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Chair

Ms. Marlene Catterall

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.)): I call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to order. I apologize for my slightly late arrival, but I missed the room change.

We have a good lineup of witnesses this morning. From the Canada Council for the Arts: John Hobday, the director; Carol Bream, the acting director, arts division; and David Poole, head of the media arts section.

Our plan is to spend about the first half of our meeting with you, and then we move on to the National Film Board of Canada.

So if I can ask Mr. Hobday to begin....

Mr. John Hobday (Director, Canada Council for the Arts): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

Good morning, everyone.

[English]

Thank you for welcoming us here on this beautiful sunny morning.

Joining me are Carol Bream, the acting director of the arts division; and David Poole, who is the head of our media arts section. The arts division is the arm of the Canada Council responsible for the adjudication and administration of our granting programs. The media arts section, which David heads, is the part of the arts division responsible for the funding of film, video, and new media.

Our biographies are found at the back of the brief.

In just over two years, the Canada Council will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. Over the life of the council, we've witnessed absolutely incredible changes in the Canadian arts scene. In the 1952 Report of the Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters and Humanities, the co-chairs, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey and Père Fernand Lévesque, lamented the poor state of the arts in Canada. In 1950, the Canadian Arts Council, the forerunner of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, noted in a brief to the commission that:

No novelist, poet, short story writer, historian, biographer, or other writer of non-technical books can make even a modestly comfortable living by selling his work in Canada.

No composer of music can live at all on what Canada pays him for his compositions.

Notice there were no “her” compositions.

Apart from radio drama, no playwright, and only a few actors and producers, can live by working in the theatre in Canada.

Few painters or sculptors, outside the fields of commercial art and teaching can live by sale of their work in Canada.

That was the situation 50 years ago.

Today, there are over 700,000 Canadians who earn their livelihoods in the arts and cultural sector. Canadians have distinguished themselves in almost every art form, both at home and around the world. The Canada Council has been happy to be a partner in this absolutely incredible Canadian success story.

The council has been and will continue to be challenged to adapt its programs and services to foster and support the evolution of the arts in Canada. The council endeavours to reflect the true face of Canada, as expressed by our artists and arts organizations. This determination lies behind the fact that artists and arts organizations from aboriginal and culturally diverse communities are priorities for our institution. It is also reflected in the manner in which the council provides financial support to film and video artists, and now to artists working in new media, which was absolutely unimaginable when the Massey-Lévesque commission pondered the state of Canada in the 1950s.

The skill of Canadians working in film was once again underscored by the recent Oscar nomination of two Canadian film makers. Chris Landreth received a \$60,000 grant from the council for his film *Ryan*, which has been nominated in the short animated film category; and Hubert Davis received a \$16,000 grant for his film entitled *Hardwood*, which chronicles the life of his father and Harlem Globetrotter, Mel Davis. *Hardwood* was nominated in the short documentary film category. Apparently, the National Film Board is going to be screening these for you later this morning.

I'm sure the chair and the members of the standing committee join me in congratulating them on their nomination and wishing them every success on Oscar night.

We appreciate that the time is limited for this discussion. We know you're most interested in hearing about the role of the council in the production of feature film.

I'm going to ask my colleagues to take it from here. We'll be happy to answer any questions you may have after the presentation, and we'll do our best to answer them in a clear and forthright manner.

I would now like my colleague, Carol Bream, to explain the granting activities of the Canada Council.

Carol.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Carol Bream (Acting Director, Arts division, Canada Council for the Arts): Thank you, John.

Good morning Madam Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

While our director has set the broader context for the arts in Canada, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the granting programs of the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Canada Council is involved in delivering a wide array of programs and services for individual artists as well as for arts organizations in Canada. Grants range from travel grants for a few hundred dollars to operating support grants of several hundred thousand dollars for organizations like the Stratford Festival, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Ballet British Columbia, the Mendel Art Gallery, Éditions du Boréal and the Canadian Opera Company.

The council receives more than 16,000 requests for grants every year. Of this number, only 6,000 are successful. Each grant application is treated with the greatest care and is reviewed by peer assessment panels convened to adjudicate the applications. The peers are drawn from a database of over 7,000 artists and arts professionals. Each panel is assembled to reflect language, gender, region of Canada as well as Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities.

The entire process is overseen by our board of directors and complies with a rigorous peer assessment policy which governs every aspect of the peer assessment process.

The board has the sole authority to approve grants in excess of \$60,000. It also scrutinizes the composition of peer assessment panels and often makes suggestions on how to achieve greater representation of the vast pool of Canadian artists and arts professionals.

From the grant application deadline to letters informing the applicants of the results of the adjudication process being sent out, the whole process takes a maximum of 120 days, or four months.

In a moment, my colleague David Poole will go into more detail about the specific strategies that have been developed to assist Canadian filmmakers.

None of the programs administered by the Canada Council for the Arts are static. They are continuously reviewed for relevance and effectiveness. Often acting on the advice of our advisory committees, our board of directors or professionals of the discipline, these programs are revised to better meet the challenges and opportunities within a sector of the profession.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is our hope that your review of Canadian feature film will be yet another source of valuable advice on design, administration and effectiveness for Canada Council programs in the area of film production.

I will now ask my colleague David Poole to get into the details.

● (0910)

[*English*]

Mr. David Poole (Head, Media Arts Section, Canada Council for the Arts): Thank you, Carol, Madam Chair, mesdames et messieurs.

It's a pleasure to share with you today some of the work the Canada Council has supported in the development of film, which includes feature film in Canada. When the Canada Council was created in 1957, parliamentarians gave us a highly elastic mandate. This was quite visionary in that it allowed the council to change with the evolution of artistic expression in all its forms. The council has made good use of this elasticity. Initially film was included under the rubric of visual arts.

However, as more and more artists chose to work in film, the Canada Council moved to create a stand-alone section dealing with work in film, in video, in new media, and in sound. The council recognized then, as it does now, that there are other federal film funding institutions, and the challenge is always to support the work of Canadian filmmakers without duplicating or competing with the efforts of these other funders.

In each of these other federal film funding agencies there are a variety of gatekeepers. These are gatekeepers such as distributors, or producers, or broadcasters, and they help determine which films will be supported and to what level. For the Canada Council we believe the only gatekeeper is the talent and the vision of the artist. The council appreciated that its limited allocation meant a more modest role in the area of film was imperative.

The Canada Council decided it would support the development of Canadian film in two important ways.

First, we would support individual filmmakers who would conceive and control the production of film projects from start to finish. Perhaps this hearkens back to the days when film was still part of the visual arts. But the guiding principal is that film must be considered like a blank canvas on which the artist imprints his or her own unique vision and perspective without outside control. This has been a great success, allowing the council to support early in their careers some of our most stellar filmmakers: Guy Maddin, Atom Egoyan, David Cronenberg, Zacharias Kunuk, Denys Arcand, Patricia Rozema, and many others. A more complete list of award-winning filmmakers supported by the Canada Council is included in our brief.

Second, the council provides support to filmmaking and to new media collectives of artists committed to working in these areas. Through these collectives the council is able to provide the infrastructure that gives these artists access to the skills and technologies to support the development of a more resilient filmmaking talent pool in all parts of Canada. The collectives support their members by offering workshops to artists interested in almost every facet of creating and producing a film and all of the composite elements, such as lighting, sound, editing, special effects, and development of a screenplay.

In the last two years, the 50 collectives supported by the Canada Council offered over 2,700 such workshops in all parts of Canada. I'm very proud to say that as of two days ago that also includes a new collective in Yukon. We hadn't been supporting anything in Yukon up until this most recent round.

If an individual filmmaker had to purchase or rent the equipment needed to produce a film from commercial suppliers, the cost of producing a film would be prohibitive for most artists. The collectives remove this impediment by offering the use of high-quality equipment and expertise in its use for a nominal cost to the filmmaker. It gives an opportunity for an individual filmmaker to progress from short films, more experimental films, to the creation of a feature film. As an example, I point to Zacharias Kunuk, who is the director of *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*. This is a film celebrated around the world for its originality and poignancy. And Zach started his career producing short videos on topics such as how to make a snow house. These were videos that were supported through the video production grants program of the Canada Council, and he works through a collective in Igloodik in Nunavut called Tarriaksuk, which also supported that production.

This is but one case, albeit a striking one, of how the choices the Canada Council has made about funding film have borne fruit in which all Canadians can take pride. There are always risks in funding film. Every agency responsible for the support of film knows this very well. Peer assessors, the people who do the evaluations, often make choices based on the previous work of the filmmakers, and sometimes the finished product surprises all of us. However, the council is committed to encouraging further development among Canadian filmmakers, video artists, new media, and sound artists. When these decisions receive the validation of an international award, an Oscar nomination, or a successful commercial release, the council can rightly feel that these investments have been worthwhile.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

● (0915)

The Chair: Thank you, and we are ready for questions.

Mr. Schellenberger, you're first.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Thank you.

I'm sorry I was late. I didn't read my directions, so I went to the wrong room this morning, and I apologize for missing the first part of your presentation. But thank you for being here today.

One question I have in the granting of funds is this. Does the Canada Council have a quota system or anything like that as to region, content, language, or gender?

