. I think that's great. FirstVoices and things are wonderful.

Maybe somewhat in response to the point John Horgan just raised, I have a wonderful example in my constituency in the Sea to Sky corridor. Up at Signal Hill School in Pemberton, they have meshed because they are adjacent to Lil'wat — you know, the Mount Currie band, who also have their own school and a new cultural centre in their school. But the ways in which the aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities are meshing, especially at the elementary level....

I was just knocked out by a tour I had of the school. There's a greeting at the door and murals, and then there's a room where they have a talking circle. Anyway, they've done a wonderful job, I think, of highlighting language and culture in their own community. So it is happening in schools, and it's very great to see.

That leads me to another question. I noticed in your presentation that you have an MOU with what you call the B.C. cultural centres. I guess my question is: are those the three first nations or aboriginal cultural centres that are being built? I know one is opened in Haida Gwaii. I of course am very proud of the Squamish Lil'wat cultural centre that's being built in Whistler. I've actually spoken about it in the House. It's going to be a fantastic international attraction to this province, and it will honour first nations art. I'm not actually sure whether there will be a language component to that. Do you have any association with it or any ability, even through your website, to highlight what they are doing and to draw visitors to it?

T. McNeil: The MOU we have is actually with the B.C. first nations cultural education centres.

J. McIntyre: Oh, okay. So that's different.

T. McNeil: Whether the cultural centres you're referring to have a relation to that organization or not.... I'm not really sure because those three use other revenue from the cultural education centres program revenue. So it's up to them as to whether or not they make a relation back to that organization.

J. McIntyre: So there will be no link, then, let's say, to this?

T. McNeil: It's safe to say there's no link right now. That's certainly something we'd be open to. We need to support and promote each other at every opportunity.

J. McIntyre: Exactly. I'd love to see that personally.

T. Herbert: There are about 17 or 18 cultural centres in British Columbia. Some of them have been around

for many years — like 25 years, U'mista in Alert Bay. They have varying programs. Some are really focused on tourism, like the new Osoyoos cultural centre — that beautiful Spirit Ridge resort. Others, like U'mista, have museums and are focused on programming there. They've done some wonderful work doing research at the museum, being able to bring back ancient songs, having those people that have learned those songs teach them to youth and develop dance programs.

The En'owkin Centre is another one in the Okanagan, in Penticton. They are very much focused on training — language training, training for artists, book publishing. So there's quite a variation. Some of the cultural centres are focused on educational benefits and learning opportunities for first nations.

Others are focused on having more tourism opportunities. I know you mentioned the Squamish and the Haida Gwaii. I believe they have an agreement with the aboriginal tourism association of B.C. and are working quite closely with them, and we have been engaging in conversations with them. We do have some mutual project ideas, specifically around protocols, working with authenticity of first nations products.

We know that we are developing the economic side and the tourism side, but we also have to replace those cultural experts. We may have some now. But what sort of programs do we have to encourage that transmission of knowledge and to build the programming within first nations themselves? That's where you get a really good product, when you have strong cultural programming for first nations in their communities.

J. McIntyre: Thank you. Good point.

[1105]

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Thank you to the delegation for coming. Bear with me as I try and slug through this service plan. I caught bits and pieces at the beginning, and I'm still a little confused. Hopefully, you can shepherd me through.

Throughout the service plan you talked about the insufficient funding primarily from the feds and how it's sort of jeopardized a lot of the programs — in particular, to address heritage and cultural related to heritage sites, etc. Of course in my municipality we have an archaeological site, Glenrose in North Delta, probably the second-oldest wet site of its kind in North America. The government in its wisdom in the '80s decided to put boulders on top of it to try and mothball it when they built the Alex Fraser Bridge, which created all the new flows, etc. So I'm quite aware of the need to address this and the lack of funding.

You also mentioned that you can't provide services to all the communities. Going back to my beginning premise, you say there's insufficient funding from the feds. Would you say there is also, equally, insufficient funding from the province?

T. McNeil: Short answer: yes.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Thank you. I read your service plan, and I didn't see that. So I'm glad we've been able to establish that.

Now here comes the part where hopefully I can learn something through this. I went through the summary of financial results on page 29. I'm looking at forecasts — Ministry of Aboriginal Relations, \$1 million for 2007-08. That doesn't include the additional \$1 million?

T. Herbert: That \$1 million was a special grant for that year. So our base funding, the \$1 million, comes from the first citizens fund. That's really our only guaranteed funding every year. We have been really good at creating partnerships with other organizations and across ministries, so that's really the only money we know we're going to get every year — the \$1 million.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Okay. You mentioned earlier, Tracey, to my colleague to the left here, the \$250,500. That would be for the arts program?

T. Herbert: Right. Just give me a moment here. I'd like to provide you with a statistic on that.

In previous years we received about \$170,000 a year for many years from the B.C. Arts Council. With the partnership with Arts Now, that has significantly gone up. We've received another extra \$100,000 from them for organizational development.

If you look overall, in 2005-06 the B.C. Arts Council distributed \$13.8 million to arts and culture across the province. Approximately \$498,500, or 0.036 percent, was distributed to recipients identifiable as first nations or aboriginal.

So in terms of the amount of money that's been spent on arts development for first nations, it's not enough, and we're doing our best to advocate for more resources.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Okay. I see on the cash flow for March 31, 2006.... I see cash received from B.C. Arts Council, \$235,000, and then for 2007, \$45,000 as an entry. So there's quite a difference there of moneys coming from the B.C. Arts Council on that statement. Nevertheless, it's page....

T. Herbert: Sorry. Are you looking at the annual report or the service plan?

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Annual report. And then, of course, in the service plan on the annual report, page 29, the total revenue is \$1.5 million. Previous to that, the final budget for 2006-07 was \$2.9 million. Without that top-up.... Maybe I'm missing something here. It went from \$2.9 million to \$1.5 million. And then for 2008-09, election year, we go to \$3.6 million. Can you describe why we're going from \$1.5 million to \$3.6 million?

[1110]

T. Herbert: That would be the new relationship trust fund, I believe.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Okay. Under the FirstVoices ledger, on page 29, there's no allocation there for '07-08 or '08-09. Is that an oversight?

T. Herbert: Sorry, which document?

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Page 29 of the annual report that's cited within the service plan — the annual report for 2006-07.

T. Herbert: Oh, here we go. Yeah, the forecasts — exactly. When this document was created, we weren't aware of where we were going to be getting funds for FirstVoices.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Okay. So are you assured that you're going to see similar funding for '08-09, or is there still some uncertainty for the FirstVoices program?

T. Herbert: There still is uncertainty for the FirstVoices program. We know that we're going to get \$250,000 from the new relationship trust. Well, if we do a good job and all our reporting is done correctly, we'll be getting those funds. But that's the only amount that's committed to date.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): When I read the report... I understand your impassioned plea, and I agree with the need for bolstering the languages that are in jeopardy. I'm not on the government side. There are some members across. Hopefully, they'll be able to convince the Minister of Finance to continue with that valuable funding.

Quickly, also, in the Ministry of Education there's been a drop of funding from '06-07? Is that correct?

T. Herbert: That was a one-time grant for a specific project. We don't get ongoing funding from the Ministry of Education.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): I have a few more questions, but I'll surrender them until, hopefully, a second go so that other members can have....

C. Puchmayr: I think we will have time.

R. Cantelon: Firstly, I just want to relate a story. Yesterday we had a presentation from Snuneymuxw First Nation in Nanaimo to the entire British Columbia Liberal caucus at Malaspina College. It was a very heartening thing. At the end of the lunch a young first nations individual took it upon himself to express his thanks. He deferred first to the Chief because it wasn't a planned thing. But he spontaneously came forward and expressed his thanks in his first nations tongue. He did it very articulately, very clearly and very confidently.

I think both the direct and indirect benefits of what you're doing are significant. We touched on the tourism, of course. We recognize tourism opportunities. But more importantly, I think, is the confidence this young man displayed and pride in his heritage and his language.

I think that will enable individuals like that to step forward in a broader sense in the community and lead — not just cultural assertiveness but economic assertiveness as they take confidence in who they are and what their heritage is.

I think you're doing great work. It will have continuing long-term direct and indirect benefits to the first nations community across the province.

Certainly, I can appreciate, in looking at the cash flow, that you rely on one-time specific grants a lot. Am I correct that the up and down don't relate core funding, but you're always chasing grants for specific projects? Could you tell me a bit more about that?

T. Herbert: Sure. It's a large part of my work as the executive director. I do know that we have some money that's coming in, but as we try to meet the objectives of the B.C. language plan and also to expand our programs in arts and culture, we do need to find that funding.

I do spend a lot of time creating relationships, meeting with people and talking about the work that we're doing in order to get that investment. I think the investment from the new relationship trust is a great example of the recognition that our organization is getting for the good work that we're doing.

[1115]

Really, when we do an analysis of the type of money that we need to do this work well, we're talking millions of dollars, not a million. It would be wonderful to have at least a base funding of around \$30 million to address the huge spectrum of work that needs to be done — from archiving all the way up to the master apprentice, to have some programming in schools. So we are doing our best to address that.

Certainly, we also know that decision-makers need plans, and we are working right now on a plan that details the expansion of the programming and the type of grants that are needed. We hope to be presenting that shortly — within this fiscal.

R. Cantelon: Again, with my colleague across the way here, I see that in 2006 you received cash from the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation of \$1 million. Then that was doubled nearly to \$2 million — the difference being allocated from the \$100 million trust fund that was put into trust with first nations people to support programs as they see fit. Am I correct in that?

T. Herbert: Uh-huh.

R. Cantelon: You've received some notification that that support will continue. Is that correct?

T. Herbert: Yes. We are meeting with them now. We are going to submit a proposal for that amount again.

R. Cantelon: I'm certainly encouraged that that amount has, in effect, been doubled to support you over the last year.

But it does concern me.... I look at the Department of Canadian Heritage. I presume that, too, is sort of

one-time grants. In other words, you take a project to them, and they support it or not. Or do you receive core funding? How's that working?

T. McNeil: We receive annual funding of \$232,000 from Canadian Heritage.

R. Cantelon: Two hundred and...?

T. McNeil: In total \$232,000.

R. Cantelon: That represents, compared to the first nations population in British Columbia?

T. McNeil: It's $\frac{1}{10}$ of the national resources, and we're continually arguing with Canadian Heritage and other regions across Canada that B.C. is home to a third of the first nations communities, two-thirds of the languages and whatnot. We may not have the population of some other regions, but there is definitely more need in British Columbia. They won't formally recognize it in a way of changing that funding formula from $\frac{1}{10}$ per region, regardless of population, regardless of need.

R. Cantelon: Thank you for that information. We'll certainly support your efforts in that regard.

C. Puchmayr: You talked about the outreach and the need to continue to do the outreach and that. I'm certainly troubled to hear that we had 40 languages, and we've lost eight.

Can you maybe tell us how many more are probably in immediate danger right now and what is being done, if so, to address that or what is the need where we can assist you to address that?

T. McNeil: I think from my perspective it's been challenging for us to come up with hard and fast numbers by community or by language. Of the 40, I can safely say 30 of them are in grave, grave danger — right on the borderline. Yet there are opportunities to change that.

As an organization we're challenged to support those communities and those languages that are in most desperate need compared to other languages. As we shared in our presentation here, we view every language as being important. So with the limited resources that we currently have, we can't stop funding one language and put that resource into another one. We just can't do that. We need to try to spread it out as much as we can, being mindful of those that are in most need.

When we're referencing that outreach, what we did was found that some communities and some languages simply didn't have the capacity to put in proposals even for these limited resources. So we developed tools to assist them to elevate their capacity in terms of templates.

Then we saw that that wasn't sufficient, so we actually went out to their communities, sat down with them and went through the proposal process. We're more trying to build capacity that way as well.

C. Puchmayr: I know we've heard the \$30 million range, and we've talked about some of the different programs that you're interested in dealing with. Have you maybe put together an idea of what the cost would be for the primary issue of trying to identify those languages that are at risk and what the needs would be to secure them?

I know there are other needs. Sometimes the young people may not be interested in picking up the languages. There may not be the immersion or integration programs available that you would desire.

What are the needs there immediately to try to address the inventory of the languages and what the risks are? What is needed to try to save the remaining 32 languages?

T. Herbert: Well, FirstVoices is certainly a tool that is helping us address the issue of archiving the languages with the current speakers that we have, but it is a race. In one community alone, I believe — the one that we now have our building at — four key elders passed this December. We're losing people at such a rapid rate, and they work really hard. We're talking about fantastic people working really hard. They're very elderly, and the people supporting them take good care of them.

There's FirstVoices, for example. We need at least \$100,000 a year per community just for FirstVoices, in order to archive those languages. That's only one piece. That's only one part of the spectrum. We also need to create new fluent speakers. Our master apprentice program — I believe we're spending \$250,000 on that. Well, we're only going to be able to have maybe ten or 15 new speakers for sure across the board of 32 different languages. So we definitely need more funds in those key areas. The creation of new speakers and the archiving are absolutely essential.

T. McNeil: If I could just add to that. Tracey spoke earlier of the collaboration that we have organizationally. One of those collaborative efforts is towards the Assembly of First Nations and their Chiefs Committee on Languages. Right now we're working with them to develop a national strategic plan for language revitalization, an implementation plan for that strategic plan and, most importantly, a costing model.

What is the cost at the community and language-family level that each and every community and language family needs, in terms, for example, of language teachers in the schools, in the band offices for evening classes with adults, for immersion camps, culture camps, summer camps, spring break camps — the resources, curriculum and that whole thing? We can kind of come up with some pretty solid guesstimates, but it would be so much more beneficial if we had that kind of information at a community level.

We're kind of transitioning right now from primarily responding to the community's needs.... They write a proposal that says they need curriculum development, for example, or resources for curriculum or training programs, whatever. If they do what they need to, it's funded. But now we're kind of transitioning to

steering those communities a little bit more. Yes, we need to continue supporting all the initiatives the communities ask for, but we also need to guide them towards some longer-term, comprehensive strategic plan development.

Right now we're partnering with the new relationship trust in developing local language authorities to create a structure within the communities, in multiple communities, of people working together within the same language families. Who has what, and how are they going to work together? From there, once they create that organizational structure, then we will come up with some hard and fast community-by-community costing models. I think that might be a more comprehensive way of asking your question.

C. Puchmayr: That would be good for us to know.

D. MacKay: To Tyrone and Tracey: the question I am going to ask might not be a fair one because I don't know how long you've been with the Crown corporation, but I notice that this is the first time in 18 years that you've appeared before a select standing committee. You've done a commendable job in getting your message across. I do have a couple of questions I wanted to ask.

I wasn't going to ask the question, but the member opposite brought it up, about funding from the province. I got the impression that you suggested the funding was inadequate from the province today. I wonder if you have any idea what the funding was back in the '90s when the Crown corporation was formed. Do you have any idea what the funding was from the province?

[1125]

T. McNeil: It predates me.

T. Herbert: Well, from what I know — and I haven't seen this on paper; I've only been told this — I understand that there was an initial grant of \$10 million in 1990. That grant was spent over many years, and the gist back then was more around doing the type of programming that we're doing now through more localized agencies, like cultural centres.

D. MacKay: So that was a one-time grant, and it was to do you in perpetuity? You didn't appear to have any other funding from the province, other than this one-time grant?

T. Herbert: That's what I believe. Then, I think, at some point, maybe about six or seven years ago, the first citizens fund became the main supporter of the organization with that grant that we get from them.

T. McNeil: It's probably important to stress that those are figures that are aimed directly at regional language revitalization. We haven't been able to do an inventory on how many resources, for example, local school districts or local health authorities are putting into language revitalization. We need to inventory

those as well, because it's a little bit unfair to say that the province is only putting in a million. They're putting in a million a year to us as an organization.

We also, at some point, need to collect how much other ministries of the province are contributing in an indirect fashion.

D. MacKay: Thank you. And if I could, acting Chair....

C. Puchmayr: Yes, go ahead, Dennis.

D. MacKay: Just one more question on the loss of some of the languages. My language is gone as well. I was Scottish Gaelic, and it's gone because we didn't take the time to retain the language or speak the language in our families.

C. Puchmayr: Still wearing the kilt, though.

D. MacKay: No, I don't wear the kilt anymore, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to ask the question about whether or not you're having to pay students to learn the languages. Do you, in fact, pay the elders who are instructing in their native languages to the students? Are both of these people paid, or are any of them paid? Is there a desire amongst the aboriginal community to actually learn and retain the language?

T. McNeil: Learners tend not to be paid, which many times creates a hardship because through some of the programs they're actually going through full-time studies to learn the language. They have to quit their job to do it, and there are no resources coming in to offset their expenses in their home life. So in large part, learners tend not to be paid. If anything they may get some resourcing from their local band to offset some of their home-type expenses.

In terms of elders, where possible we provide honoraria. In many cases we simply can't because there are not enough resources there. In other cases, elders basically say they have nothing else better to do. They enjoy being around a group of kids especially, so they come in.

You know, it's our view that it's only fair that we compensate, especially the elders, however we're able to — in any fashion, at any time. It's part of the respect factor.

D. MacKay: Thank you. I will have some more questions, but I'll give up my....

C. Puchmayr: Okay, I'll put you back down. Yes, let's get everybody that hasn't spoken in.

I. Black: Let me reiterate the thanks for taking the time to see us today. I commend you on the presentation. It's very, very tight and very, very focused and, frankly, one of the best that we've seen at this committee. So thank you for that. Your connection with the service

plan and government agendas is very clear. A really big part of what we do here is to try to establish a focus on that and assess that.

I want to also commend — it's a bit of a footnote — a part of your operating model. Chief, you'd touched on this a couple of times, the fact that your admin costs are at about the 18-percent level. That's very tight, very aggressive.

I have a fair amount of experience in the non-profit sector working on boards, and in many respects, what you do has a lot of parallels to those operating models. The target is between 17 percent and 20 percent, so you're right in there. Good for you for running the operation in that manner.

I also wanted to touch on, though, and this comes to my question.... MLA Puchmayr touched on it just a moment ago with respect to outreach and then, Chief, he touched on the importance of archiving. If you add to that education and communication, the common factor across those four is greatly aided by technology.

[1130]

There were some great slides you had up there showing the use of technology and very, very progressive approaches you've taken. You touched on, specifically, NetWork B.C., and I wanted you to expand on that just a little bit. It was one of your slides — I think it was slide 32 — that made reference to this.

NetWork B.C., as you may not know — or for the benefit of members who may not know — is an internationally recognized achievement of this government in collaboration with the aboriginal community with respect to taking connectivity, most of it high-speed Internet connectivity, into some of the most remote regions of the province. This has received, literally, international awards for how this has been done and the focus of working with the first nations peoples on this project.

I was wondering if you could expand on how you plan to use this. It received passing mention, and it kind of caught my attention. Could you expand on how you plan to take advantage of that creative investment and that creative infrastructure and capacity-building that's been put in place together jointly with us and talk about what you're going to do and how that's going to benefit your program?

T. Herbert: Absolutely. The partnership with NetWork B.C. has been wonderful. Their staff are excellent. This last October Minister Ilich came out, and we had an announcement for the new investment of \$250,000 for FirstVoices specifically.

We are very excited about connectivity and having first nations with high-speed connectivity because we're going to be able to communicate about our programs and they're going to be able to access FirstVoices. There are some communities, when we do the checklist, that really aren't a good fit for FirstVoices right now because they don't have that connectivity.

Ever since the First Nations Technology Council — which you know is an organization that is also involved around capacity-building for first nations and connectivity — and NetWork B.C. have been sitting

down at the table to talk about connectivity, we've been there — for years.

I. Black: That's great.

T. Herbert: In the fiscal years that are noted in our annual report, our initial investment from NetWork B.C. was \$25,000, and then the First Nations Technology Council gave us \$25,000. That was really to build our infrastructure, to get some new servers. We'd been running on old donated servers. So that allowed us to bump up the quality of service that we were giving to our communities.

This new investment. We approached NetWork B.C. and said, "We've got this \$250,000 for the new relationship trust for communities; would you be able to match that?" because they really see a connection to the work we're doing.

We do a lot of training. As you noted, 200 people in British Columbia have been trained to use our archive, use audio, video cameras and database. FirstVoices is a database.

It's been a really great experience, and they've been there for us through the connectivity and also now through this grant. We're going to use it for community grants, for the training aspect of those community grants. Also, there's going to be further investment in the infrastructure of our tool. We're going to be contracting a few people to make some upgrades to the FirstVoices web base itself.

I. Black: That's great. Thank you. Great work.

T. McNeil: If I could add to that. We can continue building on that relation between us and others, such as NetWork B.C. When programs or funders come in, they're looking to leverage more funds or more resources from other areas. Well, FirstVoices is something that should be showcased there. This is one of the main reasons why we need high-speed connection to our communities.

I. Black: Great point.

T. McNeil: It's important to stress that we're not only talking about communities in remote, north B.C. or the coast of B.C. My community, for example, which is between Chilliwack and Hope just up here in the Fraser Valley.... I'm on dial up. That's all that's available to me, and most people wouldn't consider my community as being remote. So we try not to say remote communities but just getting to every community and, where possible, getting to every household within that community.

I. Black: That's a good point.

J. Rustad (Chair): I also want to add my congratulations in terms of your presentation and the information provided to our committee. Often our committee stays focused on the very large corporations, and we don't get a chance to be able to review and talk about the

smaller committees and the important work that they're doing. I think you've done a great job here today, and I just wanted to thank you for that.

[1135]

My question is around the two recent treaties that were ratified in the province and your work with those languages, and how you see your role developing over time, assuming that more treaties develop. How do you interact with the treaty process, with the work, in terms of saving and promoting languages? Do the treaties have any impact on your ability to move forward, or are treaties considered to be, I guess, a positive in terms of your efforts?

T. McNeil: We're actually taking a little bit of a wait-and-see approach with respect to the treaties, because typically what happens when a treaty is signed is that the resources are identified — for example, language and those resources that are coming to first peoples. Typically what happens post-treaty is that the resources for those nations are identified and streamed directly to those nations as opposed to coming through an organization such as First Peoples. So we need to kind of wait and see what government does.

We'd really hate to see our resources decline due to these treaties, because the resources are so limited to begin with. So it's a wait-and-see game from that perspective. But at the same time, there are opportunities for us to engage those nations that are signing treaties on better development, a more hands-on working relation between those nations and us as an organization.

We've got all kinds of templates and tools and resources available to them. It's just a matter of coming together maybe in a slightly different context. We don't necessarily have a relation between First Peoples and a treaty nation yet, but that's certainly something we would be open to discuss not only with government but with those nations as well.

C. Puchmayr: John, do you have another?

J. Rustad (Chair): No, that was everything.

T. Herbert: Can I just make a kind of comment in response?

J. Rustad (Chair): Oh, can I just make one other comment? Sorry, I just wanted to make one additional comment. This is with regards to the meeting, Chuck. It's scheduled to wrap at around noon. We do have a few things to discuss afterwards, so you should leave some time for us to be able to do this.

C. Puchmayr: That's correct — about 15 minutes.

J. Rustad (Chair): Just in terms of allocating time for speakers.

C. Puchmayr: Now, you wanted to ask...?

T. Herbert: Yes. I just wanted to elaborate on what Tyrone had said about the treaty process. To my knowledge, we work with those nations that are involved in treaty. We currently work with the Nisga'a Nation. They're treated just as any other applicant would be for our resources. There hasn't been any distinction made between them and any of the other communities. Also, in their negotiations to date, I don't believe there has been the level of program that we're providing, provided through the treaty process.

So that's a very interesting question. Like Tyrone says, I do look forward to seeing what happens in the future. I also believe there will always be the necessity for a regional organization to provide that umbrella of services to all first nations in B.C., whether they're treaty or not.

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): John up north asked the question I was going to ask: what are the expectations of the settled-treaty first nations developing partnerships with you people? That was my question, so I think it's been answered.

C. Puchmayr: So you've got your answer, then?

G. Gentner (Deputy Chair): Well, that's a lot of hope.

J. McIntyre: I'll be brief as well. It's probably more of a comment rather than a question, to be honest. We were talking about some of the budgets and some of the questions that I think Mr. Gentner raised earlier. Looking back at page 29 in your annual report, first of all, you can see that the budget has gone, in '03-04, from about \$1.3 million up to what you're forecasting in '08-09 at \$3.6 million, which is nearly triple.

I appreciate that in any case, organizations always want more, especially when you're doing the good work you are. You can see that millions more would make it that much easier. But I thought that for those following the committee, it would only be fair to say that yes, there's a million dollars — or going up to \$1.4 million—something from MARR — but also that the moneys that are in the first nations trust, the initiative, are B.C. taxpayer dollars that have been given to first nations to determine themselves how they would like to build capacity.

[1140]

I think it's fantastic that you're accessing those funds, but it should be acknowledged that those were originally taxpayer funds, as the B.C. Arts Council as well. I think it would be fair to say that really, the province is funding most of that budget. Hopefully, where you could get some of this extra money — I'd be happy to lend my voice — is from the federal government, which is contributing \$230,000 compared to the almost \$4 million you're looking towards.

I just thought it was fair that we recognize that even though the money is from different organizations, it is the B.C. taxpayer that's helping to support you in your endeavours.

J. Yap: Following on MLA McIntyre's closing point, the cancellation by the Department of Canadian Heritage of the \$160 million aboriginal language program. That, of course, was not good news. In your report you had expected about \$4 million annually from that source.

What opportunities are there to seek some replacement of those potential revenues from the federal government — either the Department of Canadian Heritage or some other part of the federal government?

T. McNeil: Opportunities are very limited. Canadian Heritage tells us, as first nations leaders, that if we build a business case, they'll make resources available again at that level. Yet when we put forward a business case, it's not really looked at.

J. Yap: So you've been trying to put business cases and lobbying efforts....

T. McNeil: Political pressure and lobbying efforts — yes.

Canadian Heritage kind of plays us off a little bit against Indian and Northern Affairs in direct reference to the resources our band-operated schools get. They'll tell us that there's a portion of those resources aimed at language. But as a community that has a school, we're already underfunded about 40 percent. So how can we kind of spread out the money the way somebody tells us to when we don't have enough money to begin with?

J. Yap: On that point about the funding model using 10 percent, which is the population of B.C., is that the funding model that Indian and Northern Affairs uses? It seems to me that they should be looking at the need based on demographics.

T. McNeil: Two things. Indian Affairs won't share with us their model, for one. And they're decreasing virtually all resources when it comes to our communities and, in particular, our community schools.

They're going through a process right now where they're supposed to be renewing their authority in education. They'll sit down with us and tell us they want to expand their mandate to fill our need. Yet when they go away and talk amongst themselves, it's all about cost reduction. It's only about money. It's not about education. It's not about well-being. It's not about languages. It's about reducing their expenses.

J. Yap: Last question. Where are you at with trying to encourage the federal government, be it Canadian Heritage or Indian and Northern Affairs, to have another look at the funding model?

T. McNeil: From the national perspective through the Assembly of First Nations, we are walking a very fine line. Typically, the assembly would be resourced in such a way that as long as they fulfil their mandate, they've got the parameters to work on the side of the mandate. But now if there's any attempt to lobby gov-

ernment, to lobby the opposition or to lobby anybody, those resources are immediately clawed back.

For example, the education sector of the Assembly of First Nations typically gets resourced about \$1.2 million a year. This year it's been reduced to \$353,000. So our ability to advocate nationally is really restricted. When it comes time to try to bring a B.C. position forward, that in itself is challenging, because just about everything we're doing in B.C. is unique from other parts of Canada, whether it's a provincial government or a first nations government.

It's always an "us against them" scenario. We're really hard-pressed to make progress at the national level.

[1145]

J. Yap: Well, you're doing good work with the resources you have. We encourage you to continue. I sense from the report, the service plan and your comments that it's a bit of a race against time to try to document and catalogue the few remaining speakers of some of these languages. Good work.

T. McNeil: Thanks.

C. Puchmayr: Thank you, everybody, for your questions. I just want to close by thanking you for your presentation and to share one small item with you.

I had the good fortune the last couple of years to go on a canoe journey in a cedar canoe and learned a lot of the first nations songs, especially the Coast Salish. There's nothing more moving after a 20-mile paddle in a cedar canoe than coming ashore and having someone stand up and ask in their native tongue for permission to come ashore at the different first nations territories. It's an incredible part of our culture that we must not lose.

I respect the work you're doing in attempting to preserve it. Certainly, on behalf of the opposition, we will work, as well, to try to ensure that we can assist you in getting your needs met. I'm sure my colleagues on the government side are probably equally interested in ensuring that your needs are met. We look forward to working with you. Thank you very much for coming out.

T. Herbert: *Kukwstsetsemc.*

C. Puchmayr: We'll take a short recess now, and then we'll go in camera.

The committee recessed from 11:47 a.m. to 11:53 a.m.

[J. Rustad in the chair.]

C. Puchmayr: A motion to move in camera would be in order.

Motion approved.

The committee continued in camera from 11:53 a.m. to 12:04 p.m.

[J. Rustad in the chair.]

C. Puchmayr: Okay, we're back in public. We need a motion to adopt the report. A motion would be in order to adopt the report, subject to the final edits.

Motion approved.

C. Puchmayr: The motion would be for the Chair to present the report at the next session.

J. McIntyre: As will be amended.

C. Puchmayr: Yes, subject to edits.

Motion approved.

C. Puchmayr: Motion to adjourn.
We're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

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