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**Proceedings of the Standing Committee on  
Resources**

April 12, 2022 - Issue 7

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

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Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

## **RESOURCE COMMITTEE**

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation

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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: Evan Beazley

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Appearing:

### **Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation**

Hon. Steve Crocker, MHA, Minister

Karen Stone, Deputy Minister

Gerry Osmond, Assistant Deputy Minister, Arts and Culture

Carol-Ann Gilliard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism (via video conference)

Ben Gardner, Assistant Deputy Minister, Film, Television and Recreation

Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller

Tina Newhook, Director of Communications

Eilanda Anderson, Executive Assistant

### **Also Present**

Hon. Elvis Loveless, MHA, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

Hon. Tom Osborne, MHA, Minister of Education

Scott Reid, MHA

Glenn Littlejohn, Political Staff, Official Opposition Office

Scott Fleming, Researcher, Third Party Caucus

Sarah East, Researcher, Government Members' Office

Kimberley Hammond, Director, Information Management

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Tom Osborne, MHA for Waterford Valley, substitutes for Paul Pike, MHA for Burin - Grand Bank.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Scott Reid, MHA for St. George's - Humber, substitutes Lucy Stoyles, MHA for Mount Pearl North.

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.

The Committee met at 9:02 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber.

**CHAIR (Warr):** Good morning, and welcome to the Estimates of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

We'll call the meeting to order. Prior to getting started, I wanted to announce some substitutions. Substituting for a Committee Member for Placentia - St. Mary's is the Member for Fortune Bay - Cape La Hune; substituting for the Member for Mount Pearl North is the Member for St. George's - Humber; and substituting for the Member for Burin - Grand Bank is the Member for Waterford Valley.

Just before we start, I don't see any independent Members here this morning, but just in case someone comes in, I just want to get an agreement from the Committee that we would do as we normally did, and give them 10 minutes towards the end of the Estimates meeting here this morning. Thank you.

Just a little bit of housekeeping, just a reminder to our Committee Members and certainly to the executive of the department that when you're identified by the minister or a question comes to you, just identify yourself and just wait for your tally light to light up, and proceed with answering your question.

Consistent protocols – the masks must be worn at all time by Chamber employees, unless they are speaking. Members are reminded not to adjust their chairs; these chairs have been adjusted specifically to Members who use the chairs during the House proceedings. Water

coolers are at both ends of the Chamber, and we'll get started.

Before we do, I'll ask the Committee Members to identify themselves when their tally light comes on, please.

**G. LITTLEJOHN:** Glenn Littlejohn, Researcher, Opposition Office.

**C. PARDY:** Craig Pardy, MHA, District of Bonavista.

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

**S. FLEMING:** Scott Fleming, Researcher, Third Party caucus.

**S. EAST:** Sarah East, Researcher with GMO.

**S. REID:** Scott Reid, MHA, St. George's - Humber.

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

**T. OSBORNE:** Tom Osborne, Waterford Valley.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

I'll ask the department officials to do the same please, thank you.

**B. STEELE:** Bonnie Steele, Departmental Controller.

**S. CROCKER:** Steve Crocker, Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

**K. STONE:** Karen Stone, Deputy Minister.

**CHAIR:** There's no one in the next chair, so we're going to Gerry Osmond.

**G. OSMOND:** Gerry Osmond, ADM, Arts and Culture.

**B. GARDNER:** Ben Gardner, ADM, Film, Television and Recreation.

**CHAIR:** We're back in the back.

**E. ANDERSON:** Eilanda Anderson, Executive Assistant.

**T. NEWHOOK:** Tina Newhook, Director of Communications.

**CHAIR:** All right, thank you.

We have a virtual participant and actually that's Carol-Ann Gilliard.

**C. GILLIARD:** Hi, Carol-Ann Gilliard, Assistant Deputy Minister.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Carol-Ann, and good morning.

I would entertain a motion from the Committee members to adopt the minutes of the April 7 meeting, please.

So moved by Minister Loveless; seconded by Jordan Brown.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** And that's passed.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

**CHAIR:** So, again, this morning we are considering the Estimates for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation. I will ask the Clerk to call the first set of subheads, please.

**CLERK (Beazley):** Executive and Support Services, 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive carry?

Minister Crocker.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Chair.

It's great to be here this morning. First of all, before we get into it, even before we get to the end of this, I want to thank the staff for the tremendous work they've done preparing our Estimates and the amount of work that they have done over the last year in a department that has very much been affected by COVID in it's

primary industries. So thank you very much to the staff.

Coming off last week's first Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador Conference in over two years we met a sense of renewed optimism. Marine Atlantic is expecting its best year in 10 years. Our airlines are anticipating selling seat capacity of at least 90 per cent of 2019 capacity during the summer months. Our outfitters and operators are booking packages beyond 2022, into 2023 and 2024.

Recognizing how hard COVID-19 has hit the tourism, arts and culture industry, in this budget we have an additional \$20 million of one-time investment to invest in marketing, signage, visitor information infrastructure and new research strategy, strategic product development initiatives, air access, our Arts and Culture Centres, Provincial Parks, and our Provincial Historic Sites and a cultural export strategy through the new Celebrate NL.

It is Come Home Year. Our special Come Home Year cultural and economic support programs of NL received outstanding, innovative applications from all over the province. We received 494 applications under CEDP and paid out just over \$4.1 million. Of this amount, it's important to note \$2 million of which will go directly to pay artists in accordance with the *Status of the Artist Act*. The grant money helped leverage over another \$4.3 million. Under Active NL, approximately \$1.9 million will fund 266 applicants to develop or upgrade trails and outdoor recreational spaces to encourage healthy, active living.

There will be music, theatre, film, arts and culture celebrations in over 170 community throughout Newfoundland and Labrador in the coming months. By way of example, we have helped with 75 events with a music component, more than 100 shows, three festivals, two dance projects, 20 visual arts events, two literary festivals and 92 community celebrations.

Our return on investment is quite high. Aside from COVID-19 years, tourism spending is approximately \$1.2 billion each year. Statistics Canada estimates that our cultural industries contribute \$445 million to the provinces GDP and create 4,800 jobs.

I look forward to going through the Estimates line by line this morning. Again, thank you very much to the staff of the department for the tremendous work that they have done over the past year. It has been challenging but very rewarding.

Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

1.1.01 to 1.2.03.

MHA Pardy – and good morning.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning as well.

I echo the minister comments on thanking the staff. It has been two tumultuous years indeed, but, obviously, by what the minister has read there, we seem to be coming out of the so-called fog and looking well.

It would be nice to have a copy of that. I know, Minister, that it will come out in the Estimates but it will be a period of time for them to do so.

**S. CROCKER:** MHA Pardy, we will make available the binder by stick and any information I have we'll get over to you guys, forthwith.

**C. PARDY:** Fantastic, can't ask for any better than that.

If we could look at the Program Funding Summary at the start of the budget. In that line it will look at the Capital expenditures; \$100 for Executive and Support Services; \$1.3 million for Tourism; and then we have the \$10 million, I'm assuming, equity stake in the film industry.

Is it possible that we could get a breakdown of what that is? I know the \$100 is not much but it just baits ones curiosity as to why \$100 is showing on the books.

**S. CROCKER:** It baited me as well, when I first seen it, but it's actually a placeholder in a line item. I think it was in the last fiscal year, we had some unexpected infrastructure issues at one of the Arts and Culture Centres. When we went to actually do the improvement, I think the improvement was to sound boards.

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** We didn't have a line item. So what we did this year in a precautionous approach, in case there was something else to come up, we have a line now.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** We have an infrastructure line at the Arts and Culture Centres, that if there was an unexpected need, we have a heading.

**C. PARDY:** Makes sense.

**S. CROCKER:** Obviously, to your comment around the \$10 million, again that is our continued commitment to the film and television industry, as was announced in last year's budget and it's just a continuation of the \$10 million equity investment.

Tourism, I'm going to defer to deputy on that one. I know it will come clear as we get further into the Estimates. I don't have – do you know what that one is right off the top?

**C. PARDY:** These are usually construction projects or loans or major equipment purchases or –?

**S. CROCKER:** It will certainly come out in the capital as we go through the line by line.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, we can move past.

**S. CROCKER:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** Before I get with a few general inquiries to start with, I just want to throw out the NASCAR series announcement that came forth. I know that we're investing and I'd be amiss if I didn't ask, knowing that we have our cost-of-living issues in the District of Bonavista and over the province of the Island. I know that many would question to say: Did we do a cost-benefit analysis of this investment? And that's a fair question.

**S. CROCKER:** Fair question.

**C. PARDY:** Because until you get that answer, you can't formulate your opinion and you can't

be able to direct others as what the benefit of this would be.

Will that come up today or can that not be presented now?

**S. CROCKER:** Not specifically, but I can certainly address it now.

We absolutely did. Anytime we take on an event, one of the things we do is look at a cost-benefit analysis. In this case, we would have done it primarily with Destination St. John's. The event obviously will be a little further out on the Avalon, but the major beneficiary, I guess, in a lot of ways of the week-long events will be St. John's. So we estimate an investment of approximately \$600,000 over the three years. We anticipate a return somewhere north of \$5 million. I believe that is conservative at best.

I would also add in here that that investment is also into marketing. So in that \$600,000 over the next three years, it will give us placement on the Pinty's Series on TSN. We will be running our ads. So not only is this investment with NASCAR, I guess, an investment in bringing the event here, really it's a marketing investment. So what we'll see is we'll see ads during this event, of this NASCAR event, and we'll also see ads at the other Pinty's Series races that are advertised on TSN.

**C. PARDY:** Is it possible to get a copy of that? Is that on paper that the Destination St. John's would have that done?

**S. CROCKER:** The cost –

**C. PARDY:** The cost-benefit analysis.

**S. CROCKER:** I'm not sure what detailed information we would –

**C. PARDY:** Because that does sound wonderful.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, and it is wonderful, but we can certainly see what we can get you on that, but any time we would go – there would be correspondence I'm pretty sure from DSJ on that?

**OFFICIAL:** So we'll get you what we have on that.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah. Okay.

**C. PARDY:** Good.

**S. CROCKER:** But any event like this, we typically go to the DMO that would be involved to help the event.

**C. PARDY:** Good.

Thank you very much.

**S. CROCKER:** Just anecdotally, just to add to what these events actually bring; so when they first decided they were coming here, they blocked out the Delta, subsequently they had to block out another hotel and now they're moved into their third hotel. So the economic benefit of this, the tax dollars that actually come back, help fund cost-of-living issues. Right?

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** It's tourism dollars. If you look at a tourism industry that brings in \$1 billion, you quantify that down to a 15 per cent HST and other spending. Tourism is very much a contributor to all of our programs in the province.