Mr. John Hobday: The short answer is no.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: I had a short question, too, so thank you for the precise answer.

Mr. John Hobday: It is totally based on peer assessment and merit. It happens to work out in fact that there is quite an extraordinary balance across all regions of the country, but that is happenstance.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Again, I heard that there were some 6,000 grantings done out of quite extensive applications. I suppose every one has to be judged on its own merit. These 6,000 grantings vary from small to large. What might those be?

Ms. Carol Bream: Grants can range from as little as \$500 for a travel grant for someone for the first production of a film or a musical composition, or to travel for all kinds of reasons, to as much as \$1 million for very major operating organizations, such as the Montreal Symphony or the Toronto Symphony. Stratford, I believe, gets about \$800,000 each year. Unfortunately, these are still a very small part of the total budget of the organizations, and we wish it could be more.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Thank you.

I know time is short, so I will stop.

The Chair: Mr. Kotto.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, and thank you for being here to answer our questions.

We're aware of the underfunding of the Canada Council for the Arts. I would like to know what impact it has concretely on creation in Canada and Quebec, because I know that the assistance you provide is in direct support of creators.

I would have a second question. I know that the Canadian Commission for UNESCO is operating under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. Are you following the discussions on the draft convention on cultural diversity? If so, how do you feel about all the bilateral accords signed by the United States and the amendments to are putting forward to delay debate on this issue?

● (0920)

Ms. Carol Bream: Perhaps I could answer the question about the impact on creation. About 17% of the approximately \$120 million provided in grants to individual artists and arts organizations go directly to creators, and 83% to organizations. Naturally, the organizations employ and train many creators. So, the two are closely related.

The impact is very significant. Even a small grant can have a very big impact on the career of an artist.

[*English*]

Do you want to talk about UNESCO?

[*Translation*]

Mr. John Hobday: The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is internationally respected for its work, especially on cultural diversity, on an instrument on cultural diversity. I can ask David Walden, the secretary-general of our commission, to send you all the relevant written information. We're very committed, and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO is highly respected internationally, because we have a real voice in that area.

Mr. Maka Kotto: You mentioned earlier that you provide financial assistance to film and video artists. Are you not in competition with the NFB, whose approach to research and development is somewhat similar?

Mr. David Poole: In that ecosystem, the idea is to always find a niche occupied by no other agency. It will become obvious when all the films are viewed, because the NFB and the Canada Council both contributed to the production of the two Oscar nominated films.

The NFB is a producer. This gives it the final say with respect to production. Our position is to be there for artists who want to create without the constraints of a producer. We find that this gives us a broader reach. We have collectives in every major city in all parts of Canada. It is our way to support this community.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Thank you.

It's always a pleasure to see the Canada Council. A dozen years ago you took a chance on an emerging writer, me, and five books later I'd like to thank you publicly for that. Given the precarious nature of your funding, I really feel it would be highly unlikely that you'd take a chance on me if I was emerging now.

I'd like to ask my first question. In light of the funding pressures that are on the Canada Council, is it still feasible to maintain a department dealing with funding film, because of the high cost of film production?

Mr. David Poole: I'll try to answer that in two ways. One is that our role has never been as a major financier in films. Once the costs of a production go high, the production always needs partnership. That's fairly generally the case in film, that there have to be a number of funding partners. I think our role is very much there at providing the skills training, the support for early work in a person's career. Once a production budget goes beyond about a quarter of a million dollars, though, we're not reasonably involved in those kinds of productions. So we are at a certain type of artist-controlled production at the early stages of people's careers.

The second thing that's happening, as I'm sure everyone is aware, is that as digital equipment becomes more accessible, some of the costs associated with equipment are becoming less onerous. People can now actually buy cameras and buy editing systems, so the actual costs of production aren't as much of a barrier as having the work seen is.

● (0925)

Mr. Charlie Angus: In my previous life I was very active on arts juries, reviewing projects at the provincial level. It was a very thorough process and very balanced, but I've always wondered how you would do it with film, because of the complexity of it and the need for partners and having it come forward to a jury, I suppose—if it comes to a jury—at a time when maybe not all the ducks are in a row. Could you explain to me how the jury selection for projects goes through?

Mr. David Poole: We receive work from people who have experience, who have made work before, so we have previous work

that we can see. The jury sees examples of previous work. They have the plan for the project that the person would like to do. It's either a script, a storyboard, or something that's fairly well worked out. In terms of what we're able to do at the council, if the budget is greater than what we can support and the peer assessment committee decides to support the project, we make a commitment to that project, conditional on the other funding being put in place. We hold that commitment until we have gotten back a plan that shows it's actually feasible for that production to be made. We can sometimes wait a few months until that other production funding comes into place.

Mr. Charlie Angus: You say an artist has to have a record. Is there any seed money for new film producers?

Mr. David Poole: Yes, actually about a third of the program is for emerging filmmakers. They're in the first three years of their career. They're usually people who have completed their basic level of training, and they're quite often making short work; they're making short fiction, animation, and documentaries.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.): It seems Canada is extremely involved in the whole field of short films and documentary films. Certainly, we're very well known internationally for our documentary and short films. That is a great success and we should all be proud.

In terms of the awarding of certain grants, I just want to know if the majority of the grants are under \$60,000. Do they tend to be more for short films and documentaries than for feature films, for example?

Mr. David Poole: I can actually give you numbers. We fund about 140 media arts films and videos a year, and of those, only about 10% are features. So 90% of what we support is documentary, short work. We help people to make that short work. They learn the skills there that they may then apply to make features, the same kinds of skills you have working with actors, the same technical skills you have in a short. If you develop your career and go on into features, those will be skills you'll use. Those are skills you could also learn at the film collectives we support.

We also support a certain kind of low-budget feature. There are some features that are still being made for under \$200,000. They're not generally wide circulation. They tend to go more to specialty channels and to festivals. We support that type of work.

Mr. Mario Silva: I have a further question.

I'm not sure if it's the same criteria used, for example, in awarding grants for writing books, but my understanding was that you couldn't get a grant unless you'd already published a book. Is it the same thing with film, that you can't get a grant until you've at least done one film?

Mr. David Poole: We require people to have completed what we call their basic training—that can be formal or informal—and they have to have material to show us.

One of the things that's a little bit different is that sometimes the cost of production of that first work can be prohibitive, so we do actually allow people who may have worked in a key creative role on another film to come in to direct their first work. But frequently people will have work they've done in workshops or on their own that they will be able to show us, even at that emerging level.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Silva.

I wonder if in our next round of questioning we might focus on how you feel the policy has affected the kinds of decisions you're making, your relationship, perhaps, with the other agencies involved, and recommendations you have for us. We're not here just to learn about what's happening, but to help plan the way ahead so it can continue happening and new things can start happening.

Ms. Oda.

Ms. Bev Oda (Durham, CPC): Maybe I'll just ask the question.

Again, I apologize for being late. I got misdirected as well.

With the guidance of the chair, if I could understand, in the area of film and your activities there, have you identified objectives, and do you review those objectives on a regular basis? In terms of the use of the grants, the effectiveness of your programs, how would you account, not only to this committee but to the public, on whether at the end of many years of this program it is successful, it's effective use of the resources you have, etc.? Is there a different way? Have you tried to introduce new elements?

It's that kind of recurring review of your approach in light of changing...policy might be the same, but the environment does change.

Mr. John Hobday: I have just a very quick comment before passing it over to David to talk specifically about film.

The council keeps all of its programs under review. In fact, we've just undertaken over the past year a complete review of every single program to make sure they are as relevant, efficient, and effective as possible and that they meet the needs of the changing environment.

The environment certainly has changed. When we look back, in 1994 we received about 6,000 proposals a year. We now receive 17,000. The number of artists in Canada, of course, has.... Those figures are just astonishing. The explosion of talent and this emerging talent pool in effect demand that we be very much *au courant* with what is going on and respond to it.

David, do you want to talk specifically about that?

Ms. Bev Oda: I want to make sure of this. You said your training, particularly, was for the early stages and artist control. To understand that, your program is designed in such a way that it's feeding into a larger system or the next stages, effectively.

Mr. David Poole: If I could just more generally try to respond to the question you asked, then I will try to get into the specifics of training.

We're fortunate in that there are two processes that go on at the Canada Council all the time that give us feedback about the programs.

One is the peer assessment process. We are always hearing back through those committee meetings about what the changes of the milieu are, what kinds of things they're responding to, and how we need to change our programs to better respond to them.

To give you some concrete examples, up until five years ago we used to deal with video as a separate practice from film, and we realized that they were just platforms for delivering the same kind of thing. So we changed that way. We changed our programs to allow artists different ways of working.

So we're in constant evolution of the programs.

In terms of evaluating whether the training that is being provided through the cooperatives is actually meeting the ends of feature film funding, it's doing a number of things. First of all, it's training as well for people who will continue to have a career making short films or documentaries. Our proof of the effectiveness of this is in fact the people who go through that process who then become feature filmmakers and who get some recognition for that.

So I would say our evaluation is based on the success of people working through that system, people like Zacharias Kunuk, who would have taken the training through the collective in Igloolik, made short films, and out of that had the skills to make *Atanarjuat*.

● (0935)

Ms. Bev Oda: So do you actually count how many entered and how many...after five, ten years?

Mr. David Poole: No, we don't. I don't have that—

Ms. Bev Oda: I know there are successes, but again, it's not only to identify the successes, but to measure the effectiveness of your program and the resource utilization.

How do you establish that you've been successful? Is there any direction in the policy that gives you a measurable objective in that direction?

Mr. David Poole: One of the things is that we try to measure the effectiveness of it by how much the work is shown and seen as well.

Ms. Bev Oda: Do you have numbers that would record that?

Mr. David Poole: Yes. We support independent distribution organizations as well as festivals and events that show the work, so we have returns to filmmakers and audience numbers that we're able to get from the organizations we support.

What we don't have is complete data, because we don't have, say, access to the broadcast measures of the work when it goes to Showcase or Super Écran. So there are some data that we have and some data that would be interesting to know from a Telefilm point of view, for instance, as well.

Mr. John Hobday: But in fact complete tracking of career development over a period of time from the time they receive their first Canada Council grant would, I think, be prohibitively expensive for us to do.

Ms. Bev Oda: If the film policy has an element of training in it, do you have any suggestions as to how the effectiveness of the program should be assessed and with what measures? How do we account for the resources allocated to training?

Mr. David Poole: I would be speaking for myself here, but I think one of the interesting things to be able to track would be the transition of filmmakers from making these short works to making work that begins to be intended more for theatrical screens to making a fully theatrical work.

I think one of the things that is difficult for a lot of filmmakers is to make that transition from the short work, over which they have complete control, to working in an industrial context. One of the things that would be interesting to look at is that missing bridge between the artist-controlled work and the more commercial work.

I would say if we were looking for a place to put more resources, and I argued this when the feature film policy came out five years ago, it would be for that budget of about \$250,000 to \$750,000, which tends to be the transition away from completely artist controlled to a more industrial model.

Ms. Bev Oda: Just to conclude, Mr. Poole—and thank you for your responses—is the feature film policy's objective at the end of the day to be successful in the world of commercial film?

Mr. David Poole: As I understand it, one of the key measures of success for the feature film policy was to ensure that Canadian feature films represented 5% of Canadian screen time.

Ms. Bev Oda: And do you think the government has an obligation to maintain just a pool of artist-controlled creations, without an expectation of moving into the commercial world?

Mr. David Poole: I think that's a really difficult question to give one answer to. I think there are two very different film cultures in Canada.

Quebec has a very interesting model. In Quebec there is a whole range of work that's supported, from very artist-driven, more personal work to work that's very successful on the commercial screen. So I think Quebec is a wonderful model. Being able to see *Les Boys* and *Les invasions barbares*—you have that whole range.

I think the challenges in English Canada are much more complex. For one thing, the very commercially successful feature films in English Canada are competing against productions with \$20 million to \$30 million promotional budgets, which is probably beyond the scale of that kind of production. So I do believe there is a place in English Canada for continuing to support work that comes from filmmakers with strong personalities—the Atom Egoyans and David Cronenbergs—and fairly strong genre work, but we may never be able to compete at the blockbuster level.

• (0940)

Ms. Bev Oda: So you believe the policy should have both included.

Mr. David Poole: Yes. I think it should be an industrial and a cultural policy.

Ms. Bev Oda: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Madame Bonsant.

[*Translation*]

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead): Good morning. I hope I won't ask a question that has already been asked. I'm very pleased to be here this morning.

I have heard that you have asked that your \$151 million budget be doubled to allow for further development. You asked for \$300 million, I believe. I hope that this is a minimum. With that kind of money, will you have a process to support the younger creators interested in the development of film and that sort of thing? Will it also allow you to support the development of those who are already there? Because there are young creators who are not known, not exploited, not getting films to produce. With a bigger budget, will you be able to develop this next generation?

Ms. Carol Bream: I will answer.

Thank you, Madam. We didn't give any specific figures. I think the figure in question was put forward by the M.A.L. movement and the Bloc Québécois, but we would greatly appreciate a substantial increase, of course.

With respect to the younger generation, we're already supported. The younger artists, or emerging artists as we call them, are a major focus for us, but we must always bear in mind that our niche is professional artists. These are young artists who have completed their basic training; for instance, a musician who holds a baccalaureate degree in music or, as David said, an emerging filmmaker who has completed some training. They are already professionals and they would be working full time as artists, if they could afford to. A good portion of our budget is dedicated to emerging artists. We even have programs in three categories: emerging artists, mid-career artists and established artists. We want to ensure that support is available to artists at these three stages of their career. That's very important.

As far as development is concerned, we have several programs to help artists pursue professional development. These are not only for artists, but also for agency administrators, who are very important in the artistic ecosystem in Canada. David can provide a more specific answer concerning media arts and film. At the council, our principle is to support professional artists at every stage of their career.

Mr. David Poole: I would like to add a couple of small points about film. Now, the success rate of emerging filmmakers is very low. In order to meet the real needs of these artists, we need more funds.

In addition, today, there are different forms of expression, such as videoclips. Things are now different from the type of production supported by the Visual Arts Service ten years ago. We have to be in a position to react to the real needs of the young creators.

Ms. France Bonsant: Who assesses the new generation? Do you have a board of directors that determines whether one artist is better than another and deserves a chance? I am new to the arts. I would like to know who decides that one person is better than the others.

• (0945)

Ms. Carol Bream: The principle underlying selection at the Council is assessment by a panel of peers, that is, artists. Each panel is selected according to the program in question. For example, in the case of a program focussing on emerging artists, the panel would certainly have young artists on it. There would probably be other, somewhat more experienced, artists as well, who could make a decision. But the artists decide who gets a grant.

Artists complete a very thorough and fairly complex application that provides all sorts of information on what they have already done and what they are proposing to do. Each application involves a specific project an artist is proposing for support. It goes before a panel of peers. The panel makes the selection, and the board, the final approval. It does not change the recommendation of the peer panel, or at least in extremely rare instances only. I have never seen it happen. Its role is, rather, to oversee what goes on.

Ms. France Bonsant: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Simms.

I keep looking for hands that are raised.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mine's always raised. You know that.

You've probably answered this already, and I apologize if you have, but if a particular person is seeking funding to do a script, a film, a video, or whatever, what resources of their own do they have to provide going to the panel?

Mr. David Poole: We often say that for the actual production itself the biggest subsidizer is the artist. The maximum grant is \$16,000 for an artist who has less than three years' experience and \$60,000 for a production over that. Those grants usually cover the hard costs that can't be deferred—a lab, a rental, or something that somebody won't just donate. So frequently the actual artist's time on the production is donated. There's a wonderful term in film budgets called deferrals, which means if we make any money on this we'll pay you. So grants only cover really part of the actual production costs. The artists themselves invest a great deal in these productions.

Mr. Scott Simms: But it's primarily time.

Mr. David Poole: It's primarily their time working on the production, yes.

Mr. Scott Simms: What about the criteria, in the case of a short film?

Mr. David Poole: The criteria are laid out in the program. We look for the quality of an original voice or an original vision in the work. We look at the person who gives us some evidence of being able to deal with this very technical field—they have the skills. We look for a budget that seems reasonable, so the amount they ask for should correspond to what the real costs would likely be.

Those are the three main areas we look at. They are printed in all our program criteria, and they're what we ask the peer assessors to evaluate.

Mr. Scott Simms: Are they the same in every region of the country?

Mr. David Poole: Yes. We consistently make sure there's a person from each region of the country on our peer committees. So there will be a person from the west, a person from British Columbia, somebody from Ontario, somebody from Quebec, and somebody from Atlantic Canada. We also ensure there's an aboriginal person, a person from a diverse cultural community, and a mix of men and women. Those peer committees are really central to what we do in the decision-making.

Mr. Scott Simms: Do those peer committees relate to the cooperatives?

Mr. David Poole: They relate to everything. The peer committees make the decisions around the grants to individual artists, as well as the grants to the cooperatives. It's how all of the recommendations are made throughout the council.

Mr. Scott Simms: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Brown.

Mr. Gord Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I know we have only a couple of minutes. Is there anything we haven't asked that you think we should know about?

Ms. Carol Bream: In response to Mr. Simms' question, in a sense, it's really important to know that none of the grants that the Canada Council gives really come close to providing the amount of money that is needed to do what the artist has to do. There is always something that is put in by the artist or the other partners. The budgets we ask for show those things. That is an essential part of the whole artistic process.

Artists are really and truly committed to what they do and are very willing, as are many Canadians, in projects they believe in, to put in a lot of their own hard work, elbow grease, time, which is money, etc. The grants we give are very small compared to what is really needed. That's true in cinema and everywhere else.

• (0950)

Mr. John Hobday: There's no question the artist is the prime subsidizer.

The Chair: Is there anything else, Mr. Brown?

Mr. Gord Brown: No, that's it.

The Chair: Mr. Smith.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Smith (Pontiac, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My question concerns the aboriginal aspect. I am an Aboriginal myself. This is an aspect of considerable importance to the people of my community. I represent a riding in Quebec.

There are of course some very fine aboriginal films, which you have no doubt been involved in. You spoke of the start of an artist's career. You also spoke of professional artists, that is, people who have a bachelor's or master's degree in a specific field. As you know, oftentimes Aboriginals have not had the opportunity to acquire this professional training. However, people in the communities do have an artistic side because it is in their nature and in their culture.

In the funding in this area, are amounts set aside specifically for Native communities? If so, what would they be?

Mr. David Poole: Seven years ago, in the Media Arts Service, we established a program for Native people under which assessments are done by Native people. It represents 10% of our overall budget. However, Native people are eligible as well for all the other programs.

We are well aware of the situation you described, of the lack of access to this basic training. So, even though the program looks like all our usual programs, we have added an element to give young people interested in cinematography an opportunity to get training in the area and to have someone with more experience act as a mentor. We have tried to react to the needs of the community.

I am very pleased to announce that, prior to the creation of this program, we were receiving about three applications a year from Aboriginal film artists. When the program was created, we received 80.

Mr. David Smith: Is there any synergy? Let's take the example of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Do you work with other departments to come up with money to help the artists from these communities? There are programs in other departments already.

Ms. Carol Bream: I was going to answer your question in more general terms. At the Canada Council, Aboriginal artists and artists from cultural communities are strategic priorities. We have a secretariat for Aboriginal arts and a secretariat for cultural diversity. There is an Aboriginal officer in each of our services: music, dance, theatre, writing and publishing, media arts and visual arts. There are Aboriginal officers to administer programs specifically for Native people and other programs, as well. They are also artists and arts professionals. We also have a number of programs for Aboriginals, as David mentioned. We have, for example, just set up a program in the Visual Arts Service for traditional Native arts. The results are very interesting; there were a lot of applications.

As concerns other departments, we have just signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Canadian Heritage to set up a capacity building program to support the infrastructure, growth and development of Native organizations and sectors of cultural diversity. We have had such a program for four years now, and will extend it to Aboriginals in the coming year.

We therefore provide support to individuals and organizations. We have also arranged a series of showcases for Native artists. At the end of February, in Montreal, at an international congress of presenters, Aboriginal artists from Quebec, especially, will be showcased. The presenters will travel by bus to the reserve near Quebec City in order to get a sense of the surroundings and to learn from the Native people themselves what producers can do. Our support for these showcases has had enormous success, and many artists who have taken part have received invitations and contracts for performances in Europe and throughout the world. It is therefore very important for us.

• (0955)

Mr. David Smith: I have one final question. When you define a Native person, do you mean a status Indian or can it be an Innu or a Métis? Do you differentiate among the three types.

Ms. Carol Bream: No, all three are together.

Mr. David Smith: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Angus and then Mr. Silva. Then I wonder if we might.... Okay, Ms. Bulte.

Charlie, would you mind if I ask you to keep it to two minutes? I'm just conscious that we're running out of time.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I defer.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Angus.

Thank you all for coming.

I'd like to get into some specifics now. Of the \$151 million of your budget, how much is actually devoted to your new media section, Mr. Poole?

Mr. David Poole: It's just a little under \$12 million.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Is that \$12 million for grants, or does it include the administration as well?

Mr. David Poole: No, that's for grants.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: It's just for grants alone. Aside from more money—we know we're going to hear that wherever—what kind of recommendation could you make? I'd like you to expand, Mr. Poole. You said what seems to be missing is a bridge between artist-controlled and industrial films. Could you expand upon that? What do you mean? A non-filmmaker like myself just sees the screen part. Can you explain to me how that...?

Mr. David Poole: People who would like to work in the industry to have films made for cinemas need to work with producers, they need to work with distributors, and they frequently need to work with broadcasters, because that's how the funding is triggered in Canada. It's a much more complex environment than being the artisan making a film, where you're your own producer and your own fundraiser.

What I'd say we have now is a fairly well-developed support for the individual who has all the artistic control, through the Canada Council, and we have a lot of support through Telefilm and through the CTF for work that has the triggers of the broadcaster and of the distributor. But it's a big jump to make, from making your own low-budget or short film to trying to make a feature, so—

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: What's the middle ground? What would be specifically...? Can you give me a scenario?

Mr. David Poole: The middle ground is partly budgetary. It's partly working with a larger budget and the things that come with a larger budget—having to work with contracts, having to work with different kinds of rights clearances. It's partly learning how to work with a producer, how to share control—

• (1000)

Mr. John Hobday: Or attracting investors.

Mr. David Poole: That's right—and producers in raising money for the work.

So there are a number of other skills you need in order to jump into the industry.

There is a very interesting program that is part of the feature film review. That is the artist-directed low-budget feature film program at Telefilm Canada. They support projects. They're still essentially artistically determined by the directors, but they'd bring producers into the picture at that point. They begin to bring in the whole broadcast industry and distributors.

I would say it would be an area that would be very interesting to put more resources into.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Documentaries are one of the things.... We seem to fund, as you say, the big so-called feature film with the box office receipts. What is your role, or do you have a role in documentaries? They're art for art's sake a lot of times. Do you support organizations such as Hot Docs?

Mr. David Poole: Yes, we do.

In fact, about half of the films we support are documentaries. They are quite often what are called "point of view" or personal documentaries. That's another major part of what we do.

We support really four types of things: fiction, short and long; documentaries; animation; and then what we were born out of, which is called experimental film, which was filmmaking that came more from a visual arts background. Those are the four things we're involved in.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Is there anything you could specifically recommend in the documentary area? I know that one of the complaints I always receive from the documentary makers is about getting a broadcast licence, first of all, to be showcased, but also that Telefilm seems to.... I'm surprised you are saying there's a low-budget feature. Somehow there isn't that envelope within Telefilm to allow the creation of documentaries.

Mr. David Poole: I'm just going to bring to your attention that on April 25, I think it is, at Hot Docs.... There is a committee that was formed at Hot Docs a year ago called the summit committee on documentary, which involves all of the agencies involved in documentary who have been researching for the last year exactly this question.

They're going to bring data about how the market is supported, where the work is seen, how many people see the work, what the impact of it is, with possible suggestions for funding from the milieu.

I think you would get more useful information in that forum.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: And you're presenting that at...?

Mr. David Poole: It's at the Hot Docs festival on April 25.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Angus wanted a couple of minutes.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes.

The Chair: I do think we have to wrap up.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I wanted to touch on one issue I thought might be of interest to the committee as we move on. That's on the admission I have to make about creative bookkeeping when it comes to grant filing as an artist.

For example, I was involved for 12 years in a photo documentary work with a documentary photographer. The work is now being shown in Europe and the United States. That work was funded on grants of \$2,000, \$1,500, \$4,000, and we had to make up our budget every time, because if we spent any money on a living wage the work couldn't be done.

So we used our budget continually to pay for production costs and we slept on people's couches. I think it's something that should be brought forward when people talk about artist's grants. Most artists work for free; that's a fact. You work as a dishwasher and you use your money for the production costs.

Do you guys have any evidence about what kinds of budgets come forward? How much money really is going to the actual artists to live in order to do their work, and how much are they actually spending? Do you have those kinds of numbers?

Ms. Carol Bream: Let's just say there are two kinds of grants the council gives in general to artists. There are several, but these are just broad strokes on what you're talking about.

One is a subsistence grant, which allows you time. As a writer, probably what you might have gotten would have been a subsistence grant to allow you two or three months at \$2,000 a month, or something like that, to live on.

The other kind of grant is a production grant, and it does allow you money. If you're a visual artist, for example, right now you can get the \$20,000, plus you get another \$14,000—this is at the top level—for your production costs, for your materials and all that.

So there are two very different things. But as you say, a writer is writing. Someone who is involved in production of all kinds of things where there is any kind of material is going to eat into his or her own living expenses.

We try to support people to have the time to do what they have to do, but we know the exigencies of projects often mean people are having to do all kinds of things.

• (1005)

Mr. John Hobday: But I think, if I might just add to that, this is pretty well true throughout the entire cultural realm. The statistics are profoundly depressing when you get the figures, in terms of dancers' or actors' or writers' incomes. It's to weep.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The Chair: That's not a bad note to end on. It's a depressing note to end on, but, no, I thank you seriously, Mr. Angus, for bringing out that point.

If I could just wrap up, and I'm sorry we have to do this, I would ask that you perhaps give some thought to the future. Obviously, the Canada Council and its role in funding film artists has evolved. What do you see coming? What recommendations might you have to make to this committee, both with respect to your own work but also to the field generally, to any other agencies or actors involved in making sure that we can have good Canadian films produced? If you want to get back to us, we'd appreciate that very much.

Thank you.

A change of cast now.

I don't want to be too task-oriented or be seen to be pushing our visitors out the door, but I wonder if Mr. Bensimon and Laurie Jones could join us at the table now.

•(1006) _____ (Pause) _____

•(1010)

The Chair: I'm pleased to welcome from the National Film Board, Jacques Bensimon and Laurie Jones. Thank you very much.

I'm sorry our time will be cut a little short this morning.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Bensimon (Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson, National Film Board of Canada): Madam Chairwoman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very pleased to be here today to present some suggestions concerning the future of our film industry. I am accompanied by Laurie Jones, Director General, Communications and Outreach Development.

The film policy review undertaken by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage provides an exceptional opportunity for the establishment of a new contract between the different players in the audiovisual industry and the Canadian government, a contract which we hope will extend beyond a strictly economic framework to include the cultural and social components that are so vital in the present context of globalization and major technological upheaval.

[*English*]

In the Canadian cultural landscape, public institutions play a key role in sharing government policy and in a certain sense defining Canada's image in the world.

The National Film Board is one of those flagship institutions. Its mission is to produce and distribute innovative, culturally diverse, and relevant works that provide Canada and the world with a unique Canadian perspective. It is an organization that puts art at the service of citizens and acts as the groundbreaker of audiovisual innovation in Canada. For example, the NFB has been central to the development of *cinéma vérité*, the cradle of Quebec filmmaking, and it has served as an incubator of new talent and technological development.

We have considered three questions and have come up with 11 recommendations: How can the objectives of public institutions be aligned with those of the private sector for the achievement of Canadian cultural objectives? What changes should be made to the current film support mechanisms, including the feature film

policy? How can the NFB, as a public institution, contribute, directly or indirectly, to the development of the Canadian film industry?

[*Translation*]

There has also been mounting international consensus that a particular feature of culture is its need for a mix of government intervention and market mechanisms. Cultural issues cannot be viewed exclusively from a free market perspective without regard for the social or heritage value of works. Culture is like an endangered species: if we do not look after it, we will disappear ourselves.

Markets, however, often lead to a standardization of cultural forms and contents and a concentration of all means of production in the hands of the multinationals that currently and largely control the entertainment industry.

As emphasized in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, market forces alone cannot ensure the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, which is the guarantee of sustainable human development. Some form of cohabitation, a mix of the two, is required.

[*English*]

To begin with, it is a fact that the Canadian audiovisual industry has made some progress. There is no doubt about it. Over the last five years the production and distribution sectors combined have grown at the rate of 8.5%, but certain events are interfering with the development of our film industry. For example, the introduction in Europe of new co-production policies aimed at strengthening the intra-continental market has led the provinces to increase their tax credits. Given the rush by the provinces to outbid each other for this share of the market in recent weeks, the Canadian government should review its position on the issue and strive to harmonize policies and incentives with those provinces.

The distributor's sector too is caught in the spiral of globalization. Aside from a handful, one by one, Canadian distributors are disappearing, owing to the lack of profit and inability to compete with the blockbusters from distributors affiliated with a large international conglomerate, despite a considerable increase in the number of films we produce and in the number of available screens, more than in the past in Canada. It is time to examine more closely the ecology of the Canadian audiovisual production and distribution process. A new balance must be created amongst the players in the industry if it is to survive global market pressures and make the necessary changes to benefit from technological development. Clearly, the public sector must play a leading role in creating synergy among the parties. It could also have a greater impact in the Canadian audiovisual landscape.

With this in mind, we feel that the public-private partnership would be more effective and better able to create conditions favouring the development of Canadian cinema if a policy framework clearly defined the responsibility of the public agency involved in the Canadian audiovisual arts and increased the means at the disposal of the public institution for the achievement of Canada's cultural objectives. Therefore, we invite the Canadian government to adopt a broader and more long-term view of the development of the audiovisual sector in our culture and more specifically to review the relationship between the key agencies—and I insist on that point—and institutions responsible for safeguarding and enriching Canadians' audiovisual heritage and the private sector.

We believe that the mandates of all cultural agencies and institutions should be reviewed so that they ensure they have the necessary means to achieve our country's cultural objectives. In the NFB's case we hope this review will result in a firmer foundation and greater financial means.

●(1015)

[Translation]

Canadian feature films—English and French combined—increased their box-office share by more than 3% in four years, rising from 1.7% in 2001 to 4.8% in 2004. This brings us close to the 5% target of the feature film support policy introduced in 2000. However, this success does not translate equally in the French and English markets; as at September 2004, Quebec films generated 21.1% of revenues in the French-language market, while Canadian films generated a mere 1.7% in the English-language market.

After all, shouldn't success at the box office mean that producers no longer need government subsidies? A selective rather than a performance matter, therefore. This would make it possible to allocate funds for feature documentaries, which have historically been one of Canada's strengths, in our opinion, and currently enjoying worldwide growth, but which do not qualify for assistance from the Canada Feature Film Fund, as it is administered at the moment.

We suggest that the feature film policy be made more encompassing, that documentary feature films not be excluded and that criteria related to box-office performance not be given disproportionate weight compared to relevance of content in awarding production subsidies.

[English]

I take as an example the film corporation that has made more than \$1.5 million with a film called *What Remains of Us*, which is now playing in its 27th or 28th week in a Montreal theatre.

[Translation]

We recommend that the NFB be prevailed upon to apply one of its hallmarks, the support and mentoring of the filmmaking process to the development of low-budget features and feature docs. Furthermore, the funds available for low-budget features should be increased, and feature docs should also be eligible for these funds.

Right now, the NFB—with its reduced budget, which has not been increased since the cuts in 1996—produces 12 feature docs, without necessarily being eligible for these funds.

Broadcasters should allocate a share of their budgets to Canadian films and do more to promote them. The Canadian government should draw inspiration from the measures taken in France to encourage broadcaster involvement. At present, only the public broadcaster—by its own choice—invests in feature films and regularly promotes them.

Therefore, we recommend that feature films become an investment priority for broadcasters. This should be reflected in the investments made by the Canadian Television Fund.

A little aside here to tell you that Canada must join up with international partners in order to become more competitive. I am not thinking of the United States, through NAFTA, or, unfortunately, of our longstanding partners, France and England, operating in a European context. If we want to negotiate a future for Canada with the countries of Europe, we will have to do so with the European market.

If Canada wants to take part in international co-productions, it must review its agreements and all co-productions in order to give priority to partners reflecting our multicultural and diverse society and move closer to Asia, Korea, China and cinema that is vibrant and like us.

●(1020)

[English]

We also have to be aware that technological innovations are opening up new possibilities for audiovisual development in general and Canadian film in particular. Some examples of changes in our ways of making and viewing films are the Internet and the new digital technologies.

One innovation of particular interest to the NFB is e-cinema. In many ways e-cinema, which already exists in several European countries, China, and Brazil, represents a strategic public investment similar to radio and television in the 20th century. In the United Kingdom, Holland, and Brazil, governments have supported its implementation as a way of promoting their indigenous cinema.

The NFB is arguably the agency best placed to be the key public partner in the development of an e-cinema network in Canada. The reasons are, on the one hand, its catalogue, its expertise, and its know-how with regard to audiovisual innovation and research and development, and on the other hand, its commitment to serving national social and educational objectives in the pursuit of its activities.

The future of the audiovisual industry lies in digital distribution, and Canada must step vigorously onto this path if it wants to achieve its cultural objectives. For this to come about, there must be an increase in synergy between Canadian cultural institutions, including the NFB, and the private sector, leading to a pooling of resources.

We are currently working in partnership with Daniel Langlois to set up a network of digital screening rooms that would have on-demand access to a huge catalogue of digital content. We and Mr. Langlois hope to be able to demonstrate this when you visit Montreal in April, the revolution that e-cinema will bring about.

New media and digital games are attracting a growing number of young Canadian filmmakers. Games will no doubt become as ubiquitous as television is today. Therefore, we recommend that the NFB's roles as an incubator and trailblazer in the audiovisual field be confirmed in Canada's film policy and strengthened by the provision of the necessary means for pursuing research, production, and distribution activities in the sector of new media and digital games.

[Translation]

A country's success is measured by its ability to train the public in new ideas and new ways of doing things while acknowledging its social and historic references. The film industry is not exempt from this new imperative of innovative societies. Therefore the training of new talents and mass education must figure among the priorities of Canada's audiovisual industry.

The NFB's work in this regard deserves to be emphasized. The NFB's Toronto Mediatheque and Montreal CineRobothèque, its online film library, the 23,000-member-strong NFB Film Club, screenings throughout the country, support for festivals, master classes, children's workshops and training of emerging filmmakers are concrete examples of the efforts we make to be present in the public space and serve as a driving force in Canadian society.

Our resources and activities attract thousands of people: professionals, researchers, students, children, families and anyone else seeking enriching entertainment or nourishment for their minds or wishing to explore their rich audiovisual heritage.

[English]

A film policy should not overlook the social and educational dimensions of film and the role to be played in this respect by a public institution like the NFB.

Today we often refer to Denys Arcand. We often refer to Roger Frappier. If those people had not been trained by the NFB you wouldn't have a mature cinema today. And I think we have to look very straight in the eye of the next generation and say that there is an institution in Canada that will develop the next generation on which our whole industry can rely.

We therefore recommend that the NFB's financial resources be increased to enable it to develop the community outreach and promotion components of its mission. The NFB could do more to provide access to its audiovisual heritage, discover new talent, and support excellence in Canadian film. For this, it has to build up its network of services in all the regions.

• (1025)

[Translation]

Canada must take advantage of the present circumstances to give new impetus to its cultural industries. In an environment where the expression of our values and cultural diversity is threatened by U.S. nation-building and international conglomerates, this is, in our view, a political priority.

[English]

I would be pleased to answer questions before the screenings of the NFB's two Oscar nominations, *Ryan* and *Hardwood*.

The Chair: I think it is safe to say that we obviously have also decided this is a political priority, and I personally thank you for the thought that has obviously gone into what you've submitted to us this morning. Congratulations on the nominations as well.

Who wishes to begin the questioning? Go ahead, Mr. Schellenberger.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Thank you very much, and thanks for attending this meeting this morning. You mentioned in your brief about the harmonizing of tax credits between provinces. I know in the United States it's open season: every state is kind of against each other. And I have found, I think, in Canada that trying to harmonize government plans for things such as agriculture between provinces really doesn't exist. So how do you feel the film industry can be different and make a level playing field between provinces if the federal government is to fund something that's supposed to be harmonized across the provinces?

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: At this moment in time, it's very interesting. I was reading yesterday, for example, a daily on the film industry. The mayor of Los Angeles was claiming that the lowering of the U.S. dollar would allow him to compete with runaway production, meaning in Canada, and so on. We will spend our time and energy just treading in mud against the Americans if we don't harmonize.

Harmonization, to me, starts with one of the first objectives that I pushed for—get the act together among the agencies. Who is responsible for what? Who is responsible for allocating funding? Who is responsible for training and development? Who is responsible for international activities, and so on and so forth? I think that will at least get the house in order on the federal front and really spell it out in terms of *crédit d'impôt*, or credit for filming, and it will spell it out in terms of provincial jurisdiction, because I think what SaskFilm, SODEC, and OMDC do is extremely important and a key part. But it is key that we send a clear message as to which part of the federal institution should invest in feature film and the way it should do it. The others would adjust to them accordingly. I think each province will have its own capacity to adjust, based on that.

For example, the film *Hardwood*, which we could produce at the OMDC. It is a thing called Calling Card, which is the development of new talent while there was money. There is money identified in each regional film funding agency. The thing is that we have to be clear on which agency at the federal level will be matching with them in order to do it.

Mr. Gary Schellenberger: Again, what is the relationship of the National Film Board with the Canada Council and Telefilm Canada? There seem to be moneys put into various productions from each different group, or am I wrong? Might there be three fundings going to a particular work?

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: I think you're totally right. The Canadian government will have to clearly identify what agency does what.

With Telefilm Canada, there is no doubt that they are a funder. I sit on the board of Telefilm Canada as the ex-officio film commissioner. Therefore, I have the capacity to see what is going on. Likewise, their executive director, Wayne Clarkson, sits on our board. So at least we see what each other is doing. It's a beginning.

The arts council is involved in the development of artists. Your questions were very pointed. The artists are doing their work in order to be exposed in a gallery, and they then pass on to the next stage, which is the industry itself. If you look at the training component, you see that most of the young generation that come out of the Film Centre in Toronto, INIS, and NSI in Winnipeg don't know anything about the business. They're equipped as creators and they're equipped with their talent, but they don't know anything about the business.

What we find ourselves doing at the NFB is equipping those people with the capacity to say yes or no when it comes to making a film and therefore developing their stature as artists. But at the same time, we have to train them in terms of what it is to run a film business today. If you don't have that side of the equation, you might as well be dead. Nobody will produce you.

I think what is confusing, to a certain extent, is that Telefilm Canada has some development money and they fund NSI and some of the film institutions, but they don't necessarily influence it because their business is simply to fund.

The arts council invests in the development of artists. But those artists also bridge into the industry, so a clear line has to be drawn there. What the NFB does through programs such as Momentum and Hothouse, which we have initiated, is equip those people with that. For example, *Hardwood* is Hubert Davis's first film. He should be taken in hand—I don't know if Hubert would acquiesce with what I'm saying—by producers who can guide him through the process, which is what the NFB does.

I'll give you a very good example. Two young filmmakers from Concordia came to see us. They wanted to make a film, but there was a conflict with Concordia. Their whole point of view was the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. Global had made a movie about it, and it didn't fare too well. We assigned a producer to this, and all of a sudden we developed a third character. That third character was somebody who was torn between the two situations. That made for a good film.

The job of a producer is to equip somebody. That's how you're going to develop the next generation. If you have a series of young filmmakers coming out of school who have to knock on every door in order to go through the maze, they will become lost in the process. We're not making it simple for the next generation in that sense.

•(1030)

The Chair: Next is Ms. Bonsant, followed by Mr. Angus.

[Translation]

Ms. France Bonsant: Good morning, Mr. Bensimon. I do not understand why, with its potential, the NFB does not have its own television channel. We know it is in partnership with the Documentary Channel, which serves the anglophone population.

Why is there not such a channel for the francophone market?

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: That is a good question.

The NFB sells its program packages to television networks across the country. We are seen by nearly 9 million viewers. There is no doubt that, when, for example, one of our films is seen on CTV, it

reaches millions of viewers. When it is carried on CBC Newsworld, it reaches some 40,000 people, and that makes a huge difference.

We have a cordial relationship with CBC-Radio-Canada. A number of programs are seen on the CBC. However, very often, we are slotted thematically on Newsworld or RDI. That means we drop a level.

On the CBC, we are seen, for example, on *The Nature of Things*, but on Radio-Canada, as you know, there are no documentaries apart from its own thematics. There are two: *Enjeux* and *Zone libre*. But we have just been informed that *Zone libre* is to be cut. We have to format our programs. We have to re-cut them to fit in these programs, whereas the NFB trademark is sought worldwide. When an NFB film is shown on the Discovery Channel or A&E in the States, they love the NFB trademark, because it is a hallmark.

The NFB has been nominated 67 or 68 times in the United States because it is an extraordinary institution that Canadians alone can come up with.

Today, we have a collection of over 11,000 titles. TV channels have been created for games of golf, for gardening, and no use is made of the heritage in which the country has invested for 65 years. I personally consider this a flagrant injustice, not only for the NFB but for all Canadians, who today have no access to their material.

Thank you for asking the question.

•(1035)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Angus and then Mr. Silva.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

I'd like to start out by saying this is an absolutely fantastic presentation. You've given us a very clear direction.

We are dealing with two issues here. One is the underfunding of the NFB, but one is the political direction we're going to take as a government.

I'd also like to say quickly that I'm sorry; I'm not able to stay because I'm on House duty. I would love to see the films.

I'd like to preface my remarks with this. You presented us with a position where we have, on the one hand, our traditional industry caught in the spiral of globalization, where we're losing distribution networks. On the other, you talk about the opportunities of digital and the future.

In the 1930s, FM radio was discovered, and FM radio was considered a major threat to the distribution networks run by RCA with AM radio. Legislators were brought forward to do everything they could to stop FM radio, and they did a damn good job for about fifty years. I sometimes wonder, in our jobs as legislators, are we busy defending AM radio here when it's undermining our artists at every level or we don't have distribution? The fact is we need to move into digital and we need a vision for digital.

I've been reading LaPierre's report "A Charter for the Cultural Citizen Online", and he speaks of the need for Canada to take the lead in developing online content for the 21st century. It's a really bold vision, one with money...and a framework plan. How would the NFB see itself in such a world, one moving into digital?

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: Well, I really think it's the part of the equation that will either give us cinema of our own in this country or not. John Grierson, who founded the Film Board in 1939, had to make a deal with the Americans at the time in order to access our own screens during World War II. Think about that, that we had to make a deal at the time, during World War II, in order to reach our citizens. I think it was Universal he had to deal with.

Digital, as you say, Mr. Angus, is giving us an incredible opportunity in a very cheap way to combine the public and private sectors in a partnership to create a whole network in this country instantaneously. The Chinese have backed this; they have a five-year plan to equip 3,000 theatres across their country. In the first year they've already equipped 200 theatres.

I'll give you a figure that is very simple. If you want to take a film you've shot in digital and you want to put it on 35 millimetre, it costs you \$60,000. Today it costs you less to equip a theatre with a digital projector. That gives you the size of the figures.

I think somebody like Daniel Langlois, somebody who invests a lot and does it out of his own view of the world, has decided, through DigiScreen, that this was going to be the next move for him.

For me, in order to move in this country, you need to have the public and private sectors parallel and working hand in hand in order to do it. That's why I'm pushing very strongly for the NFB...because we saw it happening in Brazil and we saw it happening in Holland. A very simple solution was that they financed the projector and they projected Dutch films, and that was their way to pay off their projector.

We need to do that right now, because if we don't do it, the Americans are coming with a thing called Dcin, which is digital high end, where for ten times the price they will equip theatres, but again, the theatre owner will be back to having to be accountable to the provider of the film.

• (1040)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Now, in terms of online digital content, how does the NFB see itself? Is there a role? Can we exploit this medium?

Ms. Laurie Jones (Director General, Communications and Outreach Development, National Film Board of Canada): We certainly can. We certainly do right now. We have an online film library with 250 full-length films that are accessible. There are 7,000 screenings per month and it's growing. We're adding another 200 films this year. We'd like to have a lot more. It's a question of funding, of course, because digitizing those films takes a bit of time and money.

I think there is a lot more to do in terms of getting into schools and in terms of really putting Canada in its place in the world. The online access will be the place. And with films, with the compression ratios going down right now and with all the changes that have been

occurring, it's happening now; we have to be there, and we have to have that vision in order to say this is where we want to go.

We shouldn't think of replacing the video cassette by just transferring it online. There are different applications and there are different uses. That's why the way people are using media online right now is a little bit different. With something like e-cinema and online accessibility, people will be able to either have their home theatre or else go into a theatre for a community experience and will also be able to create and share collaboratively.

Those are all things we can do online, and we're starting to do them at the Film Board but in a small way because of limited funds.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I've used the NFB many times to rent or buy videos. Do you have a budget to move your back catalogue from analog to digital?

Ms. Laurie Jones: With access to the Canadian content online program under the Canadian memory fund, we digitize part of our collection. Anything we digitize has to be put online free of charge, and it has to be contextualized. Quite often, filmmakers do not believe they need to be contextualized, because the film itself occurs, but we do it because...we were able to help people with First World War films and things like that, which actually do need contextualization.

However, on the cost of digitizing, we have 11,900 titles in our collection. We have digitized 1,395 titles so far under the memory fund program. Every day we continue—we digitize more titles—but it's a costly endeavour.

And once you've digitized, you can't say it's over, you've finished it, because usually you have another format. We started off in 1999 in on MPEG-1. We're now doing MPEG-4, and we're probably going to be looking at different technologies. Those are not conservation technologies; they are access technologies. So there's a lot of work to do still in our collection.

The thing with the NFB collection, though, is that it's a fully accessible collection, unlike things that are archived. Some of our most popular films are 40 years old. Some of the films people know right away—*Path of the Paddle*, a Denys Arcand film. They want to have access, so for us it's a really important thing to be able to have access. We now have 800 titles transferred to MPEG-2, which allows us to sell them in DVD. That's a good thing we've been able to do, and we now have a DVD mechanism, a program we've developed to do DVD on demand. We used to do video on demand; now we do DVD on demand. That's something else that allows us to go further there.

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: Mr. Angus, I know it's not directly connected, but it's directly connected to your question. I didn't want to refer to it here, but I tell you I have certain sleepless nights, and the sleepless nights are made when we, as the depositor of the Canadian memory of our filmmakers, are not able to render that cinema accessible to the next generation. It really preoccupies me.

For example, this week, during the Jutras Awards, we will be announcing that we're putting together the whole collection of Michel Brault, in terms of digitizing his work. We are also announcing this week that Anne Claire Poirier's work will be released. How many of those are just sleeping in our vaults, not being acted upon? Is it because Canada is too young a country in order to not have memory?

But the fact that we're not passing it on to the next generation.... When we did the Gilles Groulx collection, for example, a whole new generation, who didn't know what this man had done, discovered Gilles Groulx. In terms of his boxing films and the kinds of things he has done, this man invented *Rocky* before *Rocky* existed. He has done things in hockey—for example, *Un jeu si simple*, about The Rocket and other players—and those films are not accessible. They're just sleeping in the vault. Yet when you think of a film like *The Sweater*, which most likely some of you have seen in school—still, today, kids are growing up looking at those films, and it is extremely key that what we do is not only to preserve but to render it accessible.

I don't know if Laurie has a can to show you, to a certain extent, where we have to move from. This is what we—

• (1045)

Ms. Laurie Jones: Pardon the smell. These films are infected with vinegar syndrome, so they don't smell very good.

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: And you can imagine making this accessible to a school, in comparison to having this accessible to a school or a filmmaker.

Ms. Laurie Jones: This is what could happen to Canada's audiovisual heritage. This film is affected with vinegar syndrome and has also shrunk, so this film is no longer accessible.

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: We're not showing you what happens with soundtracks, in terms of magnetic soundtracks and the rest of it. So you can understand what I mean by sleepless nights.

The Chair: Mr. Silva.

Mr. Mario Silva: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I actually have several questions, but obviously I realize that in the short time it's not going to be possible. So maybe one day I'll have to contact Jacques or Laurie and hopefully get the answers to my questions.

We had spent some time on this, and you had spoken about it, lamenting the loss of Canadian distribution. Obviously, access is so important to these films, because they really are, in many ways, telling the Canadian story. That's one of the reasons I've always loved the films from the National Film Board, because the stories are always so wonderful and so beautiful.

I don't know what the situation is right now in our schools or how much the youth of our country know about what's happening out there or what productions are out there. We've created some magnificent pieces of art, but unless you are presented with it, you just don't know it exists. Everything I've seen that I've loved from the National Film Board was by accident. Either I was in school that day and they showed the film or I was at a theatre where it might have popped up. It wasn't because I decided to look for a title, because I

don't really know all the titles of these particular stories or documentaries, and so on.

So how do we get these particular pieces of art to the youth of this country? What arrangements are there with our theatres to show those, before showing an American movie, so that you get a chance to see some of our heritage before you're shown the American culture? Or how do we get this on the air in prime time, for example, before they air some type of major American series or a soap opera, or whatever?

It's just that there are so many wonderful stories that we're not seeing and don't know about. It's just so tragic. If I don't know about it, I can imagine the majority of Canadians and the public don't know about it as well.

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: We have that in common. As a young immigrant to this country, my first experience in high school was a white sheet and an NFB film projected there. When I tour the country, that's the question I get asked the most: "Where can I access NFB films?"

For the time being, we're in the middle of a shift between the old technology and the new technologies through digitalization. Practically speaking, the NFB in the 1980s closed all its cinemathèque, and in doing so we didn't replace it with anything else. Therefore, in my view, it cut the umbilical cord that linked the NFB to the citizens of this country. That's why the network is something that I still view as at least a way to connect with Canadians every day.

We have a very good network of reaching out into the schools. We sell to the schools, we present to the schools, but things are changing and people need to access through the Internet. We've created an NFB club. In a year, 23,000 members have put their names down in order to download material or view material on the Internet.

But Canadians also need a kind of tactile contact with their films. What I mean by that is if you go today to the Mediatheque in Toronto or to the CinéRobothèque in Montreal, you will walk into a room full of kids doing their McLaren thing, drawing on film, learning how to make animation films, and we have documentary workshops.

But the point, at this moment in time, is that this happens only in Montreal and Toronto. What happens to the rest of the country? How do we reach out to the rest of the country? That's a huge preoccupation for us, because the NFB is a national institution. We have production offices in Vancouver, in Halifax, and in Edmonton, but we don't have a window out there for Canadians to be able to walk into their NFB and be able instantaneously to walk out with one of those things because they would ask that it be printed.

I think the Internet, to a certain extent, is the transition we're making into the digital universe. That's why e-cinema is the other way we're pushing, again to reach out to Canadians.

• (1050)

The Chair: I am sorry, but we have a little bit of business to take care of. I suspect that—like you, Mario—we're going to want Mr. Bensimon and Ms. Jones back before us for further discussions. I just feel that I want to take them out for dinner and talk to them.

To both of you, thank you very, very much. We have to take a few minutes for business, and then we will allow you to show us what's going to win Oscars for you.

I must say, for my entire life I've thought of the CBC as Canada's broadcaster and I've thought of you as Canada's filmmaker. I hope that's the right way of thinking.

The first thing is that we have received the certificate of nomination of Robert Kenneth Armstrong as chairperson of the board of trustees of the Canadian Museum of Nature. Does the committee wish to review that appointment or not?

Ms. Bulte is saying no. Can I take that as a motion that we not review this particular appointment?

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: With respect, Madam Chair, I don't see that it's necessary to do motions all the time. If we as a committee can work in consensus and either agree or not agree....

Rather than go through this thing of motions—and I'll insist on 48 hours' notice—we can try to start working as a team here. We can ask, "What's the feeling," and then talk about it, but I really don't think it's necessary to have motions all the time.

The Chair: No, I don't think it's necessary to have a motion, but I do need to know if the committee agrees with you or if it's just your opinion.

Is there any disagreement with that? Okay. We won't review this appointment. Thank you very much.

Are there any other items of business? I'm sorry, we still do not have a firm word from all our whips and House leaders as to when we can travel. I hope to have that finally resolved for you by Tuesday.

I would like some advice from the committee, though. The response to the broadcasting report and the copyright report have to be tabled the first week in April. I presume you want the minister before us to deal with those responses. How long does the committee want, after the response is tabled, before we have the minister in front of us? A week, two weeks?

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: One week. People should have a chance to review the documents—not just our researchers, but we also should have a chance to review them.

The Chair: Absolutely.

Two weeks? Okay. We'll try to schedule it two weeks after the first week in March.

Ms. Bev Oda: Madam Chair, I don't know if this is normal or not, but when there is such a volume, and even some of the presentations, and a response to an entire report that we're looking at, and then to have a presentation in which we're limited, even if it is a full morning meeting...I'm finding that a little frustrating, certainly on my part.

I wonder if we would be able to have an option that we might consider requesting that if there are questions of more information or clarification, these could be submitted in writing; therefore, in the discussion we have, the time won't be taken up in just getting facts, figures, and information, but in actually having more of a discussion

on a going-forward basis. We might accommodate two different needs here.

• (1055)

The Chair: The committee members might keep that in mind. If what you're looking for is information, perhaps you could just ask to have the information provided and then keep it more to an exchange of ideas.

Is that what you're suggesting, Ms. Oda?

Fine. I don't have a problem with that.

Shall we initially schedule one meeting with the minister on the response to our reports?

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Yes, and with the appropriate officials as well.

The Chair: Of course.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Around the copyright report, I think we should have industry officials as well.

The Chair: It seems to me that we have to do a minimum of two, one on each response.

Okay. Thank you very much.

Is there any other business, or can we turn on the projector?

Oh, I'm sorry, there's Ms. Oda's motion.

Ms. Bev Oda: Madam Chair, this was the motion that I tabled. It has been distributed and has had the 48 hours' notice, in both official languages.

The Chair: That motion is in front of us.

May I ask a question, Ms. Oda?

Ms. Bev Oda: Certainly.

The Chair: The second part of your motion says:

The concerns expressed focus on the level of news and information programming on the private and public radio and television services in Quebec.

Is it "in Quebec" or "in French" because—

Ms. Bev Oda: No, you pointed that out. I'm sorry.

The Chair: —private and public broadcasting in French is not only in Quebec.

Ms. Bev Oda: If you could strike out "in Quebec" and then read it through, I think it'll then flow.

The Chair: So it would be:

in addition to the coverage and availability of the Olympic Games of 2010 and 2012 throughout the Francophone communities across Canada.

I guess that's what it would be.

Ms. Bev Oda: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

Just to be clear, you're not talking only about televising—

Ms. Bev Oda: No, it's for all francophones.

The Chair: But not just the Olympics?

Ms. Bev Oda: No.

The Chair: Thank you.

This will do.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I'd like to speak to the motion.

I understand this motion was also tabled at the official languages committee.

Ms. Bev Oda: I don't know about that.

• (1100)

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I'm just adding information here, that the same motion was tabled at the official languages committee.

And what I would suggest.... They resolved at that time to have CTV come before the committee.

I don't know what value is going to be served by the minister coming. Indeed, what we should have first is perhaps CTV or Rogers or BCE Globemedia, which won the bid to the Olympics, to come and talk about how they're going to ensure access to the Olympics, as opposed to the minister. I mean the minister doesn't really control programming. And on the IOC bid, that was separate and apart.

I agree that there is concern by the communities. Who is the proper party to address the issue?

Ms. Bev Oda: I think there are two issues here, as the chair has pointed out. It's not just the Olympic coverage. It's an overall service, extended service, to the francophone communities in their language and it specifically would be the Olympics.

I don't disagree that if we want to talk about the Olympics, we might have the provider explain how the coverage is going to be provided to the francophone communities.

However, I know there is a concern, and I would like to have certainly an expression or an opportunity for the minister to explain to the committee the government's concern, interest, focus on maintaining a certain level of service in the francophone language for all communities in Canada.

The Chair: I'm being reminded that the broadcasting study did deal with this in part and that some of this may be in the response of the minister.

In any case, I have Monsieur Smith, Mr. Silva, and Mr. Angus.

[*Translation*]

Mr. David Smith: Am I correct, Madam Chair, in my understanding that the television committee has already looked at this point? Is that what you said?

[*English*]

The Chair: The committee in the previous Parliament did a major study on broadcasting—it's that thick—in one language. We retabled it when this committee was struck. We're expecting a response from the minister to the recommendations in that report, and Mr. Jackson is just reminding me that this issue was dealt with, at least in part, in that report. The minister's response to the report should in part address this.

Mr. Silva and then Mr. Angus.

Mr. Mario Silva: Madam Chair, I just want to echo the sentiments expressed by the parliamentary secretary. I think she is absolutely right. We have to bring before this committee the parties who have the most to deal with on this issue and at least hear from

them first. I don't see any service in inviting the minister first. Let's hear from the industry, as was pointed out, and then if we feel we need to go further, we can at that time invite the minister. I think we're putting the cart before the horse. I think we should first ask the industry to come forward, and then if we're not clear, ask the minister.

The Chair: I do think the motion addresses Radio-Canada as well, not simply telecasting or broadcasting the Olympics.

Ms. Bev Oda: There have been some changes actually in Quebec on the regional coverage of news and information programming that have nothing to do with the Olympics. That also is affecting the level of service in that community.

The Chair: Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Chair, I feel in some ways it's an excellent motion, but I have concerns, because it seems to me we're dealing with three separate issues here. We're dealing with the lack of what happened with the private media broadcasters in terms of the Olympics, as was pointed out. Secondly, we have a number of issues within Quebec in terms of media concentration and news service. Then, thirdly, we have the issue of the lack of support for francophone production outside of Quebec. I don't think by having the minister here for a day we can address all three. I think these are three major issues that need to be looked at.

If there's time in our spring schedule to address these, we could look at it maybe in terms of three separate issues, but to bring the minister here to try to do all three, I have a feeling that within the five minutes we're allotted for questioning we're going to come out none the wiser.

The Chair: Madam Bulte is next and then Ms. Oda.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Ms. Oda, I want you to understand that the issues you raise are important ones. My concern again is who are the proper persons to address them. I'm going to agree with Mr. Angus that we can't just do it in five minutes or in a motion.

The other thing is if you talk about the media environment in broadcasting and television, the CRTC has a role in this too. I think it's important that we get all of these players here. Just to bring the minister in front of us is not sufficient. I understand it's more than the Olympics. Radio-Canada and RDS should be here as well.

I think we're trying to accomplish too much in one motion, and it could be part of a separate study.

Ms. Bev Oda: Madam Chair, I think what I'm hearing is an agreement and a consensus that there is some concern and some interest in francophone service, both within Quebec and outside of Quebec. I will agree that in trying to encompass and pay some attention, it may be an overall bigger study.

I will also agree on one point, whether the order that I suggested is the appropriate one. Certainly I think this discussion will alert the minister that there will be discussion on her response to the Lincoln report.

As far as the Olympic games coverage, if that's the most immediate one, or the changes within the Quebec market as far as the news coverage, etc., I guess my primary objective is to bring this to the attention of the committee, to get consensus that this is a matter of concern and interest to the committee, and that the committee would agree to proceed and look into it.

• (1105)

The Chair: So you are withdrawing your motion, essentially. What I would—

Ms. Bev Oda: I'm wondering if there's a way I can make an amendment or just table something.

The Chair: Why don't you table it? We can look at it again on Tuesday. By then we can find out what was passed at the official languages committee. Perhaps if they have already done this, or something similar, we can have a combined effort, rather than having the minister appear at two different committees to say the same things.

Anyway, we'll try to clarify that before Tuesday.

Ms. Bev Oda: Okay. That's fine. Thank you.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: As a point of clarification, my understanding is the official languages committee has agreed to have CTV come before it to speak on the Olympic bid. Perhaps that's an opportunity where we could possibly have a joint meeting.

Ms. Bev Oda: If we are going to look into a joint committee with the official languages committee regarding the Olympic coverage, it's not just CTV. I would like members of the Canadian Olympic Committee to appear, since they are responsible and are government-appointed people, to ensure that not only Canadian athletes are involved, but also that they're part of the larger—

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I would like to make a point of clarification, though, please, for the record. The negotiations on broadcasting are done directly with the IOC.

Ms. Bev Oda: I understand that. I've been there. I know that.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: That's why I am saying I don't know whether it would be proper to involve the COC. That's all I'm saying.

The Chair: Ms. Bulte, you're the one who has to leave by 11:45 a. m. I would really would like us to turn the projector on.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I would too.

The Chair: I'm not going to adjourn the meeting of the committee until we've seen those two films.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Madam Chair, before you roll the film, could we meet the director?

The Chair: Yes, that would be very nice.

Mr. Jacques Bensimon: I would like to introduce Hubert Davis, who is the director of one of the two films nominated this year for an Academy Award. In the 65th anniversary of the NFB, they are the 67th and 68th films that have been nominated. We hope Hubert will be able to bring that award home. It's very heavy.

Ryan has already won 35 awards in less than a year. We won't show you *Ryan*, but we'll find a way to get it to you. We'll be streaming it to all Canadians before the Academy Awards so Canadians can have access to it. We cannot stream *Hardwood* for the simple reason that it's committed to a broadcaster, and we want to give the first window to the broadcaster.

Hubert is back from the Pan African Film Festival in the U.S., where he was given a standing ovation by some American senators. I think this film does more for U.S.-Canada relations than any political strategy to meet and do business together, because it's basically about feelings, emotion, and family.

Hubert.

Mr. Hubert Davis (As an Individual): I'm just so honoured to be here. It's right up there with the surreal moments of going to the Academy Awards luncheon. I just want to express how grateful I am to be here. I'm really excited that you'll be seeing my film. I was surprised when I started out that more people than just my family were going to see it in the theatre. I was most nervous about other people coming to see it.

I have to thank the Film Board for their part in that. It's ultimately my job to make the best film I can, but they've done an incredible job of putting it out there so more people will get a chance to see it and be aware of it, which is the battle of an independent filmmaker. I just want to thank them for their help in that, and in allowing me to show it.

It's a very personal story. I didn't realize how personal it was until it was actually presented to some people outside of my family. I hope you enjoy it.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you very much for being here, and congratulations.

I am going to adjourn the meeting now.

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