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—
Chair

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): Order.

Good morning. My name is Gary Schellenberger, and I am chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I'm very pleased to be here in Vancouver this morning with some of our committee members.

What a beautiful morning. When I woke up in my room, the sun was shining in as it came over the mountains and the bridge over there. It was beautiful.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles (Executive Director, Alliance for Arts and Culture): It's always like this.

The Chair: That's great. And from the lawns I saw as we came through yesterday, you'll probably need to have the lawn mowers out very soon.

We have travelled here this morning as part of our study of the public broadcaster here in Canada. I'm very pleased to see that the witnesses who put their names forward could be here. We do have, I hope, a fair bit of time this morning.

We are waiting for Ms. Fry. She will be here or, I guess, won't be; whatever.

Welcome to Ms. Savoie and Ms. Bourgeois.

I will begin by thanking Ms. Bourgeois. One presentation that will be made—by the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting—is printed out, but it's not in both official languages. I would like to thank Ms. Bourgeois for saying that we can use that particular material here this morning, because I think there are some important graphs in there that could be useful.

I would like to try to hold the introductory presentations to around ten minutes, somewhere in there. Then we can open it up to questions. At the end of that particular time, if we've pursued the different avenues and we still have five, ten, or fifteen minutes at the end, I might ask our parliamentary experts from the parliamentary library if they have any questions for the witnesses. In all fairness, these gentlemen, or this group, will be writing up the report, so if that's suitable to our witnesses, I would hope we could go forward with that.

I would like to welcome this morning, from the Alliance for Arts and Culture, Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles; and from the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, Ian Morrison, the spokesperson, and Anne Ironside.

Following the order on my list, perhaps you would go first, please, Mr. Wilhelm-Boyles.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thanks for the opportunity to have this intervention on behalf of the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture, which represents artists and cultural organizations in the 22 municipalities of the Greater Vancouver regional district.

I found last night that I had written long, so I'm going to read short. The complete text has been distributed, but regrettably not in French. But we'll get it done.

We do not propose to answer all the questions asked in the invitation document. The committee will hear from many intervenors who have expert knowledge in all the areas of this study. In that regard, we commend to you the excellent submission of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, with which we concur in every respect.

Our purpose is to address in more general terms the essential role of the public broadcaster in reflecting, nurturing, supporting, and advancing the Canadian experiment, which is, as we see it, the creation and maintenance of a pluralistic society that is distinctive, humane, harmonious, equitable, compassionate, creative, vibrant, healthy, and prosperous. It is our view that the arts and culture have everything to do with achieving that laudable goal and that the public broadcaster has everything to do with enabling them to do so.

When we use the term “arts and culture”, we refer to both the broad definition of culture, often described as the UNESCO definition, which is the “distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society [...] it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”, and the more narrowly focused one, which includes performing, visual, and literary arts and heritage—and we add the media.

The second will be seen as a formalized encodification of the first. If we ignore the first, we dismiss what motivates people, what gives them identity and meaning, what connects them to their fellows. If we ignore the second, we forfeit the most powerful vehicles of imagination, creativity, inspiration, enrichment, and expression known to humanity. It is our view that in Canada the CBC is likely the single most important vehicle for the nurture, support, and promotion of the arts and the exploration and creation of identity at local, regional, and national levels.

Pier Luigi Sacco is a professor of cultural economics at the University of Bologna. Over the past several years, he has developed a relationship with Vancouver in which he has experienced, explored, and investigated the cultural ecology and economy of the city. Professor Sacco posits that since at least the Second World War, societies—at least those in the developed world—are no longer driven by scarcity or the search for daily necessities, but by a search for identity. He further posits that identity is primarily found in two ways: in the acquisition of things, which he calls identity through objects, and through the experience of significant relationships and occurrences, and this he calls identity through experience. The latter, he suggests, is what leads to the development of healthy, creative, effective, fulfilled communities.