**C. PARDY:** Yeah. And just to conclude on that, and I agree wholeheartedly, it's just the fact that when you make a decision on something or you make a stand on something, it's nice to have the information before you to know that you can –

**S. CROCKER:** Totally.

**C. PARDY:** – you've got the data. And it's not always easy to get it, but at least we can get what we have.

A few general introductory questions. I know I put the numbers down from last year, as far as the numbers that are employed in the department, the vacancies and retirements. So I do have those numbers to compare from last year, but maybe you can provide them this year, Minister?

**S. CROCKER:** MHA Pardy, I'll give you exactly what I have in front of me.

**C. PARDY:** Yeah.

**S. CROCKER:** The total staffing component currently is 279: 118 positions are filled; vacancy positions, May to September, were 19; vacancies seasonal currently would be 142, bearing in fact that we are about to ramp up so we would bring back our park staff, our Provincial Historic Site staff, our visitor information staff and so on would start to come back in the coming weeks. Long-term vacancies, we have four; we had 12 retirements; total resignations, end of employment, there were 50; total new hires, new to government, would be eight; and currently there are 13 13-weekers, primarily at the Arts and Culture Centres.

**C. PARDY:** We had 289 last year, 279 this year, and I know that your retirements are up, but I'm assuming that these are just pending?

**S. CROCKER:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** These will be filled. It's not a matter of any change in the staffing.

**S. CROCKER:** Yes, totally.

**C. PARDY:** We know the impact of COVID. Has the department done an analysis to find out really what the impact of COVID has been in your department? Is there a figure? I know we can wildly speculate and we know that it has been a significant impact, but did you ever come up with a figure to know what the impact COVID caused on the –?

**S. CROCKER:** On the industry you mean?

**C. PARDY:** On the industry.

**S. CROCKER:** Obviously, we wouldn't have the final numbers coming out of 2020, calendar year 2022, and obviously certainly not the fiscal year 2022, but it was huge. Operators report from being absolutely closed to marginal. I would say 2022 was certainly better than 2021. The recovery is continuing. We're in a much better position currently, I think, than we were even a year ago, and again much, much better

than we were two years ago. It is looking very optimistic.

I think last year we got back to about 25 per cent of the market. If you look at \$1.12 billion in 2019, I think last year we got back somewhere around \$250-million mark. Interestingly, coming into just how it all worked out, the third quarter last year from Statistics Canada, our restaurant/hospitality industry had fully recovered in the third quarter. They were actually slightly ahead of 2019 in the third quarter.

Again, I would not trumpet that in front of hospitality operators who had suffered so greatly, but there was a resilience. Once July 1 of last year happened and we opened up to the rest of Canada, there was resilience, but the industry hasn't fully recovered. I think it's done quite well, but full recovery is still a ways off if you talk to the airline industry, which we do on a regular basis. Destination Canada would tell you full recovery is probably in '24 or '25, but this year I think we're very strategically positioned to have a very strong year, and I would think be a leader in the country of in recovery.

**C. PARDY:** I ask that number because I wondered. You mentioned one quarter, so if you look at a little over \$1 billion, say \$800 million would be a loss for that year. If you take the totality of COVID and knowing where we're going and project, then I would think that we're looking at multi-billion.

**S. CROCKER:** Like industry impact over the two years?

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** I would hope it won't hit multi-billion but the losses will be in a billion. I'm very comfortable in saying that the losses over the two years, and even beyond because we're into it a third year where stuff hasn't recovered fully. So, yeah, it would be in the billions.

**C. PARDY:** When I said multi-billion I was projecting too because it's going to take a while for it to come back full.

**S. CROCKER:** Totally and, unfortunately, you will probably be correct by the time it is all said and done.

**C. PARDY:** Unfortunately, yeah.

1.1.01, the fluctuation in the Salaries there, I wonder if you can comment on that.

**S. CROCKER:** The increase reflects the current salary plan for 2023-23, including additional funding for a step increase and remaining approved wage increases.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, good.

Transportation and Communications: We see the variation of that, and this is probably going to be generic as we go through.

**S. CROCKER:** It is.

**C. PARDY:** The question one would ask is that if you discover that you can do it a little more through Zoom and through the measures of we were forced to as a result of COVID, will those measures be a factor going forward in our costs in transportation and communications?

**S. CROCKER:** I sure hope not. I say that because as a tourism/hospitality minister and representing the industry that I represent, I want people to forget about Zoom. I want people to start travelling again. I think it's important. There is value in travelling.

Obviously, we will take advantage of ways to use Zoom going forward, but I would be not properly representing my industry if I said we should continue to do conferences by Zoom, because we need that industry to come back. One of the concerns right now if you talk to groups like Destination St. John's and other leaders in hospitality, we have to be out there more than ever, right now, encouraging the convention industry to actually come back, because it's such a huge industry.

If you look at the multi-million dollar Convention Centre we have in downtown St. John's and the benefits of that, quite frankly I really hope that people get back to travelling. People get back to convention in person.

So as a department, yes, we will leverage, we will do Zoom but we will also encourage people to meet in person.

**C. PARDY:** I wouldn't want to be on the record as stating that I would suggest that conferences would be held by Zoom – never. I was just thinking about your staff travel and you would be able to reach out. So if you had a meeting with an operator or and MHA in the District of Bonavista, quite possibly you could do that by Zoom as opposed to the travel expense that would be to go.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely.

**C. PARDY:** So thus, if you see the same line figures, you wonder whether that will be part or is planned going forward or whether you see any marginal difference as to what it may be going forward.

**S. CROCKER:** I think there will. I think we'll see that forever and a day to some regard because, just on a personal level, I do things now, quite frankly, on Zoom, where I didn't know what Zoom was two years ago.

**C. PARDY:** Me neither.

**S. CROCKER:** Right, so absolutely. We scrutinize our budgets very closely, I can tell you, but I think it is important – even more so when we move in because you can never replace the value of in-person. I think Zoom is okay but the idea of that sidebar conversation at the side of the room in the evening does a lot for actually getting business done.

**C. PARDY:** I agree wholeheartedly.

In Operating Accounts, \$22,000 increase.

**S. CROCKER:** So, again, that would be – the \$22,700? Again, that is a decrease that reflects lower travel costs as a result of COVID and, back to your point a minute ago, virtual meetings and others that were postponed and cancelled.

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

1.1.01 to 1.2.03, MHA Brown.



**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1.2.01, obviously there was an increase in Salaries there significantly over what was budgeted and we're going to see an increase going forward. What was the rationale for this?

**S. CROCKER:** Sorry, MHA –

**J. BROWN:** 1.2.01.

**S. CROCKER:** Okay, so salary line. The increase reflects and obviously is the salary plan, including the creation of a contractual position for Marble Mountain Development Corporation and some step increases and additional remaining wage increases.

**J. BROWN:** Okay. The contract is currently ended now for the coming year. Because we are looking at \$1.1 million and now we're down to \$972,000. Is that contract with Marble Mountain work completed?

**S. CROCKER:** No, it's not. That's the CEO of Marble Mountain and we will continue that contract into this fiscal year.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, perfect, thank you so much.

1.2.02, you budgeted \$900,000 for Salaries but only spent \$753,000, how many vacancies resulted of this?

**S. CROCKER:** 1.2 ...?

**J. BROWN:** Point zero two.

**S. CROCKER:** Line item?

**J. BROWN:** Salaries.

**S. CROCKER:** Salaries.

One.

**J. BROWN:** Okay. One.

And we're expecting to replace that individual in the coming year?

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah. I'll turn it over to the deputy. When we get into technical questions, I will turn it over to the deputy.

**J. BROWN:** No worries.

**K. STONE:** Good morning.

In our budget Estimates book, you'll see a salary line for every division that we have. Throughout the year – we call it dynamic management, so this year, this is a policy position that we know will be vacated. What we're going to do is leave that one vacant for the year, but we're going to add a position under research policy, so it will show up elsewhere. Because we've heard from the industry that they want us to do more tourism research, so you'll see that in a couple of places in the book, where there's a greater need in a different division, so the salary dollars and position go there.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, so we're looking at just kind of like shifting around different places. Okay.

**K. STONE:** Yeah.

**J. BROWN:** No worries.

And that's all my questions for this section right now.

Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

So is the Committee ready for the question?

I'm sorry, I'll go back to MHA Pardy, 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair.

Minister, on the Active Staff Complement, under Executive Support, there's a contractual position there, 55557990, in your office. Just wondering about that particular individual.

**S. CROCKER:** What line was that, sorry?

**C. PARDY:** Salary report.

There were two positions there, Minister. Executive Support was contractual, \$137,459, and then under Admin Support Services –

**S. CROCKER:** Okay. Yeah, sorry, it took us a second. There's a Canada Games liaison as we prepare for 2025.

**C. PARDY:** And those would be the two positions? Admin Support Services as well is contractual, another position of \$70,916?

**S. CROCKER:** That was the CEO or the chair of Marble Mountain. This year that one is reflected in my answer to MHA Brown a second ago. That position this year at Marble has been just brought into – because obviously we didn't have the position last year and we funded it through savings. This year we're budgeting it.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, good.

Looking at, in section 1.2.02, Revenue - Provincial, last year was \$18,900.

**S. CROCKER:** So that's repayment of petty cash and floats from the provincial parks at the end of the season.

**C. PARDY:** Repayment of petty cash?

**S. CROCKER:** Petty cash, so obviously when the parks finished up their year, that's what they would have on hand in petty cash.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

Just clarification on the Operating Accounts, when you look at the variation that we had, we budgeted from what was revised of last year. That was probably a 25 per cent decrease. We had \$131,400 budgeted and then to \$100,000.

**S. CROCKER:** Without going line by line, broadly it's COVID impacts. It would be, for example, office supplies will be down because there's less people actually physically in the office.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** There was lower travel costs. It just really reflects the impacts of, I guess, less activity due to COVID.

**C. PARDY:** My last question in this section, Chair, would be under – you've added the Administrative Support, added to Estimates this

year, that category. I just wondered the rationale for doing so. It's just got a placeholder there. I'm assuming the \$100 that would be included – that's 1.2.03, sorry, Minister. I should have started with that, my apologies.

**S. CROCKER:** I'm easily confused, so –

**C. PARDY:** That's two of us.

**S. CROCKER:** 1.2.03?

**C. PARDY:** 1.2.03, I think that's new for Estimates this year.

**S. CROCKER:** That was the one that I outlined previously, it's a placeholder in case we need it for a purchase of a capital asset.

**C. PARDY:** So when we looked at the program funding summary, this is it? This is the \$100 that we were referencing earlier?

**S. CROCKER:** This is the \$100 that would have been in the – yes.

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** I guess to your other point, to the other line that I didn't off the top of my head know, it will show up here as well somewhere.

**C. PARDY:** Exactly right.

Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, MHA Pardy.

Is the Committee ready for the question?

Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 carried.

