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Resources**

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Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

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Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

Chair: Brian Warr, MHA

Vice-Chair: Jordan Brown, MHA

Members: Pleaman Forsey, MHA
Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA
Craig Pardy, MHA
Paul Pike, MHA
Lucy Stoyles, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Kim Hawley George

Appearing:

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

Hon. Steve Crocker, MHA, Minister
Jamie Chippett, Deputy Minister
Judith Hearn, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism and Culture
Debbie Marnell, Director of Communications
Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller

Also Present

Hon. Lisa Dempster, MHA, Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation
Lela Evans, MHA, Torngat Mountains
Hon. John Haggie, MHA, Minister of Health and Community Services
Paul Lane, MHA, Mount Pearl - Southlands
Hon. Elvis Loveless, MHA, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Loyola O'Driscoll, MHA, Ferryland
Perry Trimper, MHA, Lake Melville
Joedy Wall, MHA, Cape St. Francis
Steven Kent, Political Researcher, Third Party
Glenn Littlejohn, Political Researcher, Official Opposition

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Lisa Dempster, MHA for Cartwright – L’Anse au Clair, substitutes for Paul Pike, MHA for Burin - Grand Bank.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Elvis Loveless, MHA for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune, substitutes for Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA for Placentia - St. Mary’s.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, John Haggie, MHA for Gander, substitutes for Lucy Stoyles, MHA for Mount Pearl North.

The Committee met at 5 p.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

CLERK (Hawley George): Good afternoon, everybody.

This is the first meeting of the Resource Committee for the 50th General Assembly. My name is Kim Hawley George; I’ll be the Clerk for this evening’s meeting.

The first order of business for tonight is the election of the Chair of the Committee.

Are there any nominations from the floor for Chair?

C. PARDY: I’d like to nominate Brian Warr.

CLERK: Brian Warr.

Any further nominations?

Any further nominations?

Hearing no further nominations, the Member for Baie Verte - Green Bay has been acclaimed Chair.

Could you please take the Chair, Mr. Warr.

CHAIR (Warr): If we’re all ready to go, our next order of business is to call for nominations for Vice-Chair.

Are there any nominations from the floor for Vice-Chair?

Any nominations from the floor for Vice-Chair?

J. BROWN: I’ll do it.

CHAIR: Is there a nomination for MHA Brown?

May I ask for a nomination?

C. PARDY: I nominate MHA Brown.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Any further nominations from the floor?

Hearing none, I certainly congratulate MHA Brown as Vice-Chair.

It’s 5:03 p.m. I call the meeting to order.

This is the first meeting of our Committee under the resources sector for Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. We’ll enjoy the participation of everybody here tonight. Probably halfway through we’ll end up taking a break.

If I can ask the Clerk, are there any official substitutions for tonight?

CLERK: Yes.

CHAIR: Okay, for the Member for Placentia - St. Mary’s, her substitute tonight is the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune; for the Member for Mount Pearl - North, the substitution is the MHA for Gander; and for Burin - Grand Bank, the substitute is the Member for Cartwright - L’Anse au Clair.

Just a reminder that when you’re recognized to speak tonight, wait for your tally light to turn on and certainly feel free to speak. If your tally light does not light up, please just give us an indication that it’s not lit and we’ll sing out to the Broadcast Centre.

This evening, if there are Members attending who are not Members or official substitutes of the Committee, I certainly solicit the Committee’s agreement on whether, and if so, how these Members may participate, including how much time they will be allocated and when that allocation would occur.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As Members of the Official Opposition, we've conferred with the Third Party and we propose the following to the Committee: We would have our assigned time speaking, the Opposition and then the Third Party. We would cycle through that a second time and then we would allocate 10 minutes for the visitors.

We would follow that pattern throughout the proceeding. I throw that out to the Committee. I'm not sure if that was clear.

CHAIR: Is there a general consensus that we all concur with the recommendation from the MHA for Bonavista?

The MHA for Exploits.

P. FORSEY: That will be a total of 20 minutes entirely for the independents.

C. PARDY: That's an amendment. I accept that amendment.

CHAIR: Okay.

Is that each independent Member or total?

C. PARDY: A total.

CHAIR: Total.

C. PARDY: So a total of 20 minutes for the proceeding.

CHAIR: Okay.

Any further discussion on those recommendations?

The Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm fine with that in general. The only thing that I would add is that particularly given the fact that this department – there's not a lot here compared to some other departments and we have three hours. The three hours is going come off the budget time, whether we use it or we don't use it.

I'm okay with that, but if we get down to the fact that we have about 20 minutes or a half-hour left at the end of that – they only use up 2½ hours, there's a half-hour left and we have further questions, we would like to be able to have the ability to ask questions, given the fact, as I said, that three hours is coming off the clock regardless.

CHAIR: The Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sitting here as an observer and seeking consent, so I appreciate whatever opportunities we may have. I'm just trying to seek clarification as there are two independent Members here this evening. If there happens to be an occasion with this Committee when there are three independent Members, would that be 30 minutes and, therefore, 10 minutes each or still 20 minutes?

CHAIR: Well, each Committee will make its own determination.

P. TRIMPER: I'm talking about this one. If the next meeting of a department associated with this Committee, if there are three independent Members here, will we each have 10 minutes to speak?

CHAIR: My understanding from the suggestion by the hon. Members, that's 20 minutes in total, regardless if there's one or if there are three. I stand to be corrected on that, but is that ...?

C. PARDY: Yeah, that is correct. Remember, it's only for this proceeding here, this sitting of the Estimates, yes.

P. TRIMPER: Sorry, so I'm still confused. If there were three independent Members here this evening, it would still just be an allotment of 20 minutes? That's what (inaudible).

P. FORSEY: Yes, 20 minutes total. If there were three, there would be seven and six for each one. Right now, you get 10 and 10; 20 minutes total for the independent.

Does that clarify?

CHAIR: With the Committee Members, is there consensus that we agree with that? The consensus on 20 minutes total. Okay.

All right, before I go to the minister, I'll ask the Members of the Committee to introduce themselves for Broadcast, please, starting with the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Craig Pardy, MHA, Bonavista.

G. LITTLEJOHN: Glenn Littlejohn, Political Researcher.

J. BROWN: Jordan Brown, MHA for Labrador West.

S. KENT: Steven Kent, Researcher for the Third Party caucus.

P. TRIMPER: Perry Trimper, MHA for Lake Melville.

E. LOVELESS: Elvis Loveless, MHA for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune.

L. EVANS: Lela Evans, MHA for Torngat Mountains.

P. FORSEY: Pleaman Forsey, MHA for Exploits.

J. WALL: Joedy Wall, MHA for Cape St. Francis. I'm here today as an observer.

L. O'DRISCOLL: Loyola O'Driscoll, MHA for the District of Ferryland, also an observer.

P. FORSEY: Pleaman Forsey, MHA for Exploits.

J. HAGGIE: John Haggie, MHA for the District of Gander.

L. DEMPSTER: Lisa Dempster, MHA for Cartwright - L'Anse au Clair.

P. LANE: Paul Lane, MHA for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the hon. the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Maybe what we can do, first of all, I'll let the staff introduce themselves. I'll start at my right.

J. CHIPPETT: Jamie Chippett, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

J. HEARN: Judith Hearn, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism and Recreation.

B. STEELE: Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller.

D. MARNELL: Debbie Marnell, Director of Communications.

CHAIR: Perhaps what I'll do is I'll call the first subhead and, Minister, you can start.

S. CROCKER: Yes, sure.

CHAIR: I'll ask the Clerk to call the first subhead, please.

CLERK: For the Estimates of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 inclusive carry?

The hon. the minister.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll dispense of any opening remarks and just say I look forward to the conversation this evening, the debate of the Estimates of the department. I very much look forward to discussing them with the Members of the Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

We will begin with the hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a pleasure to be here this evening on the eve of the big hockey game tonight and it shows the

commitment of all the officials. I, too, like the deputy minister's tie as well and wishing I had one of those.

If I may start with some prototypical general questions that I'm sure you've seen, probably for some time, if I may go through those, asking if we can obtain a copy of the minister's briefing binder.

S. CROCKER: I believe we actually brought some copies with us. We did.

C. PARDY: You have them here?

S. CROCKER: We do.

C. PARDY: And just for the record, I went asking this year in preparation – being my first in Tourism – for last years briefing binder but we hadn't received it.

S. CROCKER: Oh.

C. PARDY: So just for the –

S. CROCKER: If the former minister was here I'd try to make excuses for him, but he's not so I won't bother.

C. PARDY: No, no. Is the attrition plan still being followed? If so, what are the changes from last year to this year?

S. CROCKER: So the attrition plan is still being followed. I'm going to fumble through some papers here unless you have it at hand, Deputy.

J. CHIPPETT: We're on the third version of an attrition plan, so it's still being followed. So far we've reduced by 30 positions. That would be the plans from 2015-16 until 2019-20.

C. PARDY: Just to follow up. The third version –

CHAIR: I'll just recognize you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The third version, when did the third version come into being?

J. CHIPPETT: The third attrition plan is for 2020-21 and there were targets established for 2021.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: This is the rapid-fire question here now – session.

How many people employed in the department?

S. CROCKER: Currently, there are, total positions, 289 within the department.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: I think it was 282 in my notes for last year, so we've gained seven from last year, would that be correct?

S. CROCKER: I'll defer – I know our new hires this year were six, our retirements were five, our resignations were 10 and end of employment were 33. That might have been a vacancy factor in that.

J. CHIPPETT: I think the position total is taken at any particular point in time, based on payroll records. You might get a discrepancy there, in particular, because we have such a large number of seasonal staff, if you think about our parks and so on. That likely explains the discrepancy.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: That would make sense because I think October the Estimates were last year. We're in a different time of the year.

S. CROCKER: Yes, 146 of our employees will be seasonal.

C. PARDY: Okay, yes.

Are there currently any vacancies not filled in the department?

S. CROCKER: Do you have that handy?

B. STEELE: We currently have 16 positions that are vacant.

C. PARDY: 16?

B. STEELE: Yes.

C. PARDY: I see from the numbers that the minister had given, there are no positions eliminated.

S. CROCKER: No, there were no positions eliminated. There were some end of employments.

C. PARDY: Okay, attrition, yeah.

How many contractual and short-term employees are in the department?

S. CROCKER: Right now, in this snapshot, there are three contractual, 32 temporary and 146 seasonal.

C. PARDY: We know your department received funds for COVID from the federal government last year. Are there any since then?

J. CHIPPETT: I can just run through the four pots we got. We got funding for recreation and sport; emergency funding from the federal government for that. We also got funding related to the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program.

That would have been our own COVID contingency; you asked about the federal government. It was sport and there was funding from the federal government directly to arts and culture organizations and heritage organizations, but I think that would be it.

C. PARDY: Okay, so this was in addition to the \$25 million, I think, last year that was allocated?

J. CHIPPETT: I think the \$25 million is the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program.

C. PARDY: Right.

J. CHIPPETT: That was 100 per cent provincial funding. That was provincial government funding.

C. PARDY: Okay.

We know that COVID affected everything, without exception. Are there any backlogs that are occurring within the department that would be worthy of noting?

S. CROCKER: No, I don't think so. I think the department really learned a lot from the first iteration of COVID back going into the high peak season for this department last year. I think we were able to get the provincial parks open this year on time, obviously, still following COVID restrictions.

I'll hand it over to the deputy if he knows of any backlogs, but in my time there, I don't think I've run across any. Other than your normal COVID issues, I don't think we have any major issues right now.

J. CHIPPETT: From a grants perspective you'll see, and we'll talk about in terms of some of our allocations, they were slightly lower, but very minimal. Otherwise, as the minister said, we're really a service provider in terms of facilities and so on. So the biggest COVID impacts for us would be Arts and Culture Centres, provincial parks, provincial historic sites, provincial pools and so on.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, it wouldn't be a backlog as much as it would be an emptiness, unfortunately.

C. PARDY: Okay, yes.

Maybe we can move on to the subsections now, 1.1.01, with the Chair's permission?

CHAIR: You're good to go, 1.1.01 to 1.2.02.

C. PARDY: It was in the media in April this year, Minister, where we talked about the ATV trail within the Main River Waterway Provincial Park. I know the CBC carried an interview with you. We know that it was a Canadian Heritage River and we had the discussion.

In that interview, you had stated that since 2001 the regulations have not changed. I think you had stated in that article that you had asked them at the time to look at all those regulations that would be – and I know that April is not that long

ago. I'm just wondering if there are any regulations that are going to be brought forth that you're earmarking, if possible.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, we haven't finalized our deliberations on that yet. There are regulatory changes, if not legislative. But there are certainly regulatory changes that we are looking at doing to strengthen some of those regulations around what we would have seen happen with the Main River.

C. PARDY: How would that have happened? Minister, you're talking about in a Canadian Heritage river and a provincial park. How would that have occurred?

S. CROCKER: The minister has the ability to allow such developments in a park.

C. PARDY: So the minister granted the development within a park.

S. CROCKER: Correct me, Jamie, if I'm wrong, but the Tourism Minister today does have that ability to amend –

C. PARDY: Okay and weigh out all the facts that would be presented before I'm going to make that decision.

S. CROCKER: He or she –

C. PARDY: Because the regulations would prevent development in a protected area. We have that, even if it's 2001.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, this circumstance is one that allows the minister to issue the permit outside of the EA process in this department.

C. PARDY: Within the Tourism Department, I'm asking that now in this, because especially in the Executive Support we look at the evaluation of policies and objectives. Is there other legislation that you have earmarked to be bringing forth in this sitting or the fall sitting, that you can say now that something is on the front burner?

S. CROCKER: I'll put on my hat as Government House Leader; we won't bringing forward any legislation this session that's not absolutely something that we planned.

C. PARDY: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: So, no, we won't see anything coming from this department in this session. But, certainly, by fall I think there may be things we may bring forward to the legislative agenda. Some of these things, like the changes that could possibly be made to the environmental act, could be probably done as regulatory, not legislative.

C. PARDY: Okay. Good.

Air access: In every document that we've written, in the Budget Speech today that Minister Coady had released, in the Premier's Advisory Council on Tourism – everyone is cognizant of the importance of air access. Where are we with enhancing our air access or planning to make sure that we are ready to roll when we do open? Are there efforts ongoing for consultation with carriers or the federal government?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, that's an extremely important question, not only for this department but it's multi-faceted in departments. IET actually has a role to play here because they're primarily responsible for the air access strategy. As you would have heard in today's budget, we've committed to working with the partners, the airport authorities and the airlines, to get them back.

As unfortunate as COVID was, we're not going – pre-COVID we would have been focused on additional new routes and finding ways to get into different markets. Unfortunately, right now – and we've had this meeting with a group, it was led by HNL recently, who put together a committee and had a report done and some information on what it could look like.

Unfortunately, the biggest challenge we're going to have now, it's not going to be about, at this point in time, getting into new markets, it's actually going to be getting back to re-establishing what we had. The struggle is going to be – and we most recently met with Air Canada. Every market in North America and every market in the world right now sees air access as a major, major hurdle. We're going to have to be very strategic as we go forward and work with the airlines and with our airport partners to make sure that we get our routes re-

established. It's not going to be a short-term plan; this is a long-term challenge for us.

When you talk to the industry, they talk about it in three brackets: one is immediate, one is medium and one is long term. Really, you get into long term before we actually get back what we had, due to the fact the industry is not nimble; that industry will not respond quickly.

C. PARDY: No. Talking about long term, pre-COVID, when looking at air access do we ever look at working with industry? When I throw that out to you, I know I read in the fishery in Norway where they have tourism destinations, but they work with their fishing industry to make sure that they're transporting product in those markets that they strategically established.

S. CROCKER: Very interesting point. Since I came to the department, I raised with the deputy and maybe others, that when we look for new markets for our tourism – and I think this sort of goes to where you're going – we need to be piggybacking more off our industries as well.

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: If you have the business travel, airlines' profitability is built on business travel. So, to your point, we need to be looking at the UK and Norway when it comes to oil and fish, and the southern US, Texas, for example, when it comes to oil.

But, yeah, we need to be – I'd actually like to see a point in time where we actually piggyback off IET. When we're marketing oil or we're marketing mining, we're actually at the same time marketing us as a tourism destination for those people.

C. PARDY: I was just thinking marketing our fish products.

S. CROCKER: Oh.

C. PARDY: Whatever the destination we have, that's all, but I know that it's comprehensive.

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: You'll tap into whatever can offset the cost of the flight.

Another thing that came up in the Budget Speech was bringing back the expats, those Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to entice them back. What have we done within that, within the tourism part? Is there anything related to tourism that we have an initiative ongoing to bring back these expats?

S. CROCKER: I guess some of that would be a shared strategy with Immigration. One of the things we are going to be doing – and it was contained in our red book – was Come Home Year 2022.

C. PARDY: Okay.

S. CROCKER: So we'll be launching Come Home Year 2022 sometime post-Labour Day. We're hoping that will give an opportunity, again on a multi-departmental facet or bringing multiple departments in to say not only do we want you to come home in 2022, we're actually going to play on that as come home permanently in 2022 and use that as part of our immigration strategy.

CHAIR: I'll remind the hon. Member his speaking time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll just start off with some general questions there. During last Estimates, the minister talked about the working group with Indigenous people and key departments reviewing existing monuments, symbols and observances to ensure that they're anti-racist and discussions with key stakeholders in that. I'll ask the minister about the progress of that committee and that work?

S. CROCKER: That work is being led by the Departments of Labrador Affairs and Indigenous Affairs. It is a very important piece of work, but I think we need to make sure the proper consultation is done. We'll work with the Indigenous groups and the department to make sure that as we do that, we do it properly.

There are certainly challenges with that; we have done some work with the Interpretation Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor. I think you'll see some

of those changes coming forward, once we complete our consultation on that. Yes, there is work ongoing but, again, we'll take it piece by piece and make sure that important work is done.

J. BROWN: Another question. Last year, we asked how the department was planning to provide extra supports for the exporting of cultural products to the rest of Canada and beyond. What strategies are currently in place for this? Have there been any more initiatives? Seeing that we're in a pandemic time and we're coming out of the opening area, has any work (inaudible) exporting our cultural products and stuff now?

S. CROCKER: That's a very important question. Absolutely. I will add the COVID context to this. As a department right now, and dealing with the most impacted industry throughout the economy, throughout the world, of tourism and hospitality, our focus over the last period of time has been so much on getting us back to a position of rebuilding.

There are a lot of new initiatives and things that we are going to do that certainly have been delayed by COVID. Rightfully so, because pre-COVID we were at \$1.2 billion in tourism GDP to the province. If you go back and look at the Premier's Advisory Council on Tourism, their hope for this season is \$200 million. Right now, our focus is on getting reopened and getting our tourism industry back on its feet.

J. BROWN: Yeah, I know. Under the Tourism and Hospitality Support Program, how many businesses have applied? Do you have it broken down into sectors like restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfasts, that kind of thing?

S. CROCKER: We don't have that. Mr. Brown, we don't have those numbers immediately available, but we can certainly get that for you.

J. BROWN: That would be much appreciated.

Thank you.

S. CROCKER: You may be able to find it out through the binder. When we get to that heading, I might be able to elaborate a little more on specifics.

J. BROWN: Perfect. Likewise the plan for the post-pandemic. I realize you talked about the reopening and Come Home Year 2022, but what about the sectors for music performers? Are there any plans around the music industry and stuff like that, as they've been effectively –?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, as you would have heard today in Minister Coady's speech, there is an allocation this year again for our artists. It's important. Every facet of this department, whether the cultural, the arts and recreation, all feed into the viability of the tourism industry.

Absolutely, we were there last year to support our artists and we'll certainly be back this year to support our artists. As you would have seen again today, not only saying that we'll make them a part of the tourism assistance program, but the additional \$1 million for ArtsNL, which now brings the commitment up to \$5 million a year.

J. BROWN: Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

Now I'll go with the line items. Section 1.1.01 Minister's Office: For the increase for the Salaries, what's the justification for that for the budgeting?

S. CROCKER: The increase in Salaries. That's the 27th – no, it's not the 27th pay period. That would be the wage increase, Deputy?

J. CHIPPETT: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: Yeah that would be the wage increase. Not for the minister, by the way.

J. BROWN: Thank you.

1.2.01, Salaries again: The increase from budget '20-'21 to the actuals and then on again to the actual Estimated budget, what's the reasoning for all those increases?

S. CROCKER: If I'm correct, that's the new ADM for the Arts and Culture branch. When this department was shuffled a bit last year with IET, one of the parts of restructuring was the second ADM, because as you can see we're a very small shop.

J. BROWN: Okay, so that was the –

S. CROCKER: Some positions went to IET. One of the things that was left for us to do was hire a new –

J. BROWN: Okay, so that's a completely new ADM. Okay.

S. CROCKER: Yeah. That was actually a publicly advertised position and I think recently closed.

J. BROWN: Perfect. Thank you.

So that position is soon to be filled?

S. CROCKER: Yes, it was a publicly advertised process.

J. BROWN: Okay, perfect. Thank you, Minister.

1.2.02, same again there. From the budget '20-'21 then to the actuals it was lower, but then when we get to budget '21-'22, the Salaries are significantly increased again. What is the rationale for that, please?

S. CROCKER: I'm sorry, which one was that?

J. BROWN: 1.2.02.

S. CROCKER: 1.2.02, Operating Accounts?

J. BROWN: No, 1.2.02, Corporate Services, General Administration continued.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, go right ahead, Jamie.

J. CHIPPETT: There's no new funding in that. Actually, we decided to fund some of the positions that had traditionally been unfunded in that branch. We have a lot of new commitments, particularly around arts and culture. We know there's a lot of policy work that will be a part of moving those forward, so we chose to move some money around in our salary plan to enhance our policy division.

J. BROWN: For that one there, Deputy Minister, some people have moved from different sectors of that department into this section of Corporate Services?

J. CHIPPETT: No, that would be positions on the books that had not been funded. As other positions may have become vacant, we would use those salary dollars to fill those positions.

J. BROWN: All right, thank you, Deputy Minister.

Under provincial revenue, nothing was budgeted for '20-'21, but in the actuals for '20-'21, there was a revenue of \$5,900. What was that for?

S. CROCKER: That was projected revised. It reflects the repayment of prior-year employee floats and petty cashes.

J. BROWN: Okay, perfect. Thank you.

Under that section, I am good for this.

Thank you, Minister.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Anything further on 1.1.01 to 1.2.02?

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Just a couple of quick questions.

1.1.01: I notice in Transportation and Communications when we look at the revised compared to where we are, I'm assuming now it's COVID-related. We know we had an off year. I'm assuming that you went right back to the previous year, assuming that it was very similar to what was budgeted previously?

S. CROCKER: Yes, in '20-'21 in the budget, that would have been done using zero-based budgeting, which would be the same principle as now.

C. PARDY: Okay.

S. CROCKER: But the fact is, in '20-'21 there was very little drop.

C. PARDY: Okay, and the same would apply in the other ones, 1.2.01 in Transportation and Communications there and same all throughout.

S. CROCKER: You'll see it throughout in T and C, Transportation and Communications is certainly down.

C. PARDY: The final question in this section, Mr. Chair.

On page 14 of the Budget Speech, they talked about an incentive program and they were going to have an incentive program for the Atlantic Bubble. Am I correct in that, or am I thinking that 14, that might have been the Premier's Advisory –?

S. CROCKER: Premier's Advisory Council. Yeah, I think that would have been the Premier's Advisory Council report. Obviously, I'm really happy you read that report. It was a great report, and thanks to Jill Curran and her crew for putting it together; they put a lot of time into it.

Yeah, as you would have heard in the budget language today, we will use the money that we have to make sure that we address as many of the recommendations from the PAC report as possible.

C. PARDY: Okay, good.

S. CROCKER: We'll certainly look at everything that we can to support the industry.

C. PARDY: They suggested an incentive campaign, so again, that's not looked at yet, but that will be something that you will take on advisement and action.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, we've actually reviewed some incentive programs. There was an incentive program last year in New Brunswick and there was also an incentive program last year in Prince Edward Island, so we've looked at those plans as something that we would certainly, possibly, entertain as we move into the season.

C. PARDY: Okay.

I'm good, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

We'll be voting on the first subheads.

To the Committee Members, shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.02 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.2.02 carried.

CHAIR: I'd like to ask the Clerk to call the next subheads, please.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.3.03 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.3.03 inclusive carry?

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2.1.01: How many Visitor Information Centres do we have in the province?

S. CROCKER: We have eight and we support nine other regional Visitor Information Centres.

C. PARDY: I think in last year's Estimates it stated that it was \$71,000, was the operating grant to Visitor Information Centres.

S. CROCKER: That is correct.

C. PARDY: Okay.

I'd just like to throw something out for your feedback. It comes from an entrepreneur in the District of Bonavista, the historic District of Bonavista. He had stated and states that it is time to undertake a worldwide search for an individual with credentials and a track record who has developed the tourism industry able to compete nationally and internationally, long into the future. I said that was well stated. He looked at one person with the expertise that would be able to build a plan going forward to market us nationally and internationally.

I'm sure we have personnel doing that within the department. The only thing he's saying is that

this person would have the expertise and would have done it international.

I would be amiss if I didn't throw that out to you.

S. CROCKER: I would certainly not argue with your constituent but I would challenge him. We have some really good people in the department and we've ran a very successful targeting campaigns. I think when we formed government in 2015, tourism was somewhere around the \$700 million mark and pre-pandemic we had built it to \$1.2 billion.

Tourism in this province has unlimited potential. I think we can certainly get there, but we'll take advice from anybody.

C. PARDY: Air access will always be an issue –

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

C. PARDY: – for whoever is going to be involved.

S. CROCKER: If you wouldn't mind just for a second, back to air access.

You're absolutely right with air access, but the challenge with air access is a jurisdiction the size of ours. We'll never be able to buy air access. Air access comes when we can market our product to the right markets, to get the bums in seats, because we will never compete with the Vegas's and Orlando's when it comes to marketing budgets that some of those jurisdictions have. But to your point, absolutely, and it's going to have to be a very strategic build as we build air access.

C. PARDY: I think we can compete with anybody in the world. You would agree with that as far as in our marketing and what we've got to offer.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely, what we have to offer but again –

C. PARDY: We're never second to Orlando.

S. CROCKER: I didn't say we are second to Orlando. We are second to jurisdictions when it comes – if they want to compete on dollars –

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: That was my remark is that if we want to compete on dollars and cents we would be challenged in those markets.

C. PARDY: Good.

2.1.01 in the Grants and Subsidies, \$221,000. Can we state what that was for?

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

There's \$150,000 goes to Destination Labrador for an operational contribution and there's \$71,000 that goes to your previous, on the regional visitor centres.

C. PARDY: Oh, right on.

Destination Labrador and the Visitor Information Centres, so where would the revenue come from here in this department here? The provincial and federal, what would be the nature and the source of that revenue?

S. CROCKER: The Traveller's Guide? It would be the Traveller's Guide.

C. PARDY: Sorry?

S. CROCKER: The Traveller's Guide.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: Nine, I'm sorry. Oh, it's the ACAT – Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism.

C. PARDY: That's the federal or provincial?

S. CROCKER: That's a new federal-provincial program we just recently re-signed, actually, with some great improvements.

C. PARDY: Okay.

S. CROCKER: Right, yeah, sorry.

C. PARDY: We've already said, probably, on two occasions now about how devastating the pandemic has been to the industry. I know we have a \$30 million now for the new Tourism and Hospitality Support Program, which is badly needed. Can you outline where this will be spent? I'm assuming this is not what we've already spent. This is a new program now to help the industry going forward. Will it have the same parameters and be rolled out the same as before?

S. CROCKER: So two things: this is the new program. We had a very similar program last year. As you would've read in the PAC report, industry, the PAC recommendation – I think it was recommendation number 2 – was that it not be the same as previous. They want it to be done based on demonstrated losses, because some of the hardest impacts – the COVID impacts, while they're great on all, they were selective in some ways. Some businesses were able to – their market or they were able to adapt. So, no, we'll work with IET this year to develop a program that addresses more along the lines of actual losses.

C. PARDY: Okay. They also stated in the Premier's advisory report that they'll need between eight- to 10-week lead time. I think they stated eight to 10 – at least it was eight. Will we open soon, or do we know that we're going to open soon? I know that we haven't got the eight- to 10-week lag, we haven't achieved that, but I'm just wondering is that something that we are planning for?

S. CROCKER: Turn around.

C. PARDY: Okay.

S. CROCKER: I was pointing to the Minister of Health.

C. PARDY: When the guidelines permit.

S. CROCKER: No, absolutely. Very much so.

We're having regular communications. I know myself, the Minister of Health and the Premier; we've met within the last three weeks with the PAC. We're hearing what they're saying. I think if you're listening to the wise words of the Health Minister these days, he's talking about

we're 60 per cent vaccinated now, one percentage point per day. Most other Canadian jurisdictions are out with their plan and our plan, I think, will be out in the not-too-distant future.

C. PARDY: I didn't frame that question as – and I fully respect. I think the residents in the District of Bonavista that I serve would say that, listen, only when the time is right.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: But if we did our projections on the vaccinations – which the Minister of Health and Community Services has stated in sort of a finite time – then they would provide some lead time now for us to say, listen, if he is correct and we have that vaccination plan, then we can certainly say that we are opening for business and for travel at that point in time. We haven't gone there yet, have we not?

S. CROCKER: We have not said. I think there will be more said this week, but you can start to do math as well on 60 per cent, 1 per cent per day; you can see where we are going to get as a province.

C. PARDY: That's what I'm saying. We know where we are. The only thing we need to inform what they're asking for in that report is give as much lead time to those expats that are up in Ontario that are going to come home.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

My most recent conversation with the chair of the PAC was on Friday. I think our industry is doing a good job now in starting to read the tea leaves of when it would be reasonable for us to expect a reopening. It's very important. We understand how important it is to the industry. We have to make sure we do it and we do it right.

C. PARDY: Important to do it right, Minister. I agree.

When I asked the question in the House of Assembly, I asked about the ads. I know the report talked about the loss of businesses. I think 45 per cent that were employed in tourism were no longer employed. We know the impact that

would be out there. The \$30-million program would support that.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: I'm assuming that's what it's going to be intended for, but we're still running the markets on the Mainland, or our ads in those markets that we depend on.

S. CROCKER: We are, absolutely.

C. PARDY: And, as you stated, priming the markets.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

If you would have seen the CBC report last week where Mr. O'Brien in Bay Bulls quite colourfully told us that we better keep doing it, because it's important that we are there on top of people's minds as they start to make those decisions on where they are going to travel.

C. PARDY: The businesses that are not going to open that we may have lost; the \$30 million could apply to those, to try to get them open again. Would that be a factor? I know you said they have to look at the lost –

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: – their bottom line. Would there be an element to see if we can resurrect those businesses that we lost over COVID?

S. CROCKER: I would think absolutely. That would obviously be how the program would be designed, to make sure that we maintain the businesses. There are businesses that didn't open last year.

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: That program this year will be designed in a way that there are supports to get them back up if they want to come back into the industry.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. Member that his speaking time has expired.

2.1.01 to 2.3.03, the hon. Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Looking at this, for Purchased Services under 2.1.01, Tourism, can the minister say what this purchased service was? Would that be the advertising program?

S. CROCKER: That's our program.

J. BROWN: That is. Okay, I just wanted to make sure what that was.

I notice that we budgeted significantly more for that. Are we anticipating a larger advertising campaign coming up?

S. CROCKER: That reflects our new Atlantic agreement with ACOA, the new Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism. That agreement was just accepted, just signed off only days after I moved to the department, and actually had some good improvements.

One time that marketing program only allowed us to market Atlantic Canada as a bundle. Whereas there will still be some of that, we can now market ourselves in conjunction with Canada, not just Atlantic Canada. There are bilaterals so we can now invest some of that money on a bilateral basis and not an Atlantic Canada campaign.

J. BROWN: I noticed today in the Budget Speech the minister asked about – well, mentioned in her Budget Speech about the tourism aspect of Labrador, significantly as its own. Are there any plans for advertising, just marketing the Labrador region as a potential tourism hub?

S. CROCKER: That would primarily be done through the DMOs, because each region of province has a destination management organization that looks at the specific regions. As a province, we market the province but, obviously – and you would see that our ads are built that way. When we market the province, we market the province.

Sector-specific advertising is something that we can do. You think, if we were advertising to outfitters, we would primarily be, in a lot of cases, advertising Western and Labrador. Those types of direct advertising campaigns happen in

markets that most of us wouldn't see unless you're a –

J. BROWN: Living somewhere else.

S. CROCKER: Right. If you're an outfitter or if you're somebody who takes advantage of outfitters, you would see direct marketing to you, not as much as our broad campaign markets the entire province.

J. BROWN: Yeah, just going back to there. With the tourism idea and that, are there any plans of investment for anything for, say, different regions, like upgrading tourism Information Centres and things like that for the upcoming – we all know there is going to be an upcoming tourism boom eventually. Are we planning on any increases in tourism infrastructure, things like that to do this, or for the marketing or anything like that? It's been two years per se that we haven't utilized our infrastructure. Are we planning to get ready for this?

S. CROCKER: As a province, we have very little of our own provincial government-owned infrastructure. I think over the recent last decade we've seen tremendous improvements in the tourism infrastructure in our province if you think about accommodations or activities. We've really moved the ball and it's been done by a private industry.

Our primary role has been to support through marketing. I think that's why we've been successful because pre-COVID, I would argue with anybody that we were very, very successful when it came to getting people into our province and really changing the experience over the last decade.

I think if you just think about our own districts, our own regions of the province, the world class that we've built in the industry, whether it's accommodations or whether it's culinary, we can compete with anybody. Really, government just needs to be here to be a support mechanism because I think our industry is well prepared to get back in there. We just have to make sure right now that we give them every assistance we can to get them back in that market.

J. BROWN: Minister, we have so many Information Centres that are owned by the Department of Tourism, but there are, you said, nine affiliated ones?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, I think there are nine communities that actually – and I believe that was from many years ago when there was a divesture of some locations. I can just quickly –

J. BROWN: I was on the board of one of them.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, so Lab City; Gateway Labrador; Lab Straits Historical Development Corporation; Gander and Area Chamber right on the highway, they've taken that facility; and Bay Roberts. Yeah, those have been taken over.

J. BROWN: When was the last time their operating grants were reviewed to sustain their operation? When was the last time those grants were actually reviewed to be considered significant enough to keep those operations running?

S. CROCKER: I can tell you I've been in the role now for a couple of months. I haven't seen anybody approach me looking for more money for those facilities. I shouldn't say that because somebody will approach me tomorrow morning.

If you think about some of these – and I'm only familiar with a couple – they're running quite well because I think the communities that have them are using them.

J. BROWN: Yeah. When I was with one, we did approach government to increase our operating grant. We did approach at the time and they told us: No, they're going to be reviewed.

My question now is: Would you entertain reviewing them to make sure they are funded significantly to meet the world-class tourism marketing that we do?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's them being able to offer the supports. I'm not familiar with the one you're speaking of –

J. BROWN: Oh, yeah.

S. CROCKER: – in particular, but the two or three, at least two, that I am familiar with I think

they've been able to leverage themselves in a lot of cases to keep their operations up and running. It's certainly a model going forward that I would certainly entertain looking closer at.

J. BROWN: Yeah, because we advertise something and when someone shows up to this particular information site to make sure that they meet the expectation that the person is going to get.

S. CROCKER: Right. We could probably talk about that all night because that's a very much changed – the way people travel has changed over time, so much so that people don't necessarily get their information anymore on a pamphlet –

J. BROWN: And that's fair.

S. CROCKER: – along the side of the highway. They get it off a phone and their travel is planned in a different way. What we do need to make sure is that we're adapting with the times when it comes to this type of infrastructure.

J. BROWN: Absolutely.

Moving on to 2.1.02, Sector Research, I know this was moved because in the last budget it was technically still under the old department and it was just recently moved back over. From the totals there for operating, it was – what was I going to say? I lost my train of thought, sorry.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, that's okay.

J. BROWN: Yeah, so operation, like I said, it significantly – under Purchased Services, it was budgeted for \$176,000 but in actuals it's \$130,000. What's the justification for like – what was the Purchased Services and why did it come in under?

S. CROCKER: That reflects fewer partnership projects. Really, it's COVID related.

J. BROWN: Okay, so it is COVID related. It's not –

S. CROCKER: It's COVID related and that's why we would've seen the budget reinstated to pre-COVID (inaudible).

J. BROWN: Okay, so it wasn't – because I know, like I said, it's Sector Research, so it's obviously operating to find markets and stuff for us, I'm guessing that's what it's really doing.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

J. BROWN: But I'm just curious on why it was operating –

S. CROCKER: Is that where we would have –

J. BROWN: – under for COVID.

S. CROCKER: – (inaudible) the PAC?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: Yeah. One of the things we would've done in this, now, most recently, is where we would've helped fund PAC.

J. BROWN: Okay, so this is where PAC would've come from.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, this is where PAC would've gotten some of their resources.

J. BROWN: Okay, absolutely.

Like I said, now under Sector Research, is there any upcoming plans for this, for market research currently? Are we looking at anything significant here?

S. CROCKER: Market research is an ongoing thing.

J. BROWN: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: Totally. Again, it's been derailed by COVID. Finding that niche as we go back is going to be challenging. We have to find out who wants to come here. I didn't realize it until I got into the department, 80-plus per cent of the people that come to this province come from Ontario. Even when you talk about VFRs – visiting family and relatives – 80 per cent are Ontario. Correct if I'm wrong Judith, 80 per cent of our non-connected tourists are also Ontario and, after that, the next most important market to us is Alberta.

You can see the ties, even after you factor out visiting family and relatives, that the people that come here primarily come from Ontario and Alberta.

J. BROWN: All right, thank you, Minister, I'll pick this up after.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista, 2.1.01 to 2.3.03.

C. PARDY: I think this is the time now, Mr. Chair, that we move to the independents.

P. LANE: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: (Inaudible.) I thought we were going to do it at the end, but it's –

C. PARDY: I think we have two turns each and then we provide 10 minutes –

CHAIR: Okay.

C. PARDY: – to a maximum of 20 minutes.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Lake Melville.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you to the Committee. Thank you to the Chair.

I think, first of all, to this department, I want to extend my own personal appreciation and congratulations to the department for, through these amazingly trying times so many things were derailed by COVID-19, but the final caribou monument was done. I think that is truly a remarkable accomplishment. I'm well aware with the friendships I developed there myself in other roles and monitoring it, I just have to say thank you to the people in front of me and to those who've moved on from the department and those who are no longer with us who've played a role. I congratulate you all.

I heard a lot from the folks in Turkey – very emotional. So, therefore, my question, Minister, is I wonder if you can provide any update on post-pandemic and people starting to move around a little bit, what the plans might be for

the province to officially recognize the monument in person?

S. CROCKER: Yeah. That is absolutely something that we plan on doing. Obviously, the plans – I think one iteration of the plans would be this coming September, I don't think that's possible. I actually just recently looked, I think Turkey is at 18 per cent vaccination, so I don't see it this September. I think you quite possibly would agree that September would be the best time for us to do it. That's the information that I have. We would certainly look at September 2022, if we're not able to do it this September. The realistic timeline of doing it this September is not ...

P. TRIMPER: Thank you, Minister.

My suggestion would be, as with the establishment of the Caribou just a few weeks or a couple of months ago, I would not wait for an anniversary; I would grab the opportunity. There is so much that can derail the importance of us being together and I would urge you to just – when the opportunity presents itself to grab it. If I have any personal capability myself, I will be there to join you and cheer everyone on.

S. CROCKER: Thank you and I certainly appreciate – I know and respect your involvement in the process and certainly take that back because that's an interesting ...

P. TRIMPER: A question, just a detail about the budget, I haven't had a chance to speak to, frankly, anyone in the department, but I was pleased to see today, I am just trying to understand and I guess here is a good opportunity, I saw reference today to an Artistic Assistance Program and I've also seen reference to an Artist Support Program.

Are those two separate programs, different wordings? I believe it is referring to supporting artists from Labrador to participate in events, opportunities in Newfoundland.

S. CROCKER: I'm not sure I can get down there, Mr. Trimper, but I think two of the references today – one of the references would have been allowing artists to be involved in the support program, the THSP program. One of the other references would have been the final \$1

million to bring ArtsNL up to its \$5 million. There was a reference as well to the continuation of supporting artist programs in Labrador as a region of the province.

There were specifics, Jamie, on Labrador, I think?

J. CHIPPETT: I don't think that funding is in our budget, maybe it is in Minister Dempster's budget.

P. TRIMPER: That's just it, it has been missing. There hasn't been financial support for artists to travel. I have been lobbying to see if something could be done; it was hoped last year through discussions with ArtsNL. I'm looking at my colleague to the west of myself who also was involved in that and I think I'm looking and get a nod from Torngat Mountains and probably from behind myself. Labrador was hoping for some financial support, I think in the vicinity of \$50,000, it wasn't a lot but it would make a lot of difference for many artists to offset their travel costs.

S. CROCKER: That is certainly something that we can take away to have a look at, at that price tag.

It's a conversation certainly worth having, whether it's with ArtsNL or the department, but absolutely something we can certainly take away.

P. TRIMPER: We have done some of that. It would be nice if something was earmarked. I've been part of those conversations between sort of Labrador leads at the Lawrence O'Brien centre, for example, and the director for ArtsNL. But the importance was just to see something that could be there. We were suggesting that ArtsNL could be actually part of the vetting process for applications. So take it out of government, but something could be there and the artists would recognize. I just would encourage you, if you could, to establish something.

I know we haven't reached there yet, but I'm going to use the opportunity before I pass it over to my colleague. Pippy Park: very familiar from previous roles I've had before. There is an opportunity with Pippy Park for some investment in some campsites. I would have

difficulty describing them, but perhaps people in the department would be aware of it. I just wondered if that opportunity is still there. I'm looking at the interest in camping, revenues to be generated, things opening up. Is that still on the radar of this department? Now that it's with you, versus it used to be with Environment, previously.

S. CROCKER: I think that like everything right now outside of government and ABCs, it's something that we would certainly look at.

Pippy Park, I guess, is unique in a lot of ways because the reality is we're sitting in Pippy Park tonight – and how we work with that. Pippy Park is not – for the value of Pippy Park – and maybe to your point, government doesn't put a lot of money into Pippy Park. There certainly might be an opportunity there, but it's something certainly that we'll be looking at as we review all of our ABCs.

P. TRIMPER: Okay. I do see it potentially as a good revenue generator, given the demand.

I also want to put a plug in, Minister, for Expedition 51°. This is a partnership between Labrador and Quebec on joint tourism opportunities. To me, there's a great opportunity here: As we would look for partnership with the federal government, here's an adjacent provincial government. As our highways develop – and I saw a reference today in the Budget Speech to the Trans-Labrador Highway – I think it's a golden opportunity. I heard you say earlier that a lot of the programs are within the Destination Labrador, but I would put on your radar that an opportunity hopefully will appear for some additional funding to support them on signage, on co-operation.

They're developing a strategy there. I'm not sure if you've seen the logos, but there has been a lot of work done over the last few years. I just checked today and meetings are ongoing with your department.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, to your point, when you said Expedition 51° I knew I had heard it before or seen it before, but it was in my former role in Transportation and Works that we had those discussions. Absolutely, I think there's an important tourism link there as we go forward.

P. TRIMPER: Okay, thank you. I'm going to just ask one more question.

I wanted to go back – my colleague for Labrador West jumped on me – with the Main River and the ATV trail. Just – I'm sorry, it was for Bonavista. I'm also concerned about how that situation arose. I've also been reading some of the commentary from Members of the Committee. I was involved 20 years ago, I think – 25 years ago – in the establishment of that river as a Heritage River, so I understand it well.

We really need to figure out a way to really take the politics out of these commitments to future generations. If there's nothing else that we do right, we need to get it right for the kids that come along behind us. This is a situation.

One of the pleas I'm seeing from the community: Is there an opportunity to go back and revisit that decision and actually demobilize that ATV trail?

S. CROCKER: I think that's something that we have or we are exploring. Not an easy answer. For the future, I think we can fix it with regulatory changes that would not let it go outside of a process. The going back, obviously, becomes, in lots of ways, a legal issue. You would appreciate how do we get there, how do you find a way to go backwards on something.

P. TRIMPER: I sure do and appreciate it. We are very lucky in this relatively small province to have four UNESCO jewels. The status when we receive them is extremely important. It's part of our international marketing. As you say, we are world-class; we need to respect our commitments the same way. I would appreciate and encourage any efforts.

I'm going to stop there and let my colleague take up the time.

S. CROCKER: Thank you.

P. TRIMPER: Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'm just looking for direction. Are we going to – ?

P. LANE: I'll take the second (inaudible).

CHAIR: All right.

2.1.01 to 2.3.03, the hon. the Member for Bonavista, any further questions?

C. PARDY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would personally concur with what my hon. colleague stated about at least the pursuit of demobilization. That's a commendable pursuit. I think you would have a lot of the population that would be behind you in that pursuit.

2.1.03, Strategic Product Development, would that be a relatively new addition? I know it wasn't in Education last year. I'm just thinking now from what I read this. And what would this division do?

S. CROCKER: This division takes a strategic approach to growth and high-quality, competitive tourism products – long-term economic value.

C. PARDY: Can you give a specific example?

J. CHIPPETT: Just to the first question, tourism product development was always in the department for – I guess first when I started in the department in 2003, there was a division responsible for product development. As an example, if you look at our Purchased Services, we would do partnership projects with industry.

I'll give you an example of one of those projects: a season extension initiative. In various years the province works on providing funding to operators who look at trying to stretch the traditional tourism season. That's obviously a big part of our tourism product. Similarly, we do sector partnership agreements with outfitters that we talked about just a few minutes ago.

It's called Strategic Product Development because it was a broader division under the former TCII. But with the change in the department, we're back to really having a tourism product development division.

S. CROCKER: I think it's something that would answer some of the questions that MHA Brown had with regards to how you get into

specific niches. Because again, the Outfitters Association was one group that we had an agreement for \$100,000 with last year. They would get into their markets. I guess what it is, is strategic markets that we find.

C. PARDY: Good.

If we can move on to 2.1.04, Marble Mountain; \$1.5 million spent last year and now we're back down then to the previous one. What was the money directed for last year?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, that's the snow clearing, deck repairs, insurance, payroll and refunds for season pass holders.

C. PARDY: Would you remind repeating that, my apologies.

S. CROCKER: Snow clearing, deck repairs, insurance, payroll and refunds for season pass holders.

C. PARDY: So I'm guessing now the three items that you had mentioned, with the exception of the refunds, that would be standard for years prior to that. The difference would be the refunds on the season last year?

S. CROCKER: Deck repairs, I think, were a major component. One of the challenges with Marble Mountain is the aging infrastructure. It's really difficult for government to operate and maintain a ski hill.

C. PARDY: Understandable.

In last year's Estimates, they talked about the release of an RFP. That may have been out for the last couple of years, maybe.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, I think the initial release was late '18. It was late 2018.

C. PARDY: But no takers?

S. CROCKER: We haven't been successful, yeah.

C. PARDY: No.

When we read about now in the budget about looking at what we do with Marble Mountain,

we really don't have a lot of options there. We can't divest itself if it's not something that someone is willing to invest in. We've had two or three years attempting to do so.

The other thing I would like to know is what exactly does it cost the province? I know when we run the ski hill; we know the value of the ski hill for the West Coast, but I'm sure we must have it costed out what the economic impact on the West Coast would be, whereas our figure and the department would be a linear one but there's a bigger picture here of what that hill would mean to the economic development on the West Coast.

Do we have numbers in relation –?

S. CROCKER: I'll defer to the deputy.

J. CHIPPETT: We had numbers but they were some time ago. We're doing a new analysis to inform what our next steps might be in terms of economic impact.

I guess just to clarify a little bit on the RFP. I think one of the time periods you need to consider is in the middle of a pandemic it may not be the best time to try to seek private sector investment. I guess that's a part of – along with the economic analysis it's to kind of rethink strategy in terms of how we might proceed with next steps on that resort.

S. CROCKER: I guess to the deputy's point, really for the last 20 months, whatever it's been now, it's hard to try to sell a resort where you don't have tourists, you don't have a whole pile of liquidity out there looking to invest and set operations. But it's something that's important for us to do, because your point is well taken that there is an economic value, winter tourism value. It's a great winter tourism product, but I'm convinced that we do have to find a way to deliver it differently because to simply just to even think about the infrastructure requirements that are coming – this year there was an issue with a cable. I mentioned earlier about the deck repairs. This is an aging piece of infrastructure that the province is going to be really challenged going forward to get the infrastructure dollars in there that the facility needs.

C. PARDY: The deputy minister had mentioned that we did do that analysis back some time ago. How far off were we from being revenue neutral, taking into account the economic development for the West Coast of the province? Were we in the ballpark?

J. CHIPPETT: I couldn't answer that. We can get an answer for you but I don't recall numbers right off the top of my head.

C. PARDY: Okay, we'd love to see that if that's – if you can put that on your to-do list that would be much appreciated.

2.1.05, Grants and Subsidies there are doubled. I'm not sure if you mentioned that, Minister. I know there are expenses that come up but this is under the Grants and Subsidies, 2.105.

S. CROCKER: That's additional funding for capital related to purchases and repairs. That was a cable that was broken.

C. PARDY: Okay, at that time.

Pippy Park, my colleague from Lake Melville spoke very highly of Pippy Park and he looked at an extension to Pippy Park. But it appears that the funding for Pippy Park has been reduced this year, the Grants and Subsidies. I'm not sure what the rationale – why the about \$12,000.

S. CROCKER: The \$12,000 was a decrease. That was a previous budget decision, correct Jamie?

J. CHIPPETT: Yes.

S. CROCKER: There is some attrition numbers in there as well; \$7,100 for attrition.

C. PARDY: I notice there are no revenue lines on the parks. I'm assuming the revenue is contained by the entity itself for Pippy Park to operate.

S. CROCKER: Pippy Park, yeah.

The revenue is retained by Pippy Park. This is truly an operating grant or this is our contribution to the operations of Pippy Park.

C. PARDY: I'm assuming you, as the department, would know what that revenue is each year. When you give out a grant it is nice to know what the return would be because it is likely that what they take in exceeds the grant that you give out – conceivable.

J. CHIPPETT: That's possible, but they do report on it every year in their annual report in terms of what revenue they would get.

S. CROCKER: This comes back to – I did hear some, I don't know if emotion is the right word from the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands earlier this afternoon when we talked about the idea of all ABCs being responsible to the new Committee of the House of Assembly on budgets, and this would be, again, one of those entities that would become subject to that type of an inquiry.

CHAIR: I'll remind the hon. Member his speaking time has expired.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West on 2.1.01 to 2.3.03.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Going back to Marble Mountain again. The minister alluded to aging infrastructure. Do we have an idea of what needs to be replaced at Marble Mountain or do we have an idea of upcoming infrastructure issues that may rise that we'll see come up in line items in the future?

S. CROCKER: I don't have that at hand. I don't know if you have anything, Jamie, on what the infrastructure deficit is at Marble right now?

J. CHIPPETT: I can tell you that the decking is – this year the repairs we did was a fix from egress perspective, from a fire safety perspective, that decking is basically the age of the resort so that is one significant project. The physical envelope of some of the sheds and the accommodation facility there is another major piece. Then the third piece, the minister spoke to, was the Black Maria lift, so cable installation is a significant expenditure as well so that would be three of the major projects that are top of mind.

J. BROWN: Okay. Then, obviously, the unforeseen –

S. CROCKER: Right, it's all moving parts.

J. BROWN: Yeah, so obviously this is going to become a – as this ages, we're going to see more and more infrastructure need for this facility. All right, perfect.

Thank you, Deputy Minister and Minister.

Park Operations, 2.2.02. My first question is: Where are we with the Eagle River waterway park and moving along with that in Labrador?

S. CROCKER: I'm going to turn that one over to the deputy. I know it is something that I was recently briefed on, but we're going through the processes, the consultation processes that are needed to do that. The mapping process is scheduled for this summer – some more of the mapping this summer – but it's certainly a project that's coming along quite well.

I'll turn it over for more detail from the deputy.

J. CHIPPETT: Consultations have started with the Innu Nation and NunatuKavut. We're waiting now to launch the public consultation process. You should see news on the public consultation process in very short order. We're pretty excited about that project and getting it off the ground.

You'll see in this activity that some of our revenue is up. It reflects federal revenue and support from, actually, private foundations who provided funding so we could do some of the mapping work, some of the flyover work and the conservation assessment.

J. BROWN: Excellent.

J. CHIPPETT: Those things are happening. Delayed a little bit last year because we couldn't bring people in to do some of the helicopter work and so on, but hopefully we'll move it right along this summer.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Deputy Minister.

Another thing, too, is with the T'Railway. The maintenance and repairs obviously to the

T'Railway is always ongoing. Is there any more work planned to be done with the T'Railway for upgrading or anything like that, or are we just keeping more of a maintenance for that?

S. CROCKER: The T'Railway is an absolute struggle for this department. We're not equipped, in lots of cases, to deal with it and we are doing band-aid approaches. It's just as well to say what it is. We're having discussions with Transportation and Infrastructure around the T'Railway.

It's an important piece of our infrastructure, but it's one that's very hard to maintain in this department. But, again, we get lots of good co-operation from Transportation and Infrastructure. Hopefully we'll get to a place where we can still market the asset and find ways to keep it going because, obviously, we all see the Friday afternoon or the Sunday night news releases saying we have a washout in such-and-such a place. It's extremely challenging to maintain a T'Railway.

J. BROWN: Oh, absolutely, because my old man even talks about getting his quad and doing the T'Railway. It seems to be a very fun activity that people seem to take as go from one end to the other on the T'Railway. So it is marketable but, obviously, it's a very expensive marketing asset.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely. Again, it's a small market but I know if you talk to the Town of Port aux Basques, as an example, they'll talk about some infrastructure needs there. There are a lot of people taking advantage of the fact of put an ATV on the ferry in North Sydney, come across, do either-or which way, because you don't have to backtrack. We're very unique in that way.

There is certainly opportunity there because you get off in Port aux Basques and go back Argentia, or get off in Argentia and go back Port aux Basques. We're a very unique market for that and there is a niche. It's primarily, I think, Atlantic Canada and the Eastern Seaboard, so there's an opportunity.

J. BROWN: It's a very East Coast kind of activity. Is there any idea about probably finding a way to market that as a way? Is there any

approach of thinking maybe this is a marketable thing that we can actually work with?

S. CROCKER: Absolutely. I think there's a growing market for adventure tourism; I see it in my own district all the time with some of the trail restoration that's happening there. That fits to, in lots of cases, a local market. Yeah, there's certainly a market in Atlantic Canada and, to some extent, the Eastern Seaboard, the northeast that would be interested in that type of product.

J. BROWN: Last year, we saw the extended season for the provincial parks. Did that work out for us? Did we get a positive return on the extended park season?

S. CROCKER: Park the COVID challenges for a minute. I think the last camping season was as successful as it could be. I think we've seen more and more people in this province –and I go back to the remarks from the Member for Lake Melville, I think he mentioned camping and the uptake in camping around the province last year.

We just rebranded our parks and new website. Trying to get a new look and feel around it because there is certainly an opportunity for our provincial parks. Look forward to finding ways to help modernize them and get them to a place where they can be highlighted in the way they should be. We have a lot of beautiful provincial parks around the province, camping and day parks.

J. BROWN: Absolutely. With the extended park season and everything like that, do you think going forward that will be the new park season?

S. CROCKER: I think that's something that will be determined by demand. I'm not an expert in the field but I think we really have to see where people go and what people want to do. I think one of the results of climate change has been our falls are getting different than they would have been in the past. So, yeah, if there is an extended season and we can make it affordable to the province, because we do have a lot of people who work in these parks, it's certainly something that we can look at.

J. BROWN: Absolutely.

Now, going with the parks, obviously, we did rebranding and everything like that. What was the cost to the department for that rebranding?

S. CROCKER: I'm going to defer.

J. CHIPPETT: I don't have that number here. It was primarily done in-house through the government's marketing and branding office. So it would be largely their staff time, as I understand it.

Judith, do you have any ...? No? Okay.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, so it's not something that we outsourced.

J. BROWN: Okay.

S. CROCKER: It was done in-house.

J. BROWN: Excellent.

S. CROCKER: Anybody who hasn't had the opportunity, go on and have a look at it; the rebranding is really good. Actually, the photos that are used in the rebranding are all from a photo contest we ran last summer for our park users. So we solicited their photos for a photo contest and that's how we built the photo programs around our parks.

J. BROWN: Oh, excellent. So it was provincially driven right down to the residents?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, residents did the picture taking.

J. BROWN: Going back to 2.2.02 for Park Operations, you have federal revenue there. That's the money for the Eagle River parkway and a few other things there?

S. CROCKER: That's the jobs and the – sorry, 2.2 ...?

J. BROWN: 2.2.02, Park Operations and federal revenue.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, there are things in that federal revenue; one of it would be we have some green job funding this year. We're providing 40 additional summer jobs in the parks, 100 per cent federally funded.

Yeah, there we go. That's the green space jobs. There is some funding there, \$226,000, for Eagle River. There is some money in there, disaster assistance for the T'Railway from the 2020 Snowmageddon. We are actually switching three of our parks from diesel to solar this year. There's some green money in there as well from the federal government to do that.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Minister.

CHAIR: Thank you.

I remind the hon. Member his speaking time has expired.

We are halfway through our Estimates for this evening so I think we'll probably take 10 minutes. We'll be back at 6:40.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let's take nine, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: We can take nine.

AN HON. MEMBER: That way we'll finish a little earlier.

S. CROCKER: You want to go home and watch that hockey game.

CHAIR: Back again at 6:40, please.

Recess

CHAIR: Thank you for being so prompt.

We'll continue on with 2.1.01 to 2.3.03.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before I continue with the questions on the heading 2.2.02, Parks Operations, I just want to chime in on – my colleague from Labrador West talked about the significance of T'Railways. I think the minister had expressed a concern or stated that we need to find ways to market the asset. It is an asset.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

C. PARDY: You referenced your area. I would reference the Bonavista Peninsula and say that economic development that would be on the Bonavista Peninsula with people started to get down to Trinity and Bonavista. Remember, one thing about the T'Railways and what the tourism – I'm not sure if I read it now in the Premier's Advisory Council or not, but we talked about strategizing to find 12 months of the year usage.

I know that the all-terrain vehicles, the ones that use the trail on my subdivision, there are probably a half a dozen. They're responsible users and they do a lot of travelling with that. Their desire to get down to the historic part of the lower part of the peninsula is not possible. There is broken trail going down there and we know that going down as far as Lethbridge area, they boast about what an economic return they have in that area, but bar none, there is nobody saying they don't desire to go down to Trinity and Bonavista.

S. CROCKER: Anybody in your area who wants to look at a successful group in dealing with the T'Railway, look no further than the Conception Bay North T'Railway association and the work that they have done in Conception Bay North. It is remarkable, they have done it with very little or no actual government funding. They have done it through a lot of volunteer and a lot of hard work, but they have been extremely successful.

Very challenging because of, obviously, the infrastructure that is needed, but it is good for in-province tourism and I think there is a real opportunity here for an adventure tourism – an experience that actually helps – primarily through, I would suggest, would likely be the shoulder season because of the type of person that it is attracting.

C. PARDY: Yes.

Part of your strategic planning is a good one in relation to this.

When you say CBN T'Railway association got very little or no – one or the other. Very little or no?

S. CROCKER: \$995, I think.

C. PARDY: Next to no.

S. CROCKER: To my knowledge I think there was one –

C. PARDY: Okay.

S. CROCKER: Yes. To date.

C. PARDY: Good.

It should have more.

Park Operations, we have a \$600,000 increase in Purchased Services. Can you qualify what that was for?

S. CROCKER: That is the wash from the federal monies. That's the federal monies in. That reflects the T'Railway repairs from the blizzard and the solar project in the three provincial parks. They are offset by a 100 per cent federal revenue.

C. PARDY: Okay. That's the disaster relief?

S. CROCKER: Disaster relief and the switching the three parks off diesel to solar.

C. PARDY: Okay.

We have the revenue from the Parks Operations at a mere \$500. I know that you didn't account for the revenue coming in earlier when I addressed it, but surely, goodness, this is not the revenue from our Parks Operations here, \$500.

S. CROCKER: Parks Operations fees go directly to general revenue. This decrease of \$500 from the – I'm going to read you right from the book – 2020-21 budget and the '20-'21 budget projected revised reflects no revenue obtained from the sale of history books and posters.

C. PARDY: Okay.

S. CROCKER: We account for every cent.

C. PARDY: So the money from the bookings and the reservations they'll go towards general revenue?

S. CROCKER: They go to general – sorry, go ahead, Jamie.

J. CHIPPETT: If I could clarify, last year we brought in about \$900,000 in revenue through camping fees. That's about \$850,000 in nights sold and about \$50,000 in your seasonal passes or day-use passes. Then the camping reservation system is offered by a third party vendor. When the public pays to make a reservation or change a reservation, that fee is actually kept by the provider and that is the way government pays for that service.

C. PARDY: That third party looking after that service, Deputy Minister, I guess that's probably tendered, contracted out every – yearly?

J. CHIPPETT: Yes. We did five years with a potential of a two-year extension when we went to RFP the last time. We'll be going to RFP very soon for a third party provider for that service.

C. PARDY: Good.

We have 32 parks in our system. Are all revenue-neutral? Do they bring in enough money that would equate to the expenses that would – 32 parks.

S. CROCKER: Thirteen approximately are charge at, because the rest would be day parks primarily. There isn't enough revenue to offset the expense, but I would make the argument that we have a great park system in this province and it's something that we should certainly preserve.

C. PARDY: It's an investment.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

C. PARDY: It's an investment.

Of the 13 paying parks that we have, I guess we have a variety of, we'll say, the occupancy rates. Which parks would jump out to state that would have a high degree of occupancy?

S. CROCKER: Our three marquee parks are Butter Pot, Notre Dame and Barachois. That's our three leading parks, but we also see strong performances in parks like La Manche, Sandbanks and –

C. PARDY: Lockston.

S. CROCKER: – Lockston. We see success in all our provincial parks and I am a proponent of doing what we can to get more investment in there. I think I mentioned a couple of times already tonight the idea of the parks that are on diesel and getting them off diesel. I think in a provincial park if we're on diesel, we shouldn't be.

C. PARDY: Minister, I'm a big advocate of that as well.

Another thing is the programming that we offer at these provincial parks is a great investment into the future youth, the children and the future citizens that we would have.

J. CHIPPETT: Just on the reservation system, if I could.

C. PARDY: Sure.

J. CHIPPETT: (Inaudible.)

CHAIR: The deputy minister, please.

J. CHIPPETT: Sorry.

Butter Pot reservations are up 32 per cent, La Manche is up 23 per cent, Lockston Path is up 73 per cent and Sandbanks is up 780 per cent.

C. PARDY: Deputy Minister, when you say up from, those are figures that are from the past season, the COVID season?

J. CHIPPETT: I don't think we used the COVID season. We used, I believe, the season before because we started late because of COVID.

C. PARDY: Okay.

J. CHIPPETT: So they're based on the similar time frame, the year prior to COVID.

C. PARDY: At least you have comparables.

J. CHIPPETT: That's right.

C. PARDY: But I would say last year was good, too, for the short time that you had I would think

that you would've found that because people were itching to get out.

So there's no upgrade to the parks' reservation system because that's contracted out to a third party, that's looked after. Okay.

2.3.01, in the Grants and Subsidies: Can you indicate which programs are included in this line, 2.3.01?

S. CROCKER: It that Sport and Recreation?

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: Okay.

Grants and Subsidies, so there is a reflection here of \$2.7 million for Canada-NL bilateral agreement on sport participation in response to COVID and so this is an offset with federal revenue. So that would be the increase there. Looking for a list of who gets – the list will be in your binder when you get it.

C. PARDY: That's fine, no need to read through it, save that. That's good.

S. CROCKER: There was a federal offset from COVID as well.

C. PARDY: We've got the revenue, the federal revenue and I'm assuming now that that was COVID related.

S. CROCKER: That is the COVID –

C. PARDY: That's what you're referencing now?

S. CROCKER: That's what I'm referencing when I say federal revenue, yes.

CHAIR: I remind the hon. Member his speaking time is expired.

Go ahead, Minister, and finish what you were saying.

S. CROCKER: Thanks.

Just to the Member's point. Yeah, the big increase is the COVID money. There is also a

bilateral agreement that brings in funding on a regular basis as well. Correct, Deputy? Yeah.

CHAIR: The Chair recognizes the Member for Labrador West, 2.1.01 to 2.3.03.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Under Sport and Recreation there, are we working with Education to provide more supports in schools post-pandemic?

S. CROCKER: I guess the quick answer is yes if you mean – the school programming is obviously the school programming. But do you mean the use of the infrastructure?

J. BROWN: Not only infrastructure but looking at some afterschool varsity programs that are not probably a part of the school program but also using the school's facility like certain sports that may not be in the school but also something that the region is interested in. We get that a lot, too.

S. CROCKER: I had a conversation last week, I think it was Rec NL and this is a topic that they bring up that I fully support is that in many communities the school, and particularly the school gymnasium, is the only indoor recreational facility. I'm not sure we're utilizing them enough. I think communities should be given, as much as possible, full access to those taxpayer-owned buildings when it comes to sports programs, not only for youth but for seniors.

A lot of the things that seniors, 50-plus groups and the like could be doing in these buildings in the evenings and weekends; not sure we're utilizing it fully enough but it's something that I think the Department of Education, and I know I've spoken to the minister about it, but these are assets of the taxpayers of the province and we should be fully utilizing those facilities.

J. BROWN: Absolutely. Thank you, Minister.

Could the minister provide a list of programs and organizations that receive grants and subsidies from the Healthy Living Fund, and what other projects would be coming up?

S. CROCKER: So there is a link – if I'm correct – in the binder when you get it that

brings you to the Community Healthy Living Fund. And also in your binder you will find the list of the 2021-2022 grants.

J. BROWN: Okay, perfect. Thank you, Minister.

How many athletes are currently sponsored under the Athletic Excellence Fund?

S. CROCKER: I'm going to defer.

J. CHIPPETT: We can certainly get you that number. I don't know the number off the type of my head.

J. BROWN: Okay, perfect. Thank you, Deputy Minister.

Has there been any initiatives taken by this department to encourage physical activity during the lockdown, if so, was there any cost or anything associated with that?

S. CROCKER: I'm not aware of anything we've generated ourselves. We've seen it during the lockdown, though. People have taken it on as their own initiative. The use of our walking trails in this province has grown exponentially during COVID. There are great opportunities – and I think COVID actually opened us up, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to our own backyard. We've certainly used that, and I would hope to see that trend continue.

You would've seen in the budget today the Physical Activity Tax Credit. For the people that can avail of this I think it's great. But there are lots of things that we can be doing in nature to promote physical activity.

J. BROWN: So, obviously, I guess it's a good opportunity for the sports and recreation side to merge with the parks side to promote the joint use of outdoor activity.

Going on to the Community Sports Facilities there. Obviously, these are facilities throughout the province. What facilities are currently –?

S. CROCKER: That's Community Healthy Living, right?

J. BROWN: Yeah, so that's under 2.3.02. What current facilities are remaining under the Community Sports Facilities?

S. CROCKER: So really that's the grants through the Community Healthy Living Fund.

J. BROWN: Okay, that's not the actual –

S. CROCKER: No, our facility will come up in the next – yeah, so 2.3.03 is the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre.

So, yeah, 2.3.02 is primarily, or well is, the Community Healthy Living grants.

J. BROWN: Okay. So 2.3.03 would be the training centre. So how many facilities would be left in that there now? Because there was Stephenville, and is Happy Valley-Goose Bay still technically – yeah.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, the Happy Valley-Goose Bay facility, I think, TI is reviewing. There are some structural issues and the wellness centre I think –

J. BROWN: Was going to replace that one.

S. CROCKER: Yes, I defer to the Member for Lake Melville, but I think the wellness centre is well under way now.

P. TRIMPER: It should be opened June.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

J. BROWN: Once that is, the other one will close and that's it.

S. CROCKER: We have to wait and see what comes back from Transportation and Infrastructure when it comes to what, structurally, is the challenge. We'll see what the report says.

J. BROWN: Okay.

The structures are still handled by TI. You just look after the grant for operations, is it?

S. CROCKER: Yes.

J. BROWN: Okay.

Currently, what grants are you operating? Which facilities are you granting to?

S. CROCKER: Right now it's the provincial Sports Centre on Crosbie Road.

J. BROWN: That's it, after the closure of Lake Melville?

J. CHIPPETT: Lake Melville or the Labrador Training Centre, there's not a grant for that. It's run through the operational funds in Transportation and Infrastructure.

J. BROWN: Okay.

J. CHIPPETT: The only facility we actually grant is –

J. BROWN: Okay, the only one – okay, that makes more sense. My apologies.

That's the end of my questioning for this section.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Before I go to the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands, do you have anything left in 2.1.01 to 2.3.03?

C. PARDY: Yes.

CHAIR: Is there much?

C. PARDY: No, I can probably do it in this period of time.

CHAIR: Okay, all right.

C. PARDY: Because you're looking at getting to the next section.

CHAIR: Absolutely, and I'll let the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands start it off.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Your diligence on keeping on schedule is to be commended.

CHAIR: Thank you, Sir, thank you.

C. PARDY: To be commended.

2.3.02, Community Sports Facilities, isn't that the pools? We have three provincial pools. Would they not come under that one? You said it didn't, so where would the pools be found?

J. CHIPPETT: They're back in the first heading, under Sport and Recreation. I think it's 2.3.01 maybe.

C. PARDY: That's the next section we're doing.

S. CROCKER: No.

C. PARDY: Oh, we just passed.

J. CHIPPETT: Yes.

2.3.01, the provincial pools are in that section.

C. PARDY: 2.2.01, I've just got the heading C.A. Pippy Park Commission.

J. CHIPPETT: No, 2.3.01.

C. PARDY: Yes, okay, the previous one.

On the pools, we have three provincial pools. Would that be the revenue that we have see in Sport and Recreation here? Would the revenue from those pools be found in this line, the Revenue - Provincial?

S. CROCKER: Yes, it would.

C. PARDY: It would be.

S. CROCKER: It would be. Provincial revenue would be right at the pools, and that's why you see the budget of \$337,000 and the revised was \$49,000. That's the revenue for the provincial pools.

C. PARDY: Okay.

I know the value of the pools; I'm a big supporter of the pools. I'm assuming, then, the three pools, there's a variety in those three as well, as far as the revenue that would be brought in on them. There's a variety on the ability to be revenue-neutral or –

S. CROCKER: Yeah, I'm not sure (inaudible) –

C. PARDY: – the amount taken in, I'm sure, is reflected in the population.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

C. PARDY: We don't have those figures?

S. CROCKER: No.

C. PARDY: No. Okay.

In the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Centre – and that's the one on Crosbie Road?

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: Well-used and a great asset to the province, there is no doubt about that. I notice there's no revenue line here in this one either, so I'm assuming the revenue from here would either go to general again or it would be general revenue or subsumed by the centre itself.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: Okay, yes. That's the subsidy to the centre. The centre will retain – I guess, similar to the Pippy Park situation, they would retain their revenue. This is what we give them to offset their costs.

C. PARDY: Okay.

Can you tell me what the revenue is on the Crosbie Road sportsplex?

S. CROCKER: We can certainly get that for you.

C. PARDY: Okay, that's good.

Just one final note before I conclude, Mr. Chair. You had stated earlier: The community usage of the schools.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: No doubt. I think if they're put there by the taxpayers, there ought to be no obstacles or hurdles that would allow the residents of the communities to use these schools. I know the previous premier had a conversation one time, and I think we probably all concurred that there are lots of obstacles and

barriers to getting access to those buildings. We need to be quite clear going forward that they are for the communities and they are available, under the regulations that we would flesh out and the obvious ones. So that is good.

I conclude there, Mr. Chair, with that section, and thank you for the allowance of time.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Shall 2.1.01 to 2.3.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.3.03 carried.

CHAIR: May I ask the Clerk to read the next section of subheads, please.

CLERK: 3.1.01 to 3.1.08 inclusive.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.08 inclusive carry?

The hon. the Member for Mount Pearl - Southlands.

P. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just have some general questions and they're going to be scattered all throughout because I only have the 10 minutes.

First question, I want to go back to – I think this was asked at the very beginning by somebody – that situation that happened up on the Northern Peninsula in the provincial park and allowing a road to go through there and so on. You say that there is a piece of legislation that says that the Minister of Tourism can override environmental legislation and just allow that to happen without respecting the environmental process and having a public hearing and all that stuff. Is that correct? Is that what you said?

S. CROCKER: That is a piece of the regulation, yes.

P. LANE: And I'm trying to understand the rationale for that. Obviously, we have environmental legislation for a reason. If it was for anything else, you would have to have an environmental process and the public would be notified and all that. What makes this situation so special that it could happen? Why is that section in the legislation?

S. CROCKER: It is a 2001 regulation and I think this is another one of those circumstances that shows you that regular review of our regulations is something that we should be obviously doing, because what might have been okay in 2001 probably doesn't fit two decades later.

P. LANE: I appreciate that, Minister. I also appreciate that you're not the minister involved, but I think that if we all recognize that here and now, I would have thought that the minister of the day would have recognized that when he just allowed this to happen.

Just wondering, so this was put in place so that an outfitter could have access to his outfitting camp by going through a provincial road. That is what was reported, I think, in CBC when I read it. Would that be correct?

S. CROCKER: This is approximately a one-kilometre ATV trail coming off the Nalcor transmission line. This really became an issue once Nalcor built the transmission line coming down the Northern Peninsula and it gave easy access.

I stand to be corrected on this, but what happened is at one point that the Nalcor line is, I think, 30 metres or 30 feet from the boundary of the park. This gave an easy access, and my understanding is there was a lot of indiscriminate ATV use happening in this area because of the Nalcor transmission line. This is what precipitated this. I think the argument for doing so was to get people on a single trail versus just indiscriminate, off here and off there.

P. LANE: But there would have been a request for this road put in by the – again, I'm going by the news story, which may or may not be totally factually correct. This road would have been requested by this outfitter from Deer Lake who asked to have this road go in so that he could get

access to his outfitting camp. That's what the story said.

S. CROCKER: Yes. Obviously, the decision was a few years ago. But, yeah, it was a request made and it was a request granted.

P. LANE: Besides that outfitter from Deer Lake that was in the news, are there any other outfitting camps that are also getting access from that road? Or was that the only one? Is there another one up there?

S. CROCKER: That's the only one that I'm aware of.

P. LANE: All right, thank you.

S. CROCKER: That's the only one in the park, right?

P. LANE: What's that?

I was of the impression there was another outfitter up there besides the one that was in the news that was accessing that road for their business. To your knowledge, that's not the case?

S. CROCKER: Not to my knowledge. The deputy might have ...

J. CHIPPETT: So I think in the article you referenced there was reference to another outfitter. I'm not aware if that outfitter is actually in the park or not. We haven't had a request from anybody else that I'm aware of for ATV access.

S. CROCKER: There's (inaudible).

J. CHIPPETT: That's right.

P. LANE: Yes, the information that I received, which may or may not be accurate, is that there was a request made from the outfitter from Deer Lake, and that's who got that road put in. But then there's another outfitter that's benefiting from that same road who is another outfitter in that same area.

S. CROCKER: That could be, if they're using the same road.

P. LANE: Yes.

S. CROCKER: The request would have come from the individuals who that request was approved.

P. LANE: All right, moving on.

In terms of the parks, I had a couple of constituents reach out to me about this one. You've kind of already answered it, so I'm not going to belabour it because of the time.

I did have a couple of people who are campers – I'm not a camper, to be honest with you. If there's no colour cable TV, that's roughing it in my world. Camping is not my thing. This person is and he goes to the parks and so on. He goes to – Butter Pot Park, I believe, is the one he's talking about.

He said: When you get a chance, Paul, and the House opens, bring this up. He said: We've been going to Butter Pot and other parks for years and at one point in time, it used to be really great; they used to have nice programs for the kids. They used to have hiking programs and they used to have scavenger hunts. They used to have – not a drive-in movie but like a movie screen there somewhere; everything was kept up. There was a nice playground. It was a nice experience.

He said things have gone downhill over the last couple of years, not just because of COVID, but even prior to that they stopped the movies and they stopped this and that. I don't know if that's true, I'm only going by what the man told me. He said the bottom line is, and I guess the point is, we only have a number of provincial parks. We're talking about tourism and bringing people here. It's one thing to upgrade the website, make it user-friendly and it all looks really nice and everything on the screen, but when people get there, it should be a top-notch place.

Everything should be spruced up, painted up good and lots of programs for the kids and stuff like that. Maybe have things like – I don't know – a canteen, boat rentals. Make it an experience, not just a campsite, was his point I suppose. He said there were things that have gone downhill in his opinion. I don't know if that's true or not, I'm only going by what he told me. I just pass

that along, Minister. I don't know if you have any comment.

S. CROCKER: Yeah quickly to your point, we leverage – finding the investment for the infrastructure, obviously, but leveraging. I mentioned it earlier; I know this wouldn't go exactly the way your constituent referenced, but the fact that we're getting three parks off diesel this year. We've gone from 40 students in the parks – because they have a significant role to play. We've received federal funding this year that we're doubling to 80 staff. Typically, a provincial park that had two students in the summer this year will have four.

P. LANE: That's good.

S. CROCKER: This gives us some opportunities there. Educational programs are difficult. I'll certainly take it away because I couldn't agree more. We need to make sure that we're getting the investment into these parks. Look forward to spending some time this summer talking to some park users to see what ideas they may have, innovative ways of actually getting upgrades into the parks.

There have been attempts, I think, from time to time of bringing in people to operate certain small businesses in parks. If the scale is there, I don't see why we wouldn't do that, if somebody can make a success of it.

P. LANE: I appreciate that, Minister.

Like I say, it's all about enhancing the experience, I think is the point he's trying to make. It's one thing to have a campsite where you can go camping, but if you want to make it a real nice experience, then it all has to look the part, look nice, have some stuff for the kids and activities so that they really enjoy the experience.

Minister, given my time, I'm only going to get one more question in here now. I've brought this up in the past; I'll continue to do so. In terms of tourism product and inventory, we do a great job marketing the province, but one of the things that I've certainly noted, and others from time to time – I know it's not all provincial, but there are all kinds of different attractions and things around the province; some are bigger, some are

smaller. Some fall under the province. Some might have fallen under the municipality perhaps, or a lot of them might have been even make-work type projects and stuff like that.

Having some sort of an inventory, if you will, of all the assets we have from a tourism point of view, and having somebody not just catalogue those assets, but make sure that they're maintained. It's one thing to give somebody a grant, or a group a grant or a program to build a nice lookout or something, but if there's nobody following up after the fact and it's all falling apart, then a tourist takes the time to go off the beaten path to have a look and all they see is an eyesore. It actually makes it better not to go at all than it is to go and see something if it's not maintained, in my view, at least.

So any thoughts on what we can do to manage all those assets and make sure that whatever we're putting out there when people are going there, that they're going to get a good experience and things are going to be maintained and looking sharp.

S. CROCKER: I couldn't agree more. I think over the years we've scattered money, if that's a fair ...

P. LANE: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: We have to make sure our investments are stronger, more strategic and fitting what people want. There's a lot of market research and that. If you look at the quality of tourism, there are a few regions in the province that really stand out for the product that they've developed. I think there are good examples; you don't have to think far of communities that have done it. But I think a lot of it becomes, in some ways, a community responsibility, because it would be really hard for the provincial government to navigate its way through.

If you look at, then, our colleague from Bonavista, if you think about what's happened in that region of the province for quality of inventory, I think – and I know he's agreeing with me now for sure. Not only in Bonavista, but we see it on the Southern Avalon as well and the Gros Morne area. Now I'm starting to name places. I'm going to get in trouble. It's there and we've done it, but a lot of times it's community-

driven. It's really hard for government to oversee the problem.

I couldn't agree with you more. Our ad programs need to be – you can only sell the really fancy box of chocolates once, because if there's nothing in it, nobody is going to buy that box of chocolates again. We have to make sure – we have this beautiful packaging – that we're backing it up. I think we are and I think we've come leaps and bounds in the last decade or so on getting to backing up the product that's behind these wonderful ads.

CHAIR: Thank you.

3.1.01 to 3.1.08.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I concur with those last words, Minister, fully. There's no doubt.

S. CROCKER: On the box of chocolates?

C. PARDY: Well, especially the Bonavista part.

One thing, you have regional co-operation in there, too. We talk about regionalization and areas co-operating and you have it big time in that part of the peninsula. Without getting in to too much detail, you know what exists down there and hopefully you will get to meet with them shortly on a Zoom meeting.

S. CROCKER: That's right. I think someone is working on that.

C. PARDY: One last note, and I know it's not 3.1.01, but I just want to follow up on what my colleague just finished with.

When we talk about the Main River Waterway, the minister made the decision at the time because it was within the regulations to make that decision. But he wouldn't have been the sole decision-maker in government at that time, not for something of that magnitude. If it's something political or something that he wished to do, surely goodness that would have involved some other members of government in some

other branches, whether it be Water Resources or whatever it would be.

S. CROCKER: You're asking me to look into a crystal ball that I don't own. I have no idea how that decision was informed.

C. PARDY: You didn't prep for that CBC interview, the April one?

S. CROCKER: I didn't ...?

C. PARDY: Prep.

S. CROCKER: Well, my answer would've been the same.

C. PARDY: Same in there.

S. CROCKER: I don't know how that decision was made or the rationale of the decision.

C. PARDY: Yes. I can't see it being solo. I'm just saying call it as it is. I can't see it being one minister making that decision without others, without it being a collective decision. That's a big one.

S. CROCKER: It's certainly not a decision that I was involved in.

C. PARDY: No, okay.

3.1.01, Arts, Culture and Heritage. The Purchased Services, the \$3.4 million, where does this money go and what is it allocated for?

S. CROCKER: Number six, is it, Jamie?

C. PARDY: That's 3.1.01, Purchased Services.

S. CROCKER: It's a one-time movement of funds to the Arts and Culture Centres' Capital Account for the replacement of soundboards that were failing and needed replacement.

No – yeah, Purchased Services. The decrease?

C. PARDY: Yeah, we have the decrease. I just wanted to know what it was allocated for, but there is a decrease and you can speak to that.

S. CROCKER: I guess it came from cancellations of the majority of last year's programming.

C. PARDY: Okay.

We have six Arts and Culture Centres in the province. I'm like a broken record in asking what the revenue – I'm assuming that they're not all revenue-neutral. I'm assuming in Arts and Culture Centres, we probably have a couple of those that do well, that are in the black. Not all six, but there must be a couple there that would be.

Do you have those figures?

J. CHIPPETT: I don't have the exact breakdown, but there is a big variation between centres. Obviously, St. John's is the busiest Arts and Culture Centre by far. This particular line item is usually what we pay out to artists and so on who perform at the Arts and Culture Centre. We sell the tickets and so on and there are various models we use in agreements with performers or tours or whatever. That's what's in that particular line, but the revenue is very variable across the six centres.

C. PARDY: Quite a difference across.

J. CHIPPETT: Yes.

C. PARDY: I notice you put the assets that you would put on the book, the Budget Speech – the other day they had Marble Mountain there – that they would. Was there any consideration of some of these centres? I know the value of them. I'm not questioning the value.

S. CROCKER: That's not a discussion that I've had. They play a unique role in their communities.

C. PARDY: No doubt about that.

S. CROCKER: Now, there are some that are successful. I think of Princess Sheila NaGeira in Carbonear, who's in a municipal building, very successful regional arts centre. But no, there hasn't been any discussion. They play a very unique role in our arts and culture, as the name alludes to.

C. PARDY: Good.

My colleague from Labrador West mentioned earlier about following up on the monuments and observations. In the Estimates of last year they had a working committee ongoing to look at those monuments and observances of what they had.

S. CROCKER: That's the interdepartmental committee?

C. PARDY: In the Estimates it did not state interdepartmental committee.

S. CROCKER: It is an interdepartmental committee.

C. PARDY: But it is, okay. It is, good

I just want to share with you the monument erected by the Department of Tourism outside the courthouse in Bonavista. I won't read it all for the sake of time, but just the opening sentence. This is titled Captain Michael Gill and the defence of Bonavista: It was here on August 18, 1704, that a naval force of French and Indians under La Grange attacked Bonavista and would have destroyed the town had it not been for the courage and resourcefulness of – and it goes on.

We had a couple people mention that, about they thought that didn't fit under the reconciliation that they would have. That is the conversation that people are having and we all have. I am just saying that came up a couple of times. Being a native of the area and an MHA now for two years, of all the years down there I've never, ever read the plaque. I didn't even know of – I knew it was there because I drive by all the time.

Equally, there is another one there that talked about a riotous mob that overrode and attacked the magistrate that was there at the time and it was a big do. It wasn't a thing that was appealing. It was probably historical, but it was just an excerpt. So I say that is a good endeavour, but at least now you have it in the official record to know that is probably one that you can have a look at in your review as well.

3.1.02, Professional Services, can you give an overview what the Professional Services would be in this category?

S. CROCKER: 3.1.02, Professional Services.

C. PARDY: And I guess which project would have been supported, Minister?

S. CROCKER: It's research projects from archaeological sites. Do you know the actual projects, Jamie, that – what quickly comes to mind for me would be Cupids with ongoing digs.

J. CHIPPETT: They're really small grants every year. We have a very small archaeological office in the department. Sometimes they would use Purchased Services to further research projects. Frequently, for example, it's students from the university or people with expertise in the archaeological field. That is what is captured in there.

C. PARDY: Okay.

The Revenue - Provincial in this component, do you just default back to the previous budget or did you look at it being a COVID year that it may be lower than that?

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: \$120,000 increase over what the actual was.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, we need to go back to the previous, but it is a reflection of the fees collected or not collected in the heights of COVID, which would've been last year.

C. PARDY: Okay. And the list of the Grants and Subsidies, I'm assuming that would come in when we get that after this – fantastic. That's good.

Signage – and I may come back to that before I pass it on to my colleague – I think I heard somewhere in the last couple of years we've talked about an initiative to enhance our signage on the TCH. If you look at some of the areas you had mentioned then I would say that the signage doesn't support a lot of those areas that we just

talked so highly of. I didn't know where we are in relation to signage.

S. CROCKER: I guess the guidelines and rules around signage falls really to TI and Service NL. So Corridor 1 falls to the responsibility of TI. Corridor 1 is what we see with regards to our own signage: our green signs or our stop sign or our yield sign. That's what you'd find in Corridor 1.

C. PARDY: So Corridor 1 are the main thoroughfares?

S. CROCKER: Right.

C. PARDY: TCH?

S. CROCKER: No, every provincially owned road is a corridor. So the primary corridor is reserved by Transportation and Infrastructure for their signage, such and such a community, 38 kilometres from here – that sign. Anything outside of that corridor, what we call Corridor 2 is the responsibility of Service NL.

Tourism: We work with Transportation and Infrastructure and Service NL when it comes to the TODS program. There's no doubt that there's work that needs to be done when it comes to directional signage in the province. Helping to find a way that accommodates our tourism operators into the available corridors and how we do that, because the TODS signs, the provincial government sign that you pay Service NL for is actually in Corridor 1.

So without a doubt, and this is something that always comes up with HNL, anytime you talk to them, they'll always raise our signage policies around the province and it's certainly something that we have some work to do on.

C. PARDY: Okay, yeah.

CHAIR: Thank you.

3.1.01 to 3.1.08, the hon. Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Under the Arts and Culture Centres, obviously with the reopening and that, are there any plans

or anything like that to expand the usage of them to other performers or other arts or anything like that to kind of just grow the use of Arts and Culture Centres? I know the one in my district kind of gets a little underutilized.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, I think that's certainly a good question. I know we met with the director of the Arts and Culture Centres just about a week or two ago. To the Deputy Minister's earlier point, it is sort of an up and down utilization. St. John's obviously is pretty much fully booked in good times.

I guess not being an expert in the field, but when you're booking tours, whoever is that tour needs a certain amount of revenue to go to each location. That factors in.

Is there room to look at what could be considered a secondary tour or something or a way to expand it? It's something that we can certainly take away and have a discussion with the people at the Arts and Culture Centres to say: How do we get – obviously, again, St. John's is not an issue, it's full – greater usage outside of the circuit? Because if you think about the Arts and Culture Centres they're used as a circuit so when we go out and book a performer, we book them to do a circuit.

J. BROWN: Yeah, that's right.

We were talking about, like I said, using the school gyms for sports and stuff like that. What about the idea of opening up the doors of the Arts and Culture Centres more to community usage for the arts in the same sense you'd use the school gyms for sports? Because, like I said, they are underutilized and there are always an artist group looking for a space. Sometimes they don't feel that, I guess, the Arts and Culture Centre is that space at the time just because how sometimes it's used.

Any thought of opening up to advertise as an artist space, when it's not being utilized for obvious reasons?

S. CROCKER: To the level that it's feasible, I don't see why we wouldn't. The only one so far I've had the opportunity since becoming minister was St. John's, but there is community space being used all the time in the St. John's

facility. I would hope it's being done throughout the province, but I'll certainly take it back to the director and make sure that if there's an opportunity there for community, no different than what's happening here, that community has access, absolutely.

J. BROWN: Perfect, thanks.

I'm just going back to the \$3 million and that for this budget for Purchased Services, so that \$3 million is for the new upgrades to the sound systems for (inaudible) sound systems?

S. CROCKER: Yes.

J. BROWN: Okay, I just wanted to make sure.

3.1.02, Arts, Heritage and Historic Development, I did talk to municipalities in my region, we don't obviously have a very old community per se, but we're getting there. The municipalities have been looking at doing their own heritage development for some certain keys things, but sometimes these programs and stuff that are in the heritage area can't be applied for by municipalities, sometimes. They're looking at doing some development in a partial park, partial heritage project and these municipalities are looking for somewhere so they can complete these two projects.

Three of them, I believe, they're looking at, is looking at old pieces of mining equipment that have been retired to put in to their community as a heritage piece, but also has a park space. So they're trying to find a place where they fit as a municipality to also help promote culture and heritage in tourism, but they're not finding that space.

Are there any thoughts of actually opening up some of these programs and stuff for grants and stuff to municipalities?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, so these grant programs are well subscribed, to say the least.

One of the things that I would suggest they would do is reach out to Heritage NL and talk to the folks there to say, you know, here's what we're doing. If not financially, what advice can you lend? What can you give us in kind with sort of a how-to guide, or possible areas that

they can apply, are there federal programs that they can leverage?

J. BROWN: Yeah, because most municipalities I speak – well, the two that are in my district, but the two municipalities that I speak to they’re trying to find ways to capture heritage items, heritage projects because we’re kind of fledgling at it because, like I said, the town was only founded in 1959. So this is a thing that we’re trying to find now. Where do they fit to build these projects or work on these projects as a municipality within TCAR?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, I would certainly reach out to Heritage NL, that would be my advice, and see what their advice would be on ways they might be able to leverage programming.

J. BROWN: Yeah, okay. Because, like I said, you have a lot of community groups, you have all kinds of stuff, but sometimes you get a municipality that kind of wants to take it on as well.

Under 3.1.02, under Allowances and Assistance, there was a \$2-million expenditure there in the actuals for ’20-’21. What was that used for?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, that was the Artist Support Program that was done last year under Tourism and Hospitality.

J. BROWN: Okay, that’s where that landed to.

S. CROCKER: That was the amount of money that was expended to artists last year who would have applied for a one-time funding for COVID relief.

J. BROWN: Okay, that’s where it landed. Perfect there.

Another question I just thought of: The Provincial Archeology Office, is that under TCAR?

S. CROCKER: Yes.

J. BROWN: Where is that found in the budget?

S. CROCKER: In the Estimates? It’s in here.

J. BROWN: Okay, it’s under Arts, Heritage and Historic Development?

S. CROCKER: Yes.

J. BROWN: Okay, just wondering where that landed. Perfect there.

That would be Grants and Subsidies and stuff like that for the \$3 million. That would fund, partially, them?

S. CROCKER: That’s more ArtsNL, right?

No, that’s the CEDP.

J. BROWN: Okay.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, that’s the CEDP that funds into Grants and Subsidies. You will see a list of that in the binder.

J. BROWN: Perfect. Thank you so much, Minister.

3.1.03, the Arts Council there: Obviously, the upping to \$5 million was from the current budget promise to bring them up to a \$5-million budget.

S. CROCKER: Correct.

J. BROWN: Okay.

Like I said, it is an ABC so we don’t see the revenue or anything like that. Would they fall in under that with your proposed plan for the House Committee on reviewing – would they come in under that?

S. CROCKER: They would be subject to the House Committee.

J. BROWN: Thank you so much, Minister.

3.1.04, The Rooms Corporation: We noticed there a drop in their subsidy. What was the reasoning for that?

S. CROCKER: Attrition.

J. BROWN: Attrition? Okay, so they were –

S. CROCKER: This is the first year that the budget reflects attrition. We have been doing attrition in core government for some time, but now ABCs are also responsible for their own attrition targets.

J. BROWN: Okay and this is because of that. Once again, they will be subject to the –

S. CROCKER: They'll be subject to the new House of Assembly Committee.

J. BROWN: Perfect. Thank you, Minister.

3.1.05, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation: No change in this for Grants and Subsidies. Any reason why we're not working with this line item here?

S. CROCKER: So that's their operations money.

J. BROWN: Okay.

S. CROCKER: To date I haven't heard that they were in any need of –

J. BROWN: Oh, from the operation side?

S. CROCKER: From the operations side they seem to be fine. Obviously, they were very stretched in their grants funding, but hopefully we've resolved that now.

J. BROWN: They'll be subject to the ABC Committee?

S. CROCKER: They also will be subject to.

J. BROWN: All right.

Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador: I notice that they never had an increase in some time either for theirs. Have they ever asked or requested for any increase to their operations?

S. CROCKER: Not since I've been in the department. I haven't had a request for increased funding.

J. BROWN: Okay and obviously the same thing, they'd be subject to ABCs.

S. CROCKER: They would be subject, yes.

J. BROWN: All right.

Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation: This is what you mentioned there with the increase to their grant –

S. CROCKER: Right.

J. BROWN: This is their loans and grants and stuff like this.

S. CROCKER: This is our Equity Program. Right now, there's an additional up to \$6 million this year for the Equity Program. It was highlighted in the budget today.

I think the Film Development Corporation was first launched in 1997. Up until now, just shy of \$600 million in film development. This year alone, we are set to go between \$90 million and \$100 million in production in this province.

J. BROWN: Oh, excellent.

With that, I'll take my time.

Thank you, Minister.

CHAIR: Thank you.

3.1.01 to 3.108.

The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3.1.02 – just a question; I don't think it's in your briefing binder. We have the historic sites. You have them listed there on your webpage. How does a site get recognized on your webpage and get the designation as being an historic site?

When I say that I just throw out, as an example now for you to ponder, if you look at the Sir William F. Coaker Foundation, the only union-built town in North America. Why would that not be here in an historic site? I know it would jump out. Basically, for anybody who would travel here, it would jump out at them.

S. CROCKER: Do you have an answer, Judith?

Go on, you were over there waiting for a question.

J. HEARN: I can give it a go.

I would tell you respectfully that is one of a multitude of amazing sites throughout the province that are well worth tourists visiting. Certainly, historic designation can be applied for through the Heritage Foundation. But in terms of infrastructure, there may be opportunities within different regions for them to do something, with the community or with the private sector, to recognize the historic significance and to plan, as many of the Committee Members have mentioned, experiential tourism events taking that site into account.

Sometimes infrastructure, we get stuck in that route, but really it's creative programming by the arts and culture community, by the historical community and the tourism community that can bring a town or a site really to life.

C. PARDY: Good answer.

S. CROCKER: B'y, that's the marketer in her, right.

C. PARDY: You should be answering more questions. That is good.

S. CROCKER: Oh, that's no problem. I can go home.

C. PARDY: So am I assuming that we do have applicants to have the designation of the historical sites, that we don't accept or we defer until later? Has anybody applied that we have refused of these marvellous sites that will be out there, like the Coaker Foundation?

S. CROCKER: I'm going to turn it over to the deputy, but to the ADM's point, I think there are so many sites, how would we ever control an inventory. With a designation comes a responsibility. It becomes challenging sometimes and I think about – and I know I was in Transportation and Works when Mistaken Point received its UNESCO designation. That really brings a responsibility in a lot of cases, that it becomes a challenge.

I think to Judith's point, the community, in a lot of cases, is the right place for some of this stuff. Jamie, you were going to add to that?

J. CHIPPETT: So I was going to say the Heritage Foundation has a few programs where you can commemorate events or dates or historic times. Then you can also apply, as Judith mentioned, for that historic designation.

But it really – to the minister's point – becomes a question of what we're capable of doing with the resources we have. I think we've had all kinds of examples tonight in the department where we'd like to do considerably more in a bunch of areas and it becomes a question of wanting to do the best we can with what we operate.

We can certainly follow up with the Heritage Foundation in terms of applications that they get and how that process works and communicate that to you, but, really, it's –

C. PARDY: That's good. We're pretty well capped out.

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: Only X number of dollars for resources. There is, no doubt – so if we're –

S. CROCKER: And it's challenging, there's no doubt about it.

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: With all of our provincial historic sites, it's challenging.

C. PARDY: Yeah. That's good.

The Colonial Building: Would that fall under one of these two headings here or would it be in the later one?

S. CROCKER: No, it's in this one here. Yeah, it's right here.

C. PARDY: What's our plan for that? Because that's not going to be a revenue generator, but it's going to be one of the ones we're going to be adding. That would be one of these sites that are very noteworthy and creditable, but that's going to be added to our –

S. CROCKER: It is –

C. PARDY: To be a cost.

S. CROCKER: – when it comes back –

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: Not added. I guess it's already there. It's just off right now. Right now it's sort of with TI. They're leading the reno, but it's slated to reopen next spring, right?

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: No. Yes, it's slated to reopen in September of 2022.

C. PARDY: September 2022.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, there's work ongoing right now.

C. PARDY: What would be the operational cost for the department, would you think, when that comes online? I'm asking the question because it's of value. I'm just wondering: You must have costed what you think this is going to cost when it lands in your lap.

S. CROCKER: Well, it would've been in our lap previously. I'm not sure what it was at when it closed for renos.

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: But I would assume it would come back as at least that plus inflation.

C. PARDY: That –

S. CROCKER: Whatever the number would've been –

C. PARDY: Oh, yes, and more.

S. CROCKER: – when it closed, which was –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: – six or seven –

C. PARDY: Years ago.

S. CROCKER: It's been quite some time now it's been closed.

C. PARDY: Yes, it has.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: Yes. Okay, that's good.

3.1.03, Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. The budget today said there's another million dollars that's going to that. I'm assuming that is the last of the \$5-million commitment to them.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: The minister back in 2019, Minister Mitchelmore, in his Estimates had stated and said this council is brutally underfunded. He didn't use the word "brutally," but he did say underfunded. Will this be a continuing line item that will be increased going forward in your plans?

S. CROCKER: There's no commitment beyond the \$5 million at this point in time. We do recognize the importance.

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: Again, I think if you look at many areas of focus of government in these times to show the importance that we've put on the Arts Council by increasing it to \$5 million from, I think, \$2 million originally three years ago, it shows quite the commitment. For right now, there isn't a further commitment after the \$5 million.

C. PARDY: No. But, Minister, a good investment.

S. CROCKER: It is a great investment.

C. PARDY: I'm just wondering where it goes from here and whether that was it. They do a lot of good things for the province.

S. CROCKER: Absolutely.

C. PARDY: I'm assuming the list of Grants and Subsidies are going to come in your binder that we're going to get after this event.

S. CROCKER: It's available on their website.

C. PARDY: Oh, okay. It's there.

S. CROCKER: On ArtsNL's website.

C. PARDY: Okay, all right.

S. CROCKER: Yes. They have a number of different program lines. If you go on their website you'll see – I think it actually is as simple as who got the money.

C. PARDY: Okay, all right. Good.

3.1.04, The Rooms.

If my memory is correct, are there 50 employees at The Rooms? I think I read that in the previous Estimates.

S. CROCKER: The Rooms, you are dead-on, Sir. Total positions is 50.

C. PARDY: So 50. I don't know if that was 2019 Estimates now or 2020, but it has remained the same.

S. CROCKER: My numbers reflect March 31, 2021.

C. PARDY: Okay.

There is a budget reduction this year, \$30,000.

S. CROCKER: That is attrition targets.

C. PARDY: Attrition. Okay.

I know what the impact of COVID has been on The Rooms, but I recall seeing an email and the email had asked – and I think it was emailed to you, cc'd to me, and I think the email said: Why in the world wouldn't they have programming at The Rooms with such a huge open space? Albeit, it may be at a reduction of what they would have, but could they not accommodate people into The Rooms? That was the nature of her email.

S. CROCKER: Yes.

C. PARDY: And I know that we were looking at the guidelines and I know that has got to be adhered to, but I know that everywhere else to

function, people are permitted in with limited numbers and with the standard guidelines.

S. CROCKER: The Rooms is currently operating. I was down a few weeks ago and there were people visiting that day and paying their admittance and there were people having lunch at the cafe. Obviously, things are not where we would like to see them, but The Rooms is operating.

C. PARDY: Yes. She stated: Can you please start Coffee & Culture and other in-person events at The Rooms. And that was May the 27th that she emailed.

S. CROCKER: When I was down there, the cafe was open. Now, obviously the cafe at The Rooms is a private company. It is a private catering company that does it. Maybe they're working on a scale of economics that they can only offer to meet the demand.

C. PARDY: Okay.

CHAIR: Thank you.

The hon. the Member for Labrador West.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Section 3.1.08, Arts and Culture Centres Infrastructure, is this a newly created line item?

S. CROCKER: Bear with me, MHA Brown.

3.1.08?

J. BROWN: Yes.

S. CROCKER: Yes, I mentioned earlier, actually. That's the soundboards.

J. BROWN: Okay, so where building infrastructure moved to TI, this is internal infrastructure, I guess? This new section here?

S. CROCKER: Yeah, that's a capital expenditure that we would've done outside of TI.

J. BROWN: Okay. This would all land there?

S. CROCKER: Yes.

J. BROWN: All right.

Under that, that would be my final question for this section, thank you.

CHAIR: The hon. the Member for Bonavista.

C. PARDY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3.1.04 – no, I'll move on to 3.1.05, the Film Development Corporation. The Grants and Subsidies here are just to advance or to invest or to subsidize the hiring of the crews for these corporations?

S. CROCKER: 3.1.05?

C. PARDY: 3.1.05, the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation.

S. CROCKER: The \$611,000, that's their operating grant.

C. PARDY: That's their operating grant?

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: Okay, that's their operating grant.

S. CROCKER: Yes, that's how they operate.

C. PARDY: My father used to always say: Don't talk, Craig, until you know what you're talking about. I'm going to venture now that I don't really know, but I think I may recall in maybe *The Big Reset*, in the Greene report, where they talked about and said that we subsidize for every hire in the film corporation something like \$40,000-something per employee. Now, that's a good investment. I say that if that's what we're subsidizing for every –

S. CROCKER: Yeah. Where –

C. PARDY: I'm not sure how they gleaned that, but –

S. CROCKER: Yes. They gleaned that in a way that not necessarily – it depends how you want to compare. So really if you look at it, the industry is more in line with other industries because one-on-three job return. That was taking the actual investment and dividing it by the

number of direct jobs. There was no allowance in that for indirect jobs.

C. PARDY: Okay.

Now, have you costed what the indirect jobs would be?

S. CROCKER: That would bring the investment down to around between \$15,000 and \$17,000 per job, which is in line with every other industry. I would go on to even go a little further. There are residual benefits from the television and film industry that are not captured. We don't capture the tourism marketing value that is there in film and television. If you think about the success of Doyle a few years ago –

C. PARDY: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: – and if you think about the current success of *Hudson & Rex* and the value to the viewer – and *Hudson & Rex* is having a tremendous success in the UK. If you think about the pictures of coming in over The Narrows and the things that have been highlighted in *Hudson & Rex*, there's no way to capture the value that's there in television and film. There's a big residual value in television and film.

C. PARDY: I can understand that anecdotally.

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: I don't know how we adequately quantify it or measure it. I don't know how we do that. You might do it on an entry survey when they come in and say, well, how did you discover this province? Well, when we came in, well, I saw it on *Hudson & Rex*. I'm here because I saw that.

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: I'm assuming that you would have that anecdotally, but you can't quantify it.

S. CROCKER: No you can't. That's where it becomes challenging when you see a math exercise on the industry.

C. PARDY: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: It's a very difficult industry to do a math exercise on and say here's exactly the net cost per job. But there's also many more indirect jobs, because if you think about film and television, it's primarily new money. Our investment – we're always the last in. The project is funded before we go in. We're not really seed money, because we're – correct, Jamie? Yeah, we're over here, so for *Hudson & Rex* Citytv and Rogers and those guys are in long before we come in. Because *Hudson & Rex* production value this year, I think, is \$30 million in production value, *SurrealEstate* is over \$20 million in production value and we have another four. We have another CBC program in the pipes, we have an NBC program in the pipes; we have a tremendous year coming in film and television.

C. PARDY: Yeah. Some would say – some may say – and I see the value in that – that we're out back to the initial question line that we started at 5 o'clock is air access.

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: Until we come to grips with air access we can market all we wish in these markets that would be outreach, but all of a sudden if they have to come in and land in Halifax and all of a sudden then they have to spend some time there and connect, do you know what? It becomes logistically impractical that they're going to find their way here. So all the things we say about what we invest in for those markets, while it has a whole lot of truth in that and merit, but you'll find the logistics, we're back to air access again.

S. CROCKER: Fair enough.

C. PARDY: Right.

S. CROCKER: But if there are bums in the seats because there are people coming from Vancouver to do film production, that's seats that are there – it's all about selling seats, to your earlier point. If we're selling seats for any reason, it gives a seat for tourism.

C. PARDY: Okay, for the production crew, you say.

S. CROCKER: Yeah.

C. PARDY: If they come in.

S. CROCKER: Every time somebody flies in here we're creating a reason for an airline to come here.

C. PARDY: Yes.

S. CROCKER: So no matter what the reason is for someone to come here, every time someone comes here it gives an opportunity for someone else to come here. If that makes any sense.

C. PARDY: I know what you're saying, yeah. That's good.

In the limited time – I guess 8 o'clock would be the – if I can squeeze in, we talk about the value of walking trails, and we have a lot of walking trails. I'm assuming that we fund associations out there like Hike Discovery who would look after or build the network of hiking trails. We have one that's an area in the province that is out on the Klondike, Spillars Cove, and two residents asked me to go out and have a look at the cliffs. That's where the *Ryan's Commander* went down there and that area, that gulch.

Anyway, there was a piece of land that gave way there – erosion. I would think it was probably 20 by 25, a piece, and it breaks the walking trail that was going around the coastline that was probably four or five feet in from the side. If you walk on the top of the trail and walk down towards it and if you were at your phone then once you crown the top coming back then you're there.

There is no signage. I don't know who would be responsible for signage in that particular case. Those two people said that they mentioned Tourism ought to have something out to qualify and say you ought not to be too close to the shores of these walking trails or the cliff's edge. That would be a classic example of that.

This is part of the UNESCO geopark site now. I did reach out to them and tell them about this large piece of fallen property that broke the trail. But I didn't know about the signage and who would be responsible for the signage in that particular case.

I walked the Skerwink many, many times and I know that we have lots of people that get close to the banks, but I don't know if they're really cognizant of what or how close they ought to get to the.

S. CROCKER: It's a good point. It may be something that going forward we could actually address safety in the tourism guide, as an example. Just to take a page or a piece of a page in the tourism guide to say, look, when using our trails please respect nature.

C. PARDY: Yes. Erosion or ...

S. CROCKER: Yeah. Obviously, policing of that would be impossible for the province.

C. PARDY: Yeah.

S. CROCKER: But, yeah, there may be opportunities as a broader statement even in tourism information centres, I would think would be inexpensive to do some type of safety –

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

S. CROCKER: Yeah, it is on the ownership, I guess.

C. PARDY: We market the walking trails. Even just something in there of a cautionary and a safety note. I know you're just bringing something in but at least that's addressed and there's no way anybody would ever expect it to be policed because you can't.

S. CROCKER: No because we don't know where they are for starters. Right?

C. PARDY: That's right.

3.1.02, you've got the recreation and sports organizations and you've got many. What is the dollar value in the recreation and sports organizations, 3.1.02?

That's back to the Grants and Subsidies I would assume.

OFFICIAL: (Inaudible.)

C. PARDY: That would be in the binder.

S. CROCKER: Yeah, if there's anything that you find that's not in the binder, just feel free to reach out and we'll endeavour to get it for you.

C. PARDY: Mr. Chair, that will conclude the questions from us.

CHAIR: Thank you.

I'm just having a look at the time there. We will certainly call the subhead.

Shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.08 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 to 3.1.08 carried.

CHAIR: Shall the totals carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation carried?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Just some concluding remarks. Minister, we'll start with you first, just briefly.

S. CROCKER: Thank you very much, Chair.

I'll be brief. I thank everybody for the questions and the time tonight. I guess most of all, thank you to the staff of the department because they're the ones that do all the hard work in getting Estimates ready and prepping the binders and going back through the months and months and months of preparation from pinks and everything else.

I've learned over the last five or six years of doing Estimates there is a lot of work that goes into it and it's the staff that do it and Members of the Committee, the Opposition, the Third Party and the independents put their research into the questions. It's one of the great parts of the budget process actually for a department.

Again, thank you to everybody.

CHAIR: Can I ask the hon. Member for Bonavista, do you want to have just a closing comment?

C. PARDY: Sure.

It's always rewarding to sit across with such a degree of expertise. You've done a good job, there's no doubt about that. When you ask a question, you have an answer. If you didn't have the answer or the data there, then it's readily available. You are to be highly commended.

You had mentioned earlier, Minister, about the success in certain parts in tourism. You talked about sometimes they want government to step back, but you just give them the resources to make it happen. I'm sure you can look at areas where it's happening and they don't need government's assistance in the planning. It happens. That's a good thing.

I look forward to the Come Home Year 2022, no doubt about that, and '25 as well.

S. CROCKER: Summer Games.

C. PARDY: Summer Games, so some big things ahead. But the biggest thing ahead now –

S. CROCKER: (Inaudible) for air access.

C. PARDY: Air access, bums in the seat at that time.

But above all, go Leafs go!

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr. Brown.

J. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank everyone for (inaudible.) It's nice to see the ADM and the DM again. I know the last time it was Estimates, but it's nice to see them again.

I want to thank everyone, all the staff over at Tourism there for participating and helping. I thank the minister and I thank my colleagues here for putting up with our questions. Have a good evening.

Also, go Leafs go!

CHAIR: Okay. Thank you.

S. CROCKER: Mr. Chair, I have three binders: One for the Official Opposition, one for the Third Party and one for whichever one of the independents wants one tonight. If the other independent here this evening would like one tomorrow, we can make sure you get one tomorrow.

CHAIR: In closing before we leave. I certainly want to thank everybody for their participation. I just want to advise Members of the Resource Committee the next meeting is Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at 6 p.m. concerning the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology.

With that said, I'd look for a motion to adjourn.

J. HAGGIE: So moved.

CHAIR: Minister Haggie.

So done.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.