As Canada welcomes the world in increasing numbers and our communities become increasingly diverse, there is an increased need to share our experiences through our stories. A recent newspaper article suggested strongly that if we are to develop harmonious relationships among all sectors of our society, rather than laying down rules of behaviour for those newly arrived in our communities—other than the rule of law, of course—we should welcome them into our homes and our gatherings; otherwise, how can they know how we live and what we value? Likewise, how can we know in any meaningful way about their values unless we encounter them where they live?

Since, realistically, most of us will not enter the homes of most of the rest of us, it falls to our public broadcaster to take us there, because it enters our homes, our living rooms and our bedrooms, and it can and should be a vehicle that enables us to tell our stories to each other with sensitivity, honesty, and humour. These stories are told by Canada's artists in all the disciplines. We believe it is incumbent on the national public broadcaster to maintain space on all its platforms for the expression of the works of Canadians artists as a priority.

In a paper entitled “Cultural Policy Beyond Aesthetics” by Professor Tony Bennett of the Economic and Social Research Council of the U.K., in reference to a study conducted in Australia in the mid-1900s by him and two colleagues, we read: “...viewed in terms of the demographic profiles of their publics as measured by their class, educational, gendered and ethnic compositions, public broadcasting led the field as being the most socially inclusive...”. It is not unreasonable to assume that a similar case could be made for the CBC in the Canadian cultural ecology.

● (0910)

In this regard, we fully support the existing mandate of the CBC. It needs no modification. However, it is a demanding mandate, one complicated by the fact that in the interests of responsible journalism the CBC must sometimes bite the hand that feeds it, and the CBC is no longer funded to carry it out with distinction. It is disturbing to realize that at a time when demands on the public broadcaster are expanding and the costs of doing business in nearly every aspect of life are increasing, the Government of Canada is funding the national public broadcaster at the same level as 30 years ago.

The CBC has a history of great achievement in the creation and promotion of Canadian art of all kinds. Indeed, the very existence of a strong, vibrant Canadian cultural sector—and its excellence is

acknowledged by audiences and commentators around the world—can be attributed to the historic investment made in Canadian artists by the Government of Canada through the CBC and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Excessive cuts to CBC's appropriations over the past three decades, however, has resulted in seriously diminished investments in Canadian arts and reduced reflection of the regions and localities of the country and the world.

It is instructive to read the following from the 2003 report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, *Our Cultural Sovereignty, the Second Century of Canadian Broadcasting*:

There is also cause for serious concern about the production and exhibition of English-language drama. Except in Quebec, where audiences are entertained and invigorated by original, home-grown dramatic productions, American programming dominates the airwaves to an extent that is largely unknown and unimaginable in any other country outside of the United States itself... Canadians seldom have the opportunity to see their own lives and communities reflected in non-news programming in the places where they live.

Four years on, not very much has changed.

A word of caution: We live in the age of metrics, in which increasingly it is felt that anything worth supporting can and must be measured. So we spend a great deal of time, effort, and money measuring anything that can be measured, and a lot of things that really can't. In the arts we can measure all kinds of things, but we have no way of measuring the impact of that moment in the relationship of artists with audience or a participant with activity when a person gains a new understanding of herself or himself or another person, of a community, or the world at large—that electrifying moment, perception or realization, that can alter belief or behaviour or transform a life. That is not susceptible to measurement, and that ultimately is the purpose and meaning and highest value of art, whether live or broadcast. We need to acknowledge the value of what is not measurable and support it precisely because its value is beyond measurement.

What is true for the arts in general is true of the public broadcaster. While its reduced means has rendered the CBC a shadow of its former self with regard to its promotion of Canadian arts and culture, it retains the potential to be the most significant arts and culture institution in the country and the most pervasive purveyor of Canadian arts and culture.

Two decades or so ago, we, the arts sector, swallowed whole the idea that the way to long-term sustainability was to make strong financial arguments in support of our activities. So we did that, and with some success. However, in making those arguments, we too often neglected the other compelling arguments on the arts—those associated with the quality of life in our communities, salutary effects on health, public safety, education, the justice system, urban regeneration, community pride, social cohesion, and the personal and social development of young people, as well as the nature of our relationships with ourselves and one another, the nature of our humanity, and our place in the world—those things that defy easy financial analysis. We are concerned that a preoccupation with measurement will become simply another excuse to ignore what makes art special and irreplaceable. So we ask the committee to remain open to those elements and values of art, and the public broadcaster's role in creating and promoting them so they are accorded the value they deserve.