**CHAIR:** Can I get the Clerk to call the next set of subheads, please.

**CLERK:** Tourism, 2.1.01 to 2.2.02 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 2.1.01 to 2.2.02 inclusive carry?

MHA Pardy.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair.

2.1.01, I guess when it comes to Tourism, a topic that would be front and centre on a lot of people's minds would be the rental car. I know the economy is (inaudible) and I know the rationale for everything, but I think you had stated that we were undertaking measures, the department was, to try to mitigate the lack of rental cars for people booking.

I've had an operator in Bonavista who stated that he figured that \$6,000 is what they've lost because of the people who have cancelled their accommodations due to the lack of rental cars. So I didn't know if this would be a good time just to be able to state as to what initiatives we've taken.

**S. CROCKER:** So we've been extremely active, and I think you recognized the fact that this is not a Newfoundland and Labrador problem; it's not a Canadian problem.

**C. PARDY:** No.

**S. CROCKER:** It's at least a North American problem. You only need to drive Kenmount Road to see there's a shortage of cars.

We've met regularly with the industry, and I have to give credit where credit is due, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador has really taken the lead on this. Carol-Ann and her staff in her division have very much been a part of that with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador.

Industry is telling us that they anticipate challenges, but they're not putting anything in availability this year that they don't actually have. They are still anticipating some – as cars become more and more available – increase in availability.

There are other initiatives that we're working on that, hopefully, we'll have more to say in the coming days, but, again, those initiatives are

being lead by – and thankful that it is – Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador. But it's recognized certainly as a challenge.

**C. PARDY:** I'm assuming Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador may have reached out to the dealerships that we would have?

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, we have turned over every stone – or Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador has, and I think they are making progress and I would really hope that we'll hear something in the coming days on some of the mitigating measures that they have been taking.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

I am assuming that Transportation and Communication is generic all the way through this program.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah.

**C. PARDY:** Once you ask one –

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, it is just the COVID impacts. And this one would reflect what we haven't been able to do as a department. Normally we would attend 24 trade shows a year. Obviously, those trade shows weren't happening last year or they were happening virtually, so this just reflects our ability not to get out and travel.

**C. PARDY:** There was \$3 million increase in Purchased Services.

**S. CROCKER:** This will become a theme throughout the Estimates now. As I'm sure you would have heard, the \$20-million announcement last week in the budget for continued supports for this fiscal year for the industry, this would be one of the pieces of that \$20-million pie. This includes some marketing supports, signage upgrades and improvements to visitor information centre infrastructure.

I'm going to ask the deputy to feel free to chime in any time that I – if I screw it up or if I miss something, feel free to chime in here.

**K. STONE:** No, that line (inaudible).

**C. PARDY:** That is good. Can you elaborate a little further on the signage upgrades?

**S. CROCKER:** We are doing new point of entry signs this year at Port aux Basques and Argentea and we plan on continuing that. Quite frankly, our point of entry signs, I would call them boring compared to what I have seen in other jurisdictions in the country. So we're looking at upgrades to our point of entry signs and we're also looking at upgrades to our regional destination signage. For example, what was called the Baccalieu Trail is now called the Baccalieu Coastal Drive. So those signs will be replaced. Discovery Trail signs will be updated.

What are they? The regional –

**K. STONE:** Seventeen TODS.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, the provincial TODS for our sites and updates to our signs at our visitor information and provincial historic sites.

**C. PARDY:** Okay. So almost like a complete overhaul of our signage on all.

**S. CROCKER:** Well, the tourism part. We did it last year, actually, with our provincial parks. We rebranded our provincial parks last year so this is a continuation on that.

**C. PARDY:** Good.

I am assuming in the binder, Minister, that we get the Grants and Subsidies. That's \$21,000 in the Grants and Subsidies and I think last year, when we looked at it, Destination Labrador probably had the chunk of that and then there was the nine visitor –

**S. CROCKER:** That's exactly it. It's the DMOs and the –

**C. PARDY:** The visitor information centres.

**S. CROCKER:** – the regional visitor information centres that are not in our inventory.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, good.

And can you explain the amount voted there, the federal nearly \$1 million and provincial \$80,000?

**S. CROCKER:** It's our Atlantic Canadian tourism agreement that we signed last year.

**C. PARDY:** 2.1.02 is developing research capacity to support economic development and diversification opportunities. Is it possible to give an example?

**S. CROCKER:** I am sorry.

**C. PARDY:** 2.1.02, Sector Research.

**S. CROCKER:** Okay, sorry.

**C. PARDY:** And the heading, Minister, it just says developing research capacity to support economic development and diversification opportunities.

**S. CROCKER:** So one of the commitments this year that we've put forward and there's a piece in here – there's \$275,000 from the \$20-million budget announcement. I am looking to a specific but what we've heard from industry is coming out of COVID, the industry is anticipating a change in the traveller.

So we really need to focus right now on understanding who that traveller is and we're going to really do a strategic review to make sure that we're marketing to the right tourist.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, good.

**S. CROCKER:** So one of the pieces that we haven't fully completed, since 2016, is a full-on exit survey, so we're going to do more regular surveying on a regular basis exit and we're planning a major exit survey likely in 2023, because it's too late to do an exit survey in 2022. We will do exit surveys in 2022, but a very substantial piece next year.

**C. PARDY:** From a layperson's perspective, that's a pretty daunting task because we really know that what we have to offer, which part of the world that we want to be able to market to – you may have an UNESCO geopark that opens up on the Bonavista Peninsula that all of sudden it's a different clientele than what we've had maybe in the past. That's a pretty complex task –

**S. CROCKER:** For this group.

**C. PARDY:** – for this group.

**S. CROCKER:** Just to lay on to that, coming out of COVID, there's another layer to understanding what it is that makes a tourist comfortable. We want to prove it, but we feel very comfortable what we're hearing from our operators is that the post-COVID tourist, we will be very attractive to, wide open outdoor space. We just want to prove it. We want to make sure, and to your point, we want to know who that tourist is and where they're coming from.

**C. PARDY:** I would wholeheartedly agree with that because I would think that even the people that transferred to bring their families back home, it was a rationale for them coming home to start with. So I can see that on the travel basis as well.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, we want to make sure that the person we considered to be our target market preCOVID, is that still our target market? I would argue it is, but I would argue that that target market has grown due to COVID.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

I remind the Member that his speaking time has expired.

2.1.01 to 2.2.02, MHA Brown.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A question there now, after the investment with airports this past year to spur activity, are we going to continue doing investments into increasing our rate of travel or air traffic into the province?

**S. CROCKER:** Yes, so again, in the additional \$20 million that was announced for this fiscal year, there is money there for access. We share the access file with IET. So the money that you would have seen announced recently for the three airports that applied was IET's money – it's great spending someone else's money.

But absolutely, I have regular calls with the airlines, PAL, Air Canada, West Jet, Swoop and anybody else who'll take my call. We understand that air access is extremely important

– we don't have an accidental tourist in this province, so we have to get them here.

Yeah, we'll continue our relationship; I think it's encouraging to see what we've seen this year. We've seen, you know, the entrance of Flair into Deer Lake; recent conversations with them is they've been successful. They've actually added an additional flight per week. We see Swoop coming into the province with two routes in Deer Lake, one in St. John's. We see Lynx coming to St. John's. So we're really seeing some new entrants into the market, which bodes well. But it's important, too, that we maintain our relationships with the mainline carriers, being Air Canada and WestJet and, at the same time, respecting the authority of the airport authorities to do their work.

But, no, the airline industry has changed and it has changed forever in a lot of ways. I think, as a province, we're very fortunate, strategically, to have PAL because it can fill in a lot of the voids that are going to be left. PAL now has interline agreements, not only with WestJet but also with Air Canada. So a strengthened relationship between PAL and Air Canada and PAL and WestJet helps us.

Quite frankly, I do recognize the costs of air access. It's challenging, but again we've seen the new competition from these low-cost carriers.

**J. BROWN:** Yeah.

**S. CROCKER:** And in a recent conversation I had with both – I think it was Swoop and Air Canada – they admitted that, I guess, the increase of this new competition is going to actually balance some of the fare costs that you may have seen without the increased competition.

But the deputy just supported me quite well. In the \$20 million, there is \$2.7 for air access, season extension and Indigenous tourism.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, nice.

Now, going to air travel, are we seeing anything coming in from the European market or anything like that, or is it mostly going to be within the Canadian domestic market right now?

**S. CROCKER:** So I think it'll be domestic and transborder this year.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** Unfortunately, our direct flight to Europe is not returning in 2022. I know St. John's did a very strong effort with Air Canada to bring that back. I think at one point in time I met with Air Canada, I think it was in November and they were – it was like that and then Omicron came along and they actually said that they wouldn't return the direct flight in 2022.

**J. BROWN:** So I guess it's more of a pause right now, than an actual –

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely, and that is certainly something that we recognize. I think the components of the air industry are important as well. I think when you see announcements like we did last week with Bay du Nord, that will help our link to Europe. Because, obviously, one of the factors in getting those direct flights for Europe has always been the oil industry and rebounding confidence in the oil industry –

**J. BROWN:** So you're looking at piggybacking more or less.

**S. CROCKER:** Right. So, hopefully, as that industry starts to rebound, that will certainly help, I hope, with the air access. Because air access is not just tourists, it's obviously business and it's a bit of a pie.

**J. BROWN:** Yeah, that's right.

Going to this year, now, I know you guys have put a lot of money into the parks in the last two years, during the COVID times. Have you seen an increase in traffic into the parks significantly since the reinvestments?

**S. CROCKER:** So our provincial parks in 2021 had rebounded, I think in a revenue number, back to \$1.2 million in revenue in parks, down from about, I think, preCOVID we were around \$1.3 million. So, quite frankly, yeah, the actual parks haven't suffered – sorry, in 2021, they did. In 2022, the parks did rebound and we've made investments in the parks last year. We'll complete those investments. There's some money in this year's budget to complete the

parks. We've bought new playground equipment for all the parks, so there's some money here this year actually to get that installed. It's accessible equipment. So that's an investment.

We've also put new – each park now has a – I don't want to oversimplify it – learning space.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** We call it a campfire space, but we brought learnings spaces back into the parks, because one of the things, traditionally – our parks are used primarily by residents. And that's important. It's important in the recreation aspect and more and more there's a niche for our parks, because if you think about our provincial parks, they sort of cater to that more rugged type tourist. You know, the backpacker, the –

**J. BROWN:** Adventure tourism.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, right. And I think going forward strategically there will be a role for our parks in the non-resident tourism industry, more so than ever when you see that adventure – to your point the adventure tourism, the person that's going to take a fat-tire bike and ride across the province, or hike lengths of trail around the province. So we feel there's a piece for the provincial parks in our overall marketing program. So we'll continue the investment.

**J. BROWN:** That's good to hear.

Marble Mountain: anyone interested?

**S. CROCKER:** Without evidence, I would say yes. Marble Mountain has had a very successful season, amid the challenges that it's had. Obviously, we had some challenges with operations and, obviously, there are still COVID challenges. The Black Maria cable didn't get installed in this past season. A lot of those challenges were around COVID and the people who can actually install that cable had to come, I think, at least from somewhere in the country, maybe from somewhere in the US. So challenges around it.

But we're very hopeful that we can find somebody to take Marble Mountain and actually turn it into the facility that it can be. Because it can be a four-season facility. We're seeing it.

Our season I would think is about to wrap up from skiing, but we've done some interesting things there this year. We're going to see the return this summer of, for example, weddings at the base of Marble Mountain.

There are things continuing to happen at Marble Mountain as we search for a buyer.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect.

So there are some people, I guess, kicking the tires, looking around and that kind of stuff. But are we looking at any – I know there's an increase here. Are we putting more investment money back into Marble Mountain until we find the right person, the right glove to fit?

**S. CROCKER:** Yes, absolutely. I think the worst thing that we could do right now is actually just sort of let Marble Mountain go cold, because we've seen this past winter what it can do. So, absolutely, we'll continue.

I think there's an investment of \$1.3million, an infrastructure investment this year of \$1.3 million in Marble Mountain and there was a similar type investment last year. Unfortunately, a lot of that is catching up on deferred maintenance, but it's important we do it.

Look, Marble Mountain, to operate, has to be safe.

**J. BROWN:** Oh, yes.

**S. CROCKER:** First and foremost. So we'll continue to put money in to make sure Marble is safe and attractive. I've often described the preparation of the sale or investment in Marble Mountain as if you're going to sell your house or sell your car; you paint the house and you blow up the tires on the car, and that's how we look at Marble Mountain. If we just let it go cold, nobody will ever get a full appreciation for the value of the asset.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect.

Thank you, Minister.

**CHAIR:** Thank you and I will remind the hon. Member his speaking time is expired.

2.1.01 to 2.2.02.

MHA Parly.

**C. PARDY:** Just back a moment on the air access, there is an air access committee. I think you said IET would be the division that would be leading that or would –

**S. CROCKER:** We now have taken the lead on air access. That's one of the advantages, I think, of this new department that we've – I say that in the same light I say that we worked very closely with IET because they have great expertise. And I know she is not here in person this morning but Carol-Ann, actually, came from IET where she was very much involved, previously, with the air access file.

So her and her counterpart at IET work hand in glove when it comes to air access, and I would say they have a very strong and full appreciation for the industry.

**C. PARDY:** Someone had told me one time unverifiable and I probably should be very disappointed in repeating it, if it is unverifiable, but the greatest shipment or what's being shipped out through Oceanex are second-hand cars.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah.

**C. PARDY:** And never gave it consideration. I wouldn't have guessed it, but I thought that might be quite plausible, knowing the demand for second-hand vehicles that are leaving the province.

2.1.03: I am assuming the variation in the Purchased Services is probably Come Home Year and part of that \$20 million as well, Minister?

**S. CROCKER:** Again, it is. It reflects support for the industry as they continue to recover. We're recognizing the fact that industry is not going to recover. We're still listening to the industry on some of the additional funding in the \$20 million to see that it fits their needs. But yes, that is exactly what it would be. It's support for the sector. The \$2.7 million is support for the sector.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

My colleague had mentioned Marble Mountain. I know it might have been \$1.2 million in additional costs last year and I think the decking was discussed last year.

**S. CROCKER:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** I know you have mentioned the Mariah cable, and I am assuming that there are going to be further expenses with making sure that it is in good shape to maintain our prospects of it being attractive by some outside entity.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely. Our focus now going into the offseason for the hill structure would be to get the lifts back in operation. I'll just throw this fact in. The last full season we would have had was '18-'19 and revenue in '18-'19 was \$3.2 million and revenue in '21-'22 to date, the date being April 2, of these numbers, was \$2.8 million. So it goes to show what the potential of Marble Mountain. It is almost fully recovered from prepandemic.

**C. PARDY:** Last year the DM had stated that they were doing a new analysis, I think, of what the value of the Marble Mountain was for the West Coast.

**S. CROCKER:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** He had some old data that he was going to supply I think, but you were going to do a new analysis of seeing what the – is that new analysis under way and has it been completed?

**S. CROCKER:** We will be able to complete that now when we complete what would be a full regular season.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** As you can tell from those numbers, back to a revenue of \$2.8 million, you can quickly derive from that how many hotels and how many rooms and how many businesses in that region actually benefit from Marble Mountain.

**C. PARDY:** 2.2.01, Pippy Park Commission: It seems pretty all straightforward, but last year we

saw a reduction of \$12,000 and the comment last year was \$7,100 of that was attrition. But I notice that we quickly in Estimates saw that we spent \$29,000 more than we estimated.

**S. CROCKER:** 2.2.01. That is –

**C. PARDY:** Just wondering what caused that increase there and why the fluctuation.

**S. CROCKER:** It was negotiated wage increases. There was \$34,000 in negotiated wage increases and it was offset by \$12,700 in attrition.

**C. PARDY:** Offset by twelve –?

**S. CROCKER:** \$12,700 of attrition. So that's how you net the number down to \$21,000.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

If you can recall last year, we had a conversation about the Main River Waterway Park. I think it might have been then probably the Member for Torngat, who might have engaged you. It wasn't a closed book at that time, because I think you were going to look at some exploration of a recapture, or exploration of.

**S. CROCKER:** I think we've settled on that that issue – I shouldn't say it's in the past, because it will always be an issue and we always monitor it. But I think our plan going forward – and this is my plan and, obviously, many, many functions in the department, but I believe from my standpoint that the person that sits in my chair should not have the ability, and I would hope to change the regulations at some point in time, working with Environment, that the environmental process were to continue without having a minister's ability to say, let's avoid the environmental process.

The minister currently has the ability to forego the environmental process. I don't believe that's correct, personally. So my intention, if I'm here long enough, is to remove that ability for the minister to actually override the environmental process in the parks.

In other departments, I'm not going to comment, but from this department's perspective I think it's important that we balance that and make



sure that we're protecting our protected areas and make sure that all due diligence is done.

**C. PARDY:** I would agree too. The regulation needs to be amended, revisited. That would be a good thing to bring.

That's not legislatively; that's just in the regulations.

**S. CROCKER:** No, that's right. But as you can appreciate in a department, it's a priority of ours, but it's been a very challenging year administrating programs and lots of times over the past year – and this is shout-out to the department again, they've had to be very nimble and move quickly to administer programs that weren't foreseen, but no, absolutely.

**C. PARDY:** Just a quick comment on the board of Marble Mountain. Are there any residents from the West Coast, locals that would be serving on that board?

**S. CROCKER:** So quite recently we've – fulfilling our obligation, the mayor of – sorry, I shouldn't say the mayor, the Town of Steady Brook now occupy their seat on the board of Marble Mountain, because they would have one. The City of Corner Brook has an appointee on the board and it is currently on the IAC board? No, it's actually down, right?

**OFFICIAL:** (Inaudible.)

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, so we have recent recommendations from the IAC, so we'll be completing that board. Because one of the things that we've heard from the West Coast, from the gentleman sitting behind you, actually, is that we need to make sure that there's proper representation from the communities as we move forward with any potential divestiture or sale.

**C. PARDY:** 2.2.02, Purchased Services, I know what you had budgeted last year to what was revised is significantly more.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah.

**C. PARDY:** And I know we've settled now in between probably in a median between what was budgeted to what was revised.

**S. CROCKER:** So your second question first. The \$971,000 reflects additional funding for infrastructure repairs and projects, last year. I think it goes back to MHA Brown's question around investments into parks.

This years balance increase that you talked about, and again it somewhat comes back to the question from MHA Brown previously, there is \$666,000 for the installation of those accessible playgrounds that we purchased in the last fiscal year. There's \$354,000 to get Butter Pot Provincial Park off diesel. That would be our last provincial park on diesel, I think?

I'm pretty sure Butter Pot would be our last – we took two provincial parks off diesel last year and this will take Butter Pot off diesel.

There's \$40,000 budgeted for Hurricane Larry damages at Butter Pot. Obviously, that would likely come back in the federal disaster assistance program but that's years away before we actually get that, so we still have to do – there would be a cost to us. Yeah, that sort of breaks down where those costs are.

There are offsets here, because if you do the math on that, it's more than \$422,000, but there's a \$600,000 reduction for projects completed, T' Railway work and – sorry Bonnie, why am I –

**B. STEELE:** It's the first phase of the –

**S. CROCKER:** Oh, okay. So the first phase of the Butter Pot solar project is done and some of the T' Railway repairs have been done.

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

MHA Brown, do you still have questions on the Tourism?

**J. BROWN:** (Inaudible) questions.

**CHAIR:** Okay. And we'll just come back to you MHA Pardy.

Go ahead MHA Brown.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Chair.

The only question I do have is about the Eagle River waterway. Where is that to in your department?

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah. So there's still conversations, continuously, happening around Eagle River. You know, we're having conversations with at least two Indigenous groups and we have to respectfully complete those conversations. As you can appreciate, sometimes it takes time to get that and get it done right. But it's an important piece for us to actually get Eagle River protected with the enclaves, obviously. But it's working – you can appreciate, it's slow going but it is something that we're still committed to.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect. Thank you.

That's my only question on this section.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

MHA Pardy, do you have any further questions under that subhead?

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair.

I don't want you to leak anything from the Rothschild report now but would some of these parks be considered for being divested from the government?

**S. CROCKER:** No.

**C. PARDY:** Okay. Note that.

**S. CROCKER:** Well, as long as I sit in this chair I have no –

**C. PARDY:** No. That's good.

That's the answer I was looking for.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah.

**C. PARDY:** Butter Pot park is solar but I guess that's the only park that we've moved into with solar initiatives?

**S. CROCKER:** No, we've –

**C. PARDY:** Several others – Lockston?

**S. CROCKER:** So we've done solar where we're on diesel. So the parks that didn't have the availability of electricity. So we've –

**C. PARDY:** Converted from diesel to solar in those that didn't have electricity?

**S. CROCKER:** Right. So we haven't gone to solar where we had a supply of electricity. But where the parks were running on diesel generations, we're moving to solar.

**C. PARDY:** Okay. Good.

I think last year we discussed a little bit about the reservation system and some issues and hiccoughs with that. Knowing we're getting closer to camping season now, is there any change in the reservation system?

**S. CROCKER:** No, I think we've worked a lot of the hiccoughs out of the reservation system. I'm confident we have. Carol-Ann, I'm not sure if you're – Carol-Ann?

**C. GILLIARD:** Hi, I'm here.

**CHAIR:** Carol-Ann, can you hear us? Can you hear Minister Crocker?

**C. GILLIARD:** Yeah, I'm here.

**S. CROCKER:** I think last year we bought in the new reservation system when we revamped the website. So I haven't, quite honestly, heard any immediate concerns around the new reservation system. But, again, we'll certainly monitor that now as we get back into that season.

**C. PARDY:** That's good for me, Chair, in this section.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Is the Committee ready for the question?

Shall 2.1.01 to 2.2.02 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.2.02 carried.

**CHAIR:** Can I have the next set of subheads, please?

**CLERK:** Arts and Culture, 3.1.01 to 3.1.07 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.07 inclusive carry?

MHA Pardy.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair.

3.1.01, \$500,000 increase in Salaries. I say \$500,000 now from what was revised last year to where –

**S. CROCKER:** Okay.

The decrease reflects reduction in staffing costs for shows due to cancellations throughout the majority of the year with COVID restrictions at the centres.

**C. PARDY:** That makes sense.

The Purchased Services increased by nearly \$8 million this year – a whopping \$8 million.

**S. CROCKER:** Very proud of that.

**C. PARDY:** It's going towards –?

**S. CROCKER:** Programming. Again, it's part of the \$20 million investment. And there's also some infrastructure upgrades as well and some one-time capital purchases.

**C. PARDY:** Example?

**S. CROCKER:** Gerry, the one-time capital purchases is that lighting?

**G. OSMOND:** That was the soundboard from last year. So it's a balancing out.

**C. PARDY:** Oh, okay, the soundboard.

That soundboard was here in St. John's? Was it in Gander? Corner Brook?

**G. OSMOND:** St. John's.

**C. PARDY:** St. John's.

Are all the Arts and Culture Centres now open and free flowing?

**S. CROCKER:** Correct me if I'm wrong, Gerry. Yes, we're back to –

**G. OSMOND:** Yes, we're back to full capacity.

**C. PARDY:** Full capacity.

And there are three, true? Three Arts and Culture Centres? Three big flagships ones, three large ones along the Trans-Canada?

**G. OSMOND:** There are six.

**C. PARDY:** There are six in total.

**G. OSMOND:** Yes.

St. John's, Gander, Grand Falls, Corner Brook, Stephenville and Lab West.

**J. BROWN:** I exist.

**C. PARDY:** No, no that's excellent. I have to travel to Lab West more often, Jordan.

3.1.02, again an increase of a quarter of a million in Salaries.

**S. CROCKER:** So the increase affects obviously the salary plan, the funding for wage increases, step increases and the Colonial Building is in there. So we're anticipating staffing at the Colonial Building.

**C. PARDY:** You're anticipating staffing at the –

**S. CROCKER:** At the Colonial Building.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, yeah.

What are the plans for the Colonial Building? Have we settled on anything? Now I know we were, I think, entertaining some prospects going forward, but we haven't settled on anything yet for the Colonial Building?

**S. CROCKER:** So we're extremely excited to get the Colonial Building completed. Obviously it's been a long process, a very worthwhile process. So the Colonial Building, when it opens, will be a display of our governance history, and I look forward to the opportunity and I'll extend this invitation to all Members here this morning and to the House as soon as it's safe to do so, we'll offer you a pre-tour to all Members of the House so you can see what they've done down there.

It's an amazing restoration, and until you actually get in there and appreciate our political history, our governance history, it's quite the sight to see, and understand how it interprets our history and how it's going to become – no disrespect to the Bonavista Lighthouse – but it will quickly become our largest provincial historic site in the province just geographically.

I think it's going to be a very educational facility for people of the province, and I think it's going to be a very interesting focal point for people actually visiting the province. It's quite an amazing – I'm sure a lot of people here know the stories – but to actually see it.

**C. PARDY:** Have you done a cost analysis of that going forward, of what it will cost? To maintain it? I see the value in it. Don't misread my question, to know that I do see the value in it.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, I think maybe Gerry's best to speak to this, because we are reflecting costs this year of the additional staffing. But there will be a cost to making the facility available. Gerry, do we have a number on that specifically?

**G. OSMOND:** We budgeted \$175,000 for operating the facility, including staffing and program supports. The maintenance of the building is transportation and infrastructure, so we don't budget for that or do any projections in that respect. But from an operational perspective, we feel that we're well positioned right now to open this building and open it, to the minister's point, quite proudly.

**C. PARDY:** I am assuming there is no revenue to be gained from that. That is \$175,000 on our heritage structure cost.

**S. CROCKER:** Right, but it is like all the revenue from all of our provincial historic sites.

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** Revenue goes into general revenue. We carry the cost but the Treasury takes the gate.

**C. PARDY:** But do you envision revenue? You're going to have a fee that they would go in there?

**S. CROCKER:** There will be a fee associated, the same as the rest of our provincial historic sites. There would be an entry fee.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

3.1.02: \$5.6 million in Allowances and Assistance in the revised budget of last year; 09 is that line.

**S. CROCKER:** So that is the Artist Support Program. Last year we did two iterations of the Artist Support Program to support our artists as we went through COVID. There were 1,212 artists who benefited from that program in 2021-2022 and again there was \$5.6 million distributed.

**C. PARDY:** 3.1.03: Grants and Subsidies there, I assume that is all for ArtsNL and they would take that and they would disburse it.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely. That is just our direct grant to ArtsNL. There was a small increase this year and that just reflects some wage increases.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

3.1.04: There is an increase of \$130,000 in the Grants and Subsidies to The Rooms from the budget last year to this year.

**S. CROCKER:** Again, that reflects negotiated wage increases. I think the negotiated wage increases were \$181,000 but it is offset by \$34,000 in attrition and operational expense reductions.

**C. PARDY:** Okay. So you had stated that the attrition last year was \$17,000. I think what was stated last year was \$17,000.

**S. CROCKER:** So this year it is at \$34,000.

**C. PARDY:** We had an increase of \$7.5 million expenditure last year. What contributed to the – okay, that’s what you just referenced with the –

**S. CROCKER:** There’s a \$1.3 million increase.

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** There’s some funding in there for the Colonial Building, because they manage the Colonial Building restoration for us. Fair, Gerry?

**OFFICIAL:** Financial –

**S. CROCKER:** The financial administration. They work with us on the Colonial Building.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

3.1.05: I’m assuming the list of those receiving the grants and subsidies under the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador would be in the binder, Minister?

**S. CROCKER:** If not, it would be on their website. They would be the same as ArtsNL. We don’t administer –

**C. PARDY:** Provide it to them and they disburse.

**S. CROCKER:** They disburse. We’re not involved in their disbursement. I know with ArtsNL, their disbursement is readily available on their website, and I would think Heritage NL wouldn’t be any different.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

3.1.06, Celebrate NL Inc., I’m assuming that’s the Come Home Year?

**S. CROCKER:** It is, but it’s Come Home Year and beyond.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** We see a role for Celebrate NL as we move forward in event attraction. This agency will work with our local DMOs, but also with Destination Canada. We see the role for Celebrate NL to be things like the announcement yesterday around NASCAR.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** So, it’s really about developing partnerships and it gives us an added amount of flexibility when it comes to partnerships.

**C. PARDY:** So Celebrate NL Inc., that is the department, or is there another group?

**S. CROCKER:** I would have tabled a report yesterday on Celebrate NL. Celebrate NL is an incorporation, but it resides in the department; the structure is within the department. You would find similar organizations in six other jurisdictions in Canada. It adds flexibility, and it really adds an opportunity for us for partnership that we normally wouldn’t have as a line department.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, MHA Pardy.

3.1.01 to 3.1.07, MHA Brown. When MHA Brown finishes his questions, we’ll break for 10.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Chair.

My first question is: Do I get to sit on the couches in the Colonial Building? Am I allowed to sit on the couches?

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Minister.

**S. CROCKER:** As soon as they’re complete. I was looking forward to this question because I might have a quote or two here from John Fisher. But, no, I won’t get into that.

**J. BROWN:** No, but I do appreciate the invitation, though, and I will take you up on that offer.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely. And, quite frankly, you do get to sit on the couches and also, quite frankly, the couches, if I’m correct, came in just

a little bit above estimates. There was no surprise to us at the cost.

Proudly, one of the things we found – and I’m going to take the liberty now that you’ve opened the door – one of the things that we’ve found in the restoration of the Colonial Building – and we’re very proud of it – is the amount of heritage carpenters that we are building, you know, creating in this province. Because it’s a very specialized trade. This is not a piece of furniture, and you will see and others when you go in the Colonial Building. And if you look at other successful regions of the province when it comes to restoration, it’s very skilled to do this work.

**J. BROWN:** Yes. And I guess it acted as kind of a gateway for apprenticeship for a lot of people in this province now to hone their craft.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely. And it’s being done by a Newfoundland company. A lot of the restoration – I forget the numbers, Gerry could probably rhyme them off, but we were really pleased, that as the Colonial Building has come along over the last decade, we were able to find the expertise here in this province to actually do the heritage carpentry work that, I think in the early days, it was anticipated that this work would primarily be done by outside companies, but it hasn’t been. We found the expertise here in the province.

**J. BROWN:** Okay. No, that’s actually really good to hear about, because I know it’s not easy to find something like that, but it’s great that we learned from that.

Heritage sites right now operating, are we putting any money back in – other than the Colonial Building – are we looking at any upgrades or extra work or anything to restoration of heritage sites across the province?

**S. CROCKER:** So we were fortunate enough, last year, in preparation for Come Home Year – someone’s going to tell me a line here in a second – to actually be able to secure some additional funding through savings throughout the year to do some work. We’ve done work at Commissariat House. We’ve done some work in Point Amour with the lighthouse. We completed an engineering study in Heart’s Content around

coastal erosion and we completed an engineering study at the Bonavista Lighthouse.

So we were able, last year, to do that and, again, through that \$20 million this year we’re going to continue on. I guess to continue on from last year’s investment, this year again through that \$20 million, we are able to secure additional investment for phase two of the structural repairs to the Cape Bonavista Lighthouse; phase two of the repairs to the Trinity Mercantile Building; shoreline and building upgrades at the Heart’s Content Cable Station; exhibit cases at the Colonial Building; and phase two of the building upgrades at the Mockbeggar Plantation. So we’ll see continued phase two work this year at those sites and Provincial Historic Sites.

**J. BROWN:** Last summer, myself and my family, we played tourists and we actually tried to get to as many historic – we had our punch card, we tried to get to every historic place we could possibly go. We did pretty good. Actually, I even darted out his way and actually had a really good time out there.

They are fantastic resources in this province and I think more people, locally, should appreciate them because they’re fantastic.

But my question is: Is there any anticipation of adding any more Historic Sites to the roster?

**S. CROCKER:** No, I don’t think there are. Obviously, we’d always take suggestion of Provincial Historic Sites, but I think, first and foremost, we need to find a way to continue our commitment to the ones we have.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** And it’s been, I can tell you, it’s been challenging. We’ve been lucky in the last two years to find a way to actually get some money in and the continuation again this year to get some phase two work done on some big projects. I think the Bonavista project this year is somewhere in the vicinity of a million dollar – there’s that much work required.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

That's right. They are very old, fragile buildings and sites. I can expect they get a little expensive. But I just thought I'd ask.

Another question is the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, I know in the last number of years you guys did increase the budget item for them, but has there been a completed review of their actual need and what – maybe X-number extra dollars might put them in a new tier where they can do something that would probably generate more revenue. Have we ever bothered to take them and review what they do and what possibilities they could do with extra budgeting?

**S. CROCKER:** They have a very strong board. I would think that they're constantly looking for ways to leverage their funding. I think they do a very good job of that. Now more than ever, I think it's sadly ironic, in a good way, that we've increased their funding to \$5 million at some of the worst time for them, for artists. There's an additional \$5 million this last year in the Artist Support Program.

It's very important, right now, that we're there to continue the supports for artists. In my opening remarks I talked about, of the \$4 million that we've allocated through the Cultural Economic Development Program for Come Home Year, over \$2 million of that again is going directly to artists in their fees.

So, you know, we're committed to artists going forward because they're such a piece of the tourism fabric in this province.

**J. BROWN:** I know sometimes, like you said, you give them \$5 million but they say if we had \$5.1 million we could do this or that kind of thing.

**S. CROCKER:** I don't think – to my understanding, I'm sure any organization would always say we can take more, but we've grown it to \$5 million from, I think – was it \$2 million, Gerry? What was \$2 million a few years back in very tight economic times, but I think that's a reflection, again, of how much they actually contribute to the economy.

**J. BROWN:** Absolutely.

The Rooms Corporation, anything on the horizon for The Rooms? Are we looking at any other projects there or anything new or developing that we're ...?

**S. CROCKER:** So you're going to see some presentations this summer from The Rooms around Come Home Year. They have a series of activities that they're going to undertake for us. There may be a Rooms partnership or two coming.

One of the things we were able to do last year was we actually – The Rooms, typically, gets \$75,000 a year for art acquisition. We were able, last year, as we moved through COVID, to find an additional \$75,000 for them for art acquisition, last year. That acquisition had a primary focus on Indigenous art.

We have some stuff that we will talk about in the coming days about The Rooms and their role that they are going to play in Come Home Year.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect.

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, a soft spot for me, I used to be with a Heritage Site in Labrador. Have we ever done a review of their actual funding or anything that we could actually increase to probably preserve more heritage in this province? I know that there's been a big push outside of there about oral history and stuff like that – preserving that. Is there anything that we're looking at to maybe help them achieve that goal of collecting all of our oral heritage?

**S. CROCKER:** Well, I think what you would find is through our Come Home Year community and culture program, there is additional heritage funding this year, things that will have a long-lasting value.

Heritage is a tough one. There is no doubt about it. I'd be the first one to say that, in the way, it is harder to qualify heritage lots of times than it is arts, as an example. But it's extremely important to us to maintain the heritage.

If you think about The Rooms, The Rooms is a big collector of our heritage. If you think about out Provincial Historic Sites, they capture our heritage, but we're always open to suggestions.

**J. BROWN:** Alright. Perfect.

Celebrate NL Inc., how is that formed? Is that an agency, board or commission? Where does that fall in?

**S. CROCKER:** It will be, I guess for lack of a better text, I don't want anyone to get visions of grandeur here, it will be a Crown corporation that will be housed within the department.

**J. BROWN:** Okay.

**S. CROCKER:** That will allow us an ability – again, as I said a moment ago – partnerships, flexibility. I guess, if you look at the iterations of it in different jurisdictions, for want of a better word, you could call it a provincial DMO.

**J. BROWN:** Okay. Sort of like Destination Canada, we're having this – something like that.

**S. CROCKER:** So the role of Celebrate NL will be to work with Destination Canada to work with the NASCARs of the world or other events that we want to attract. We were very successful, I don't know, eight or 10 years ago, in attracting – if you think back to the Brier, the Junos, those types of events, they bring tremendous opportunity.

**J. BROWN:** We're expanding that now.

**S. CROCKER:** We're going to be very active again in the event attraction market.

**J. BROWN:** Okay. Perfect.

Thank you, Minister.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

I would just ask the Committee Members to hold their thoughts and their questions until we finish our break.

Carol-Ann, can you hear me okay?

**C. GILLIARD:** I can hear you, yes.

**CHAIR:** Okay. You can put the kettle on and get yourself a tea biscuit.

**S. CROCKER:** You can hear Carol-Ann, can you?

**CHAIR:** Yes. Put in your earpiece, Steve.

Carol-Ann, you can put on the kettle, we'll be back in 10.

**S. CROCKER:** I don't have one. Sorry, Carol-Ann.

**C. GILLIARD:** That's okay. I'll put the kettle on.

**CHAIR:** We'll break for 10, please.

**Recess**

**CHAIR:** Order, please!

If I can have Committee Members and staff take their seats, we'll be ready to go.

You can hear us okay again now, Carol-Ann?

**C. GILLIARD:** Yes, I can hear you.

**CHAIR:** Okay, thank you.

Back with MHA Pardy for 3.1.01 to 3.1.07 inclusive.

Go ahead, Sir.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair.

I just want to make one comment on the chairs at the Colonial Building. Because I think I may have been quoted in the media at that time saying out in front about the cost of those chairs. The contention at that time, and I understand the fact that you would look at and we want to create a capacity for heritage carpentry – I know that we value every heritage carpenter that we have in Trinity and Bonavista and all those areas. The only contention that I had made at that time was the fact that maybe there is existing Victorian-era furniture that is out there that we could get.

I know that I had sent along, to the department, one lady who was selling a piece of furniture for a cost of \$1,000. I had passed that along to the department to inform the department that it did



exist. The picture was wonderful to investigate, but I think the investigation was going to occur during the summertime, and it might have been a seasonal employee or someone was going to go out and check out what it was. I would think it was a businessperson then, who bought it in Clarendville, this piece of Victorian-era furniture, and what a wonderful piece of furniture it was.

So my only contention at that wasn't to be on the Opposition side; it was the fact that you'd almost explore to see what was out there. Was it ever conceivable during the riot that there might still be existing furniture that belonged there?

**S. CROCKER:** I'm just going to turn around to our resident historian, the man that if anybody ever needs a history lesson or whatever, and I've known a lot of people know a lot about history and Victorian furniture and all of that kind of stuff. This guy does this for fun: Gerry Osmond.

**G. OSMOND:** Thank you, Minister.

**C. PARDY:** Talk about being put on the spot hey, Gerry.

**G. OSMOND:** Absolutely.

In terms of the chairs that we are developing and building, they are custom made for the spaces. It's not a matter of taking existing Victorian furniture and putting it in the spaces; the spaces are quite unique. If you haven't been in the building, the offices are quite small and the Chambers are quite large. So they're designed for the spaces. They're designed for the time period that we're restoring it to, specifically. That's why procuring a piece is not as simple as taking someone's Victorian furniture and putting it in the space. The pieces that we are building are a part of that strategy.

In terms of what was left in the riot or left from other parts of the building, this building is a funny story in that its maintenance is very poorly documented. Probably the most poorly documented maintenance of heritage building, I would say, anywhere. That's apparently why it's taken us so long to restore this building is because of the unknowns and the lack of documentation on what has been done and what's there.

Furniture-wise, we still have the Clerk's table. We still have the Speaker's chair. We still have podiums from the House of Assembly – 40 of them. So we have an inventory of furniture from that building that we are going to put back in the building, but other pieces have come and gone over the years, disappeared. Some have been left in the building.

I know when I first got involved in the project 13 years ago, the House of Assembly was full of furniture that didn't belong in the building and was just stored there, so we had to relocate that furniture. Some went to the Harbour Grace courthouse. At the time, it was more judicial history of furniture. So it's a complicated process, but to your question about the riot, a lot of things left the building during the riot – prime minister included.

**C. PARDY:** Gerry, thanks so much.

You think sometimes when you engage in conversation and when you do, you find your little tidbits of information that stick and make an impression upon you. I can't recall in the past when this broke in the media, custom made for spaces. Because that would have been a significant factor.

**G. OSMOND:** Yeah. If –

**C. PARDY:** I can understand that and my mind is going now to say listen, every piece is not going to fit what space you've got to create it for. That I can relate to, but I don't know if I missed that back in the time –

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, and listen, it's all good. To your point about the space, I didn't truly appreciate it until the first time I went down there, got up on the second floor and I walked into – and I knew we had a Green Chamber and a Red Chamber. But I forgot that we had a Senate. We were the Parliament of Canada, Green Chamber, Red Chamber.

When you go in, you walk in and you see the floors were painted. One Chamber the floor was painted red, and the other Chamber the floor was painted green, you really get appreciation for – and I tell you, I'm assuming everybody in this Chamber has some affection to government and politics, but when you go in down there and see

the way we've restored it, the way it's been restored, it's quite wonderful.

**C. PARDY:** Whatever we embark upon, we need to do it right.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely.

**C. PARDY:** And that's the bottom line. Whether it's a new school construction, do it right and do it with vision to know where we're going to be. That all comes from the people sitting down and for those on the outside understanding what that vision and what that plan would exist.

Just before I conclude, Mr. Chair, you had mentioned about the artists, the musicians. They're probably amongst our greatest assets that we've got in this province. There is no doubt about that. One thing, in the limited travel that I've done, I've always looked and compared to what we have on the Island compared to where I may be at that particular time. In my own analysis, no comparison. So when we talked about what we have and marketing what we have, there's no doubt for the musicians and the heritage structures to be included, Minister, as you had stated to be out in front. But we've got lots that we can certainly market to make this place an attractive destination for others.

**S. CROCKER:** I'm going to take liberty for a second. If you think about – and I think our marketing agency hit the nail on the head this year as we recover from COVID. If you look at the campaign this year, Leave No Song Unsung, it's a play on bucket list, but it's also a play on what we have that other provinces don't have.

I would argue that there are very few places – I don't think there is anywhere in North America – that has a cultural, artist industry piece that we have. I think we need to elevate it to the level that it needs to be at, because I think it's how we sell ourselves going forward.

**C. PARDY:** And I'd add storytellers.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely.

**C. PARDY:** One thing as an MHA that I find, just going around in my own district, I've discovered some wonderful storytellers. I know

that's a tribute that we've had as a culture and as a group on the Island.

**S. CROCKER:** I think if we were to vote here in the House of Assembly, you would probably qualify as the best storyteller, because there's very, very –

**C. PARDY:** Flattering me now.

**S. CROCKER:** Very clearly when you speak, you often tell a story. I would congratulate you as being the number one storyteller in the House.

**C. PARDY:** My mother used to always say one of my faults is I talk too much.

Mr. Chair, that concludes.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

I assume you're finished as well, MHA Brown?

Thank you.

If the Committee is ready for the question, shall 3.1.01 to 3.1.07 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 3.1.01 to 3.1.07 carried.

**CHAIR:** Can I ask the Clerk to call the next set of subheads, please.

**CLERK:** Film, Television and Recreation, 4.1.01 to 4.2.03 inclusive.

**CHAIR:** Shall 4.1.01 to 4.2.03 inclusive carry?

MHA Pardy.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you, Chair.

Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation: *Son of a Critch* – this is the end of the season, the last show?

**S. CROCKER:** The finale is tonight.

**C. PARDY:** There's a lot to get excited about when we look at the productions that occur here. I keep defaulting back to winding my head around as far as the cost-benefit analysis to where we are. We can throw the numbers out, we can talk about this or that and you say well, listen, but people need to be informed as to where we are and how it generates the money of which we desire.

I would say to you that we would garner, we would capture the vast majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians if we had the ability to be able to disclose as to what we do. I know the sensitivity in that and I know, I think to say, well, there is only so much you can disclose. There is some you probably can't because it might devalue any negotiations or what you would have on going forward.

But it would be sure nice to see an in-depth cost-benefit analysis of this industry. Remember, if we're going to invest in an equity stake – we know where we stood with not investing in an equity stake in offshore oil and gas; I think this particular government is out with any oil and gas, back in some time, that they weren't going to invest in an equity stake. That was my understanding.

The only thing is the film industry is one that we've delved into. So the only thing I would say is that would be nice to have, as complicated as it is, but at least to make some efforts to know that we can better communicate the benefits financially for the province.

We commit \$10 million annually to the film industry?

**S. CROCKER:** Yes.

**C. PARDY:** That's our commitment.

**S. CROCKER:** That's the equity stake. I'll just give you a few that we would have taken equity in the last year. We would have taken equity, obviously, in *Son of a Critch*, *Hudson & Rex*, *SurrealEstate*, *Astrid & Lilly Save the World*. There is also a subset of, I guess, smaller motion pictures.

To your point, it's very hard in lots of ways to quantify the spend of the industry. There is no real way to quantify what it actually contributes to other industries. I'll give you a prime example: *Rock Solid Builds*. Anybody who watches *Rock Solid Builds* on Thursday nights – and, again, 10:30 on Saturday mornings; that's when I watch it because I am not up that late on Thursday night. *Rock Solid Builds* is a one-hour ad, twice a week, for this province. There's no way to ever quantify what *Rock Solid Builds* is doing to the tourism industry, or the intro to *Hudson & Rex* when the drone or whatever comes in over St. John's Harbour.

You're right, it's really hard to quantify. We're very proud of where we have gotten with the industry. We haven't seen it yet, but if you look at the cover this year of our tourism guide, it's Cape St. Mary's. The reason we chose Cape St. Mary's this year is it's going to get to play – when Disney releases *Peter Pan & Wendy*, we're going to see Newfoundland and Labrador in *Peter Pan and Wendy* as Neverland.

We need to leverage that as much as Disney will allow us to leverage. Obviously, yeah, it's Disney; they're not exactly going to roll over for us. You would have seen it last summer in your district –

**C. PARDY:** Oh yes.

**S. CROCKER:** – the economic benefit, what that does and what it will mean for years to come. When you see the scenes of that movie of Wendy landing in Neverland, she's landing out in Dungeon Park out in – is it –

**C. PARDY:** Cape Bonavista, out in the Dungeon.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah. So people will ask where is that, and we need to find ways to market that.

But to your point, it's very hard to quantify. We do our best to quantify it, but we're confident that it's a strong investment and will pay dividends for years to come. I think if you were to ask the owners of the Duke of Duckworth are they still benefiting from *Republic of Doyle*, which is what, 10, 15 years ago, there are still people going to the Duke of Duckworth because

it was the bar on *Republic of Doyle* 15 years ago or whenever.

**C. PARDY:** My last note on that, I know it's difficult to quantify, but I know that we can probably do enough to quantify it to give substance to people to know that this is bringing a return.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah. We've been trying by actually getting out to sets and inviting media to sets. When you get on a set – I don't know if you've had the opportunity, but if you haven't, we can certainly arrange for you and MHA Brown sometime this coming season to take in a set – you will get a much deeper appreciation for what it is – everything from catering to the carpenter to the electrician. There's a great opportunity here for tradespeople. It's a very unionized industry that pays good wages.

**C. PARDY:** When Moya Greene stated in her report that \$48,000, I think, was the cost per actor that would be to the Island. I guess that's what she was assuming but she didn't look at what the benefits would be.

**S. CROCKER:** I don't accept Moya Greene's –

**C. PARDY:** That figure.

**S. CROCKER:** – figure and impact to the industry. I think one thing about the Greene report – and I think we've been clear from day one – is we will take advice, but again, we'll make the decisions on what we feel is right. Again, I respectfully disagree on her take on that industry.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, but she mentioned I think the lack of return from past productions. I don't know how much analysis, but we're all back to quantifying again for the people to know.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely, and it's very tough.

**C. PARDY:** So we were all hinged in the public in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Labradorians looking at from when PERT was coming out, because we knew how significant it was. When it comes out, and then she throws this out, and here we are looking at an industry which you have a lot of confidence in, and I think most of us do, to enjoy, then all of a

sudden you can see how conflicting people are with it.

**S. CROCKER:** It absolutely leads to, I guess, a skepticism. I think it's incumbent on all of us, because I think we all believe in the industry. I seen skepticism yesterday around the NASCAR announcement. Every time we do one of these things it's a skepticism, but again, the revenue that's generated from these operations and the jobs is what helps pay for a lot of the services that we need in the province.

**C. PARDY:** Exactly.

In 4.2.01, the Grants and Subsidies, I'm assuming maybe I have that now listed here – the listing so we have \$10 million –

**S. CROCKER:** Oh, yes.

**C. PARDY:** Grants and Subsidies, sorry. 4.2.01, Minister, section 10.

**S. CROCKER:** 4.2.01?

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**OFFICIAL:** Under Sport and Recreation, Minister.

**S. CROCKER:** 4.2.01, Sport and Recreation, yes, Sir.

**C. PARDY:** Grants and Subsidies, section 10.

**S. CROCKER:** So the \$925,000 reflects adjustments for the 2025 Canada Summer Games funding, the increase of \$1 million offset by forecasted adjustments of \$75,000 for funding, and there is some funding in here in 2022-2023 for biannual Newfoundland and Labrador Games, regional qualifiers.

So where we've had to delay the games in Bay Roberts and the games in Gander, we've reached agreements with the host committees for both games to actually do some regional qualifiers for them in their perspective towns and regions to actually offset some of the disruption and prepare for their games. Both games will be in 2024. Someone throw something at me if I'm wrong, but both games Bay Roberts and Gander will now be in 2024.

**C. PARDY:** Can you speak to the revenues there in that same section 01, 02 there. The \$378,000 federal money or the federal contribution?

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah, I'll turn that one over to Bonnie.

**C. PARDY:** Okay.

**B. STEELE:** That's the funding for the federal bilateral agreement on sport participation.

**C. PARDY:** Okay, all right.

And the provincial revenue, the \$337,500? I know it was down during COVID, but I'm assuming that's revenue that we take in from the

**B. STEELE:** The pools.

**C. PARDY:** Oh, from the pools. Strictly the pools, because the other athletic structures we have like Crosbie Road, there is no revenue coming from –

**S. CROCKER:** So no, Crosbie Road operates as a board, so Crosbie Road just gets its operating grant from us.

**C. PARDY:** Okay. Just pools alone. Good.

I've got 45 seconds and I might end. If we're going to become the country's healthiest population in 2030, I don't think the physical activity tax provision that we've got in is really going to cut that. It would be nice to see a vision as to how we're going to achieve it, if it is going to be a plan. That may not be your department –

**S. CROCKER:** It's not –

**C. PARDY:** – but you're part of it.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely. I think that's why from our perspective in the department and – we see ourselves in the Health Accord, to your point – obviously, we don't have that tax credit, but I think in my opening remarks I alluded to the investment through what we did just at the end of last fiscal year with Active NL and that program was oversubscribed – a tremendous amount of interest around trails.

Trails do two things: They help us get out and be healthy ourselves, but we've also found again – and we've heard this from the industry – our market, our tourism, our non-resident market, one of the things they're looking for is trails.

**C. PARDY:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** You would see it, obviously, in your region – totally. We see a focus there and one of the things that we will focus on going forward through, you know, the Community Healthy Living program or an Active NL program, will be trail development. Because people want trail development. It sort of gets at two things in one; it offers up a very low-cost activity for residents, and it offers up a tourism product for non-residents, that they're looking for.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

MHA Brown – 4.1.01 to 4.2.03 inclusive.

**J. BROWN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair

I have a couple of question there. The first is: Can I get a list of the companies who benefited from the NL Film Development Corporation and the dollar amounts each company received?

**S. CROCKER:** You mean production company?

**J. BROWN:** Yes.

**S. CROCKER:** That's something we can certainly give you.

**J. BROWN:** Perfect, I really appreciate that.

I do want to echo my colleague's thing, and I agree with what you said too, that the film and television industry in this province has – I know COVID took the legs out from underneath it for a little while, but even leading up to this, we've been on a steady increase of obviously production and stuff like that. *Republic of Doyle* was probably one of the biggest breakthrough ones we had in this province, and now we're filming, what, triple what we were doing in that time area.

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely. If you look at this coming season, with the commitment, *Hudson & Rex* has an expanded schedule in 2022. *Son of a Critch* was just extended. We have some other things happening in 2022. In the budget last week, Minister Coady would have announced the All Spend tax credit. That's very important when we look at attracting motion picture work. Obviously, there's no spend associated with the All Spend tax credit unless we actually get people here.

**J. BROWN:** Yeah, that's right. That's fair.

**S. CROCKER:** So yeah, and it opens up – the All Spend tax credit gives, I guess, a tool in our toolbox that we never had before and it attracts a different industry other than our local production industry. This would be more of a motion picture type industry, show of the week kind of stuff. And there is considerable industry for that out there as well. But tremendous opportunities.

**J. BROWN:** I know you probably can't disclose, but has there been more people knocking at your door about filming in this province in the last year or so?

**S. CROCKER:** Absolutely, because we've been knocking at their doors. So we're doing both. I sat down back in November, I think, along with the Premier, met with the Motion Picture Association of Canada. I think subsequent to that meeting, we had follow-up meetings with some of the major studios. We will certainly entertain their knocks on our door, but we're also going to be banging on theirs.

**J. BROWN:** Okay, perfect. I'm glad to hear. I really appreciate that.

Over on the recreation side – I think this probably comes up every time we meet. In Labrador West and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and the North and South Coast especially, travelling for competition is getting really expensive. We're hosting the provincial atom hockey in Labrador West, but we can only get I think it was four teams to travel up there, to actually participate.

It seems to be getting harder and harder with the increased cost of travel for, say, residents of the Island to travel to Labrador to compete or for

residents from Labrador to go to the Island to compete. Something needs to be reviewed there. It is getting really considerably expensive and fundraising, especially during COVID and stuff, has become a lot harder.

I know there used to be a program, years ago, about helping people travel to and from the different geographical regions of the province, but it is getting a lot harder. I was just wondering if this is something for consideration in your department to go back and look into is trying to get sport teams to meet again, basically.

**S. CROCKER:** Yeah. We can certainly take that away and appreciate your raising it because it's not something that, you know, I'll be honest, wasn't top of mind, but something that we can certainly go back and have a look at because it does certainly warrant some investigation.

Because one of the things we want to do is make sure, and especially leading into the opportunities we have in – obviously, we'll be sending teams to Niagara Falls in early August for the Canada Summer Games. We'll be sending teams, again, to Prince Edward Island for the Winter Games in the winter of 2023. In 2024, we have both our summer games and in 2025 we will host the Canada Summer Games.

So we have a lot of opportunities here for sports activity in the province over the next three or four years and it is important that people, from no matter which corner of the province they live, have an opportunity to be a part of that if they so desire and if they can, you know, equal opportunity to make these teams.

**J. BROWN:** They need to train and they have to meet in person to train.

It is something that continuously gets raised in my community, especially where we have a massive amount of young people playing hockey these days. There are a lot of hockey teams up our way.

One other thing, obviously, and I am sure you are aware, is there any room to take on another recreation facility into the program right now? As you have seen that ours had to close because of funding issues.

**S. CROCKER:** The quick answer is, you know, obviously, –

**J. BROWN:** I'll call you.

**S. CROCKER:** It's interesting because we have these conversations on multiple levels when it comes to who actually takes the responsibility for recreational assets.

Yeah, maybe we can have a conversation about what's happening there and, you know, what –

**J. BROWN:** Yeah. There is obviously some kind of solution, but, anyway, I appreciate it. Other than that, that's all my questions for this section.

Thank you, Minister.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, MHA Brown.

Do you have anything further, MHA Pardy?

**C. PARDY:** A couple of points.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

**C. PARDY:** Before concluding, the minister has stated about the value of the walking trails and he referenced our district. I had asked the Visitor Information Centre, the lady who works in Clarendville, by far the greatest number of questions and queries that they get when they stop in there is the hiking trails that would be on the peninsula.

I found that surprising when I first heard it, because that wouldn't have been number one on my list. I would think some others that probably would have – but she says by far the majority are the walking trails within the district.

**S. CROCKER:** It's obviously been 2016 since we had a full exit survey and this is why we need to get our – you know, we can't put a strong enough focus on research, in my opinion. Because we have to understand it, understand what's happening. But the East Coast Trails will tell us that they are one of the greatest creators of travel to the East Coast of this province.

When people come here, that's one of the things they want to do, and we see it throughout the

province. Trailway development is on fire. We need to harness it. We need to make sure we market it properly. It has great opportunities around season extension because hiking is great in the fall or great in the spring.

One of the things in the \$20 million that we're committed to doing this year, as well, is working with regions of the province that have season extension.

Because we know, typically, we're going to be very strong in July and August, but we need to start selling September, October, November for the West Coast of the province. We need to start selling January, February and early March, or March. Tremendous capacity not being used, unfortunately, in lots of cases, nine months of the year.

**C. PARDY:** Just two other quick points; when we talk about the wellness, I think we have a school that serves every portion of our population on the Island. How we utilize the school gymnasium, whether it be seniors to come in to have walking programs that would be ongoing for wellness issues. That would be something substantive, the better utilization of our schools that are scattered all over the Island that would reach everybody.

We've got seniors that can't get access to the schools, like to have programs to go in there walking, but they don't have it because it's not cut and dried. It's probably supporting what needs to be done, or relaxing some regulatory that would be there. But I mention that here just to be on the record to know that that is a big miss.

It would be in the District of Bonavista – and I think you may have referenced the utilization of these schools and these facilities across the Island in the past, if I didn't. So I just wanted to be on the record for that.

The last thing I have, which before I pass it over to you, Minister, would be, we've always had a legacy piece in every games that we've had – I think we have. I've had the benefit of working many years at the Summer Games complex in Clarendville, part of our gymnasium, three gymnasiums in one and what programming we could offer as a result of that facility. I know we

could have quantified it better, but I think most of it is seen by the tournaments we hosted and so on.

Is there anything that would be planned as far as a legacy piece in the upcoming games?

**S. CROCKER:** I guess, to your questions, I couldn't agree with you more on schools. Not every community have one, but we have 260 opportunities.

**C. PARDY:** Serving the regions.

**S. CROCKER:** Totally.

**C. PARDY:** If they're not in a community, they're serving a region (inaudible).

**S. CROCKER:** Totally. I couldn't agree more, they're underutilized. I don't know how we get there at some point in time, but I think we got to get there. I know I've had conversations with the Minister of Education, even around Come Home Year. A lot of our communities, that's the largest facility they have, and we've had conversations and encouraging ones, with the minister specifically around Come Home Year and allowing communities to have access to gymnasiums. I couldn't agree more.

Canada Summer Games, yeah, there are discussions we're having. I meet with the Canada Summer Games committee every second Tuesday or the co-chairs of the Summer Games committee, regular conversations with them and the city, exploring options.

I don't think it's any secret that we know there's a piece of work that needs to be done around tennis. So I think we'll get there. And we also know that there's a piece of work that needs to be done around athletics.

I said this, I think when we announced about a year ago, when we formally announced the games, you look at the Aquarena, which was a legacy piece from the '77 – I was only a boy. Even though that's a legacy piece of the '77 games, there's going to be significant investment in that, in renewing that facility.

So there will be a legacy, I would argue of the Aquarena, just to bring it back, because I would

say it might have been '77 the last time there was a substantial investment into the Aquarena.

But, yes, we have that conversation. I think if you were to speak to the co-chairs of the Canada Summer Games, both of them, are very – they very much want us to leave legacy of those games.

To your point, all games, all activities, leave a legacy. I look in my own district, if I look at the benefits of Carbonear and Harbour Grace, actually hosting the Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games, I think, twice. The track facility that's in Carbonear; work that was done to improve the pool. The 2024 games in Bay Roberts will have a legacy and it will support infrastructure around. I think Gander will have – actually, at this point in time the only 400-metre track in the province will be in Gander. These games have a benefit beyond the games themselves.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, MHA Brown and Pardy.

So if the Committee is ready for the question, shall 4.1.01 to 4.2.03 carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Aye.

**CHAIR:** All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 4.1.01 through 4.2.03 carried.

**CLERK:** The total.

**CHAIR:** Shall the total 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 the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation carried without amendment?

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:** I will turn it to MHA Pardy for just a short closing remark, if you would like.

**C. PARDY:** Thank you to the Chair and desk staff for the session.

Since becoming an MHA in 2019, one of the more exciting parts of the learning curve I have embarked upon are these Estimates proceedings. It is when you really get to know the expertise that would be in our department and the knowledge of which they hold. I’ve often contended that when I look at our province, as far as soliciting from outside of our domain dollars or funds in order to complete studies about our plight, that we need not be doing that knowing the expertise that we have within our province.

I thank you for your participation today, for your great work on behalf of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. Minister, if I could, I would love to have a copy of your introductory comments – which you said you would.

**S. CROCKER:** Oh, absolutely. You’ll get a copy of everything. It’ll be on a stick though, because we’re saving paper.

**C. PARDY:** Yeah.

**S. CROCKER:** That’s how we keep that line item down.

**C. PARDY:** That’s not on this one, is it? No, just – not his opening comments.

**S. CROCKER:** Oh, sorry. Yes, we’re trying to keep – you know those office supplies you were talking about? We just drive up the office supplies in the office of the Official Opposition when you print it.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, MHA Pardy.

MHA Brown.

**J. BROWN:** I want to thank the minister and his staff. Thank you for this, it was great to have a conversation. It looks very positive going forward and that’s fantastic.

It seems like we’re ready for the coming tourism season. I look forward to coming back and seeing how everything panned out over this past year. It is really nice to see that the film and television industry seems to be on fire right now, so I’d like to hear a bit more about that. I do take the minister up on his offer to go and tour one of those sets when the opportunity is correct, because I would like to see how that is playing out right now in this province.

So thank you all. Thank you for all your input. I look forward to sitting on that couch in the Colonial Building.

**CHAIR:** Thank you.

Thank you, MHA Brown.

Before I call for an adjournment, Minister, the privilege is yours to end the meeting.

**S. CROCKER:** Thank you, Chair.

You won’t be the first person to sit on it because I’m aiming for that. I can only imagine that when I tweet that picture out the response, but I might just do it anyway.

I thanked the staff earlier and the executive that’s here with me this morning, but thank the entire staff in the department because there’s a tremendous amount of work that goes in the preparations for Estimates. There’s a tremendous amount of work that the staff, a lot of whom are behind the scenes, have done in the last year, whether it’s the tourism-hospitality support program, the artists’ support program, pushing out programs into the end of the fiscal

year on tight timelines. There's been a lot of work done.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.

The industry is resilient. I'd be remiss if I didn't thank people like Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador and the Premier's Advisory Council on Tourism, the work that they've done to help guide us to recovery. I think we're well on the way to that recovery, but I would caution everybody that we still have a lot of work to do. We're certainly, in this department and our government, committed to doing that work in the coming months and years to rebuild this industry, not only back to the \$1.12 billion or the \$1.2 billion that it brings in to the province, but beyond.

I truly believe, and you know, we've only literally scratched the surface of what tourism can be in this province. Back to MHA Pardy's remarks earlier about our culture and our arts, that's what we have that we can sell that's unique to anybody in this world. Quite frankly, we bring in a tourist that typically has a high spending threshold and it's important that we continue the work.

Tourism is also important. As we go into Come Home Year, we get our visiting friends and relatives back in the province. I can tell you from every indication that we've seen, that's going to happen. I referenced it earlier; Marine Atlantic had a 10-year high in reservations and optimism going into this year.

Again, thanks for the opportunity. It's great to do Estimates.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister.

Before I adjourn, I just again want to thank the Committee, the minister and his department and our staff here this morning.

I would ask for a mover for adjournment. MHA Brown.

Our next meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

Thank you very much for your participation this morning and have a great day.

**S. CROCKER:** Thanks, folks.