With specific regard to the role of the CBC, we believe the following—and more, but for now.... We believe there is a need for the CBC to be more active in commissioning and presenting new work by Canadian artists and performances by Canadian performers, and paying them properly. The CBC must continue to take a leadership role in providing as appropriate on all its platforms a diversity of programming, including historic and contemporary arts of all kinds, that has as its hallmark artistic excellence, intellectual rigour, and Canadian origination.

● (0915)

The making of art necessarily involves risk. The CBC must be prepared to take risks also and it must be supported in doing so. We believe the CBC must present a distinctively and honestly and unabashedly Canadian perspective. We believe that important cultural activities take place in every community in this land and that the CBC needs to be more present in the regions and localities of Canada to recognize, capture, and reflect these activities to the communities themselves and to the people of Canada.

We believe it is time to relieve the CBC of the necessity and the responsibility of competing with commercial broadcasters for advertising revenue. The CBC does not exist to deliver ears and eyes to commercial interests. It exists to be and do all that is set out in the mandate as described in the Broadcasting Act of 1991. The CBC should be held to that mandate and should be provided by the Government of Canada with sufficient funds to do the job properly. A properly funded and strongly supported public broadcaster is a fundamental element of a modern, democratic, autonomous, and sovereign nation.

I'll give the last words to some others deeply concerned about the health of this country and its arts. From an artist in Vancouver:

I love the CBC. It's ridiculous, really, but it's true. I feel it is wounded right now, but I have sincere faith in this creation of ours. Canadian culture is a vital, living culture that is the equal of any in the world. Its work should be broadcast to the people of our country and to the whole world.

And from writer, critic, advocate, and now Mayor of Lions Bay, Max Wyman, in *The Defiant Imagination, Why Culture Matters*:

The issue is the authenticity of the idea of Canada, which rests in the books it is able to read, the music it is able to make, the TV and film it is able to watch. It has to do with what the bureaucrats and politicians call "creative capital"—the ability of Canadians to write those books and make those films, to create and innovate.

Ideally, what should emerge from this environment is work that is intelligent, truthful and sceptical, work free to shine a uniquely Canadian light on the issues of the day. Quality must be given fair opportunity to find its place.

We suggest that a greater investment in the CBC would achieve that.

Thank you very much.

● (0920)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Wilhelm-Boyles.

We'll now take the presentation from the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting and then we can ask questions.

Ms. Ironside.

Ms. Anne Ironside (Friends of Canadian Broadcasting): Thank you.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, welcome to Vancouver. My name is Anne Ironside. I'm a Vancouver-based member of Friends of Canadian Broadcasting's advisory council and a strong supporter of Canadian public broadcasting.

Friends is a watchdog group for Canadian programming and the English-language audiovisual system, with the support of 100,000 Canadians, 25% of whom live in B.C.

Appearing with me is Ian Morrison, a Friends spokesperson. As you know, Friends submitted a brief to your committee on February 26. We've also encouraged our supporters to actively participate in your important investigation.

I want to make four points, our essential message. The first is that the CBC board of directors should be chosen at arm's length from patronage, drawn from the best and the brightest Canadians, and this board should have the authority to hire, and if necessary fire, its CEO.

Almost four years ago the Lincoln report recommended that:

In the interests of fuller accountability and arm's length from government, nominations to the CBC's board should be made by a number of sources....

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

Is it somebody's cellphone?

The Chair: I don't have one, so it's not me.

Okay, please proceed.

Ms. Anne Ironside: Nominations to the CBC board should be made by a number of sources, and the CBC president should be hired and be responsible to the board.

The second point is that Parliament should instruct the CBC's board to attach a high priority to the Broadcasting Act's mandate to reflect Canada and its regions through national and regional audiences while serving the special needs of these regions.

The third point is that Parliament should invite CBC's board to develop a business plan to address its regional responsibilities, wean itself from dependence on television advertising and foreign programs, and strengthen the presentation of Canadians' stories in prime time.

The fourth point I want to highlight is that to fund that plan Parliament should offer to increase the CBC's budget drastically by annual increments of at least \$100 million over the next five years. We see it as an investment in updating Canada's social infrastructure. As the Lincoln report made clear, such an investment would bring Canadians only to the average of OECD countries' spending on civic pride. If you put it in this context, by 2012 Canada would be spending 15¢ per person per day to support a vigorous, locally relevant public broadcasting system.

Ian.

● (0925)

[Translation]

Mr. Ian Morrison (Spokesperson, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting): I will be summarizing the main recommendations contained in our brief of February 26. If you wish, we would be pleased to discuss them further.

[English]

As an additional contribution to your important work, we have also commissioned, and we offer you today, a research report from CMRI, the Canadian Media Research Inc. The title is *Trends in TV Audiences & Public Opinion, 1996-2006*, with special reference to CBC English television.

This report provides data on such topics as TV set ownership, direct-to-home satellite subscription trends, over-the-air reception and new video technologies. It also features trends in TV viewing levels, market share, and audiences for Canadian programming, as well as a review of public opinion regarding television, and CBC in particular.

I would like to touch, Mr. Chair, on highlights from this research. First is the necessity of maintaining over-the-air transmission facilities in all parts of Canada. CMRI's report indicates that 10% of Canadians depend on over-the-air transmission to receive their TV signals, which is three million Canadians. This is not expected to change in the coming years. Because they access fewer channels, these Canadians account for only 7% of viewing hours. The percentage of over-the-air TV reception is much higher among French-speaking viewers, approximately 15%.

Fourteen per cent of the viewing of CBC's English television network is over the air: in Windsor it's 51%; in Leeds—Grenville, 32%; in Peace River north, 24%; in the Kootenays, 17%; Fredericton, 11%; here in Vancouver it's 10%.

According to BBM, there are 26,100 people who watch TV off-air in Okanagan-Kamloops—our friends in Save our CBC Kamloops are on your agenda this afternoon—and here in Vancouver there are 188,700 people receiving their television over the air.

In view of the importance of over-the-air reception to three million Canadians, we were more than somewhat concerned to read in a CBC television policy submission to the CRTC last August that “over-the-air transmission will remain a viable distribution technology for the distribution of television programming only in major urban centres”.

CMRI conducted a special survey of the CRTC last autumn among a representative sample of 1,000 Canadians who do not

subscribe to cable or satellite TV. In the survey CMRI asked: If you could receive only one station off-air, what would that be? Forty-five per cent of English-speaking respondents said CBC TV and 49% of French-speaking respondents said SRC TV, far ahead of CTV, Global, TVA, TQS.

Friends therefore urges you to take up this matter with CBC next week and to remind their management that all Canadians pay for the corporation and all are entitled to receive its programming, whether they live in major urban centres or elsewhere.

We also wish to raise with you some questions about cbc.ca. That's another subject you've announced as a priority for you: the new media. This arises from CMRI's research. According to BBM—that's the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement—data, Canadians use the Internet for non-work purposes for an average of fewer than four hours a week, far less than the 26 hours they spend watching TV. Even teenagers spend twice as much time watching TV as they do surfing. Including usage at work, Comscore reports that Canadians spend five and a half hours weekly on the net.

Now, cbc.ca ranked 20th among Canadian domains in March 2006. Its monthly reach was 4.2 million users, but it had only 475,000 daily users, and they spent an average of fewer than seven minutes on cbc.ca. This represents one five-hundredth of all the Canadian web traffic. At any given moment in March 2006, cbc.ca was serving only 2,200 users, approximately the number of viewers assembled by a very small specialty TV channel.

● (0930)

The corporation has not been forthcoming with Canadians about the cost of cbc.ca. We estimate that cbc.ca costs at least \$20 million net of revenues, and employs 5% of CBC's workforce. It's a legitimate question for parliamentarians to find out the extent of taxpayer subsidy to cbc.ca at a time when, for example, the English television network is retreating from its commitment to air Canadian programs in prime time. We urge the committee to probe management on this topic. You will be asserting Parliament's right to determine priorities for the expenditure of taxpayers' money.

As you know, CBC television's prime time schedule depends heavily on sports to the exclusion of other programming. Over the 2005-06 year—the broadcast year ends on August 31—23% of CBC television's schedule was sports. This accounted for 48%, so almost half, of the total CBC prime time audience. Most of this was for professional sports. By contrast, less than 5% of CBC TV's prime time audience watched Canadian drama series or movies of the week. Foreign dramas, on the other hand, accounted for three times the audience of indigenous drama on CBC TV.

Friends recommends that the committee insist that CBC television present Canadian programs in prime time as it did just seven years ago, when 96% of its prime time schedule was Canadian compared with just 79% today. This represents a quintupling of foreign programs in prime time on CBC television over those seven years.

We've given you a little chart in this presentation that shows what CBUT Vancouver was offering in prime time seven years ago, in a representative period, and what it is offering today.

Friends has published red charts over the past two decades to map Canadian and foreign programs offered by over-the-air broadcasters in ten Canadian cities. We wish to table with this committee today our most recent red chart. I think you should have a copy. It depicts what has been available over the air here in Vancouver during the past three weeks. CBC's Canadian offerings in prime time compare with 39% for CHUM/City; with 30% for Global Vancouver; with 18% for CTV; and with 16% each for Global Victoria and CHUM's A-Channel in Victoria.

Some of us were present seven years ago when CBC's president was invited before this committee to explain why he had decided to terminate CBC's regional supper-hour programs. I distinctly recall your colleague Mr. Scott's intervention on that occasion. This committee mobilized a huge outpouring of public sentiment then, forcing Mr. Rabinovitch to compromise with 30 minutes of regional news during the supper hour. We find it an ironic but positive development that CBC has now come to its senses and has announced plans to restore 60-minute supper-hour regional news.

The CMRI research we have tabled today may explain this turnaround. When CMRI's 2006 TV quality survey interviewed Canadians about their interest in various types of programs, 61% said they were "very interested" in local news. No other program category came close. The second most popular category was national news, at 46%. The third was international news, at 33%, followed by Hollywood movies, at 27%. CMRI's research revealed that local news on television is the top priority of the Canadian people.

[Translation]

I would like to thank you for your attention. I would also like to thank you for inviting us to take part in your hearing here, in Vancouver.

[English]

We would be pleased to make ourselves available if you would like to explore these issues with us on future occasions. We wish the committee great success in this important investigation.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will turn to questions, keeping our questions relatively short, if we can. Again, we'll allow roughly five minutes.

Ms. Fry, please—and welcome.

● (0935)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

I want to thank Anne, Ian, and Andrew for coming in front of us today.

I have a couple of questions.

First, to Andrew, you said in your presentation that the CBC needs no modification. I'd like you to elaborate on that, because many people have told us that the CBC isn't actually moving as quickly as it could to utilize the new digital medium. How do you feel the CBC could do that?

My next question, which is open to Ian and Anne as well, is with regard to the CBC's mandate. It says that it must be predominantly and distinctively Canadian. Do you think it is doing that? It also says that the CBC must reflect Canada and its regions. One only has to look at the little red chart here to ask a very important question—namely, do you think the CBC reflects its regions through national and regional radio and television? Or do you think it should? And finally, does the CBC respect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada?

Those are the three basic questions.

Andrew.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: Thank you.

The mandate itself is neutral on the distribution means. That's why we don't feel the mandate needs any overhaul at all. The mandate, which you've already referred to in part, is that the CBC is to reflect Canada and its regions, its national and regional audiences, serving the special needs of those regions. It's to contribute to an exchange of cultural expression, and to be in English or French, striving to be of equivalent quality in English and French. It's to contribute to shared national consciousness and identity, and to be made available throughout Canada by the most appropriate and efficient means.

According to this mandate, the CBC is able to engage whatever means to get the message out in the most efficient and effective way. So we don't see that the mandate itself needs any overhaul at all.

With regard to some of the other issues you've raised, I think the CBC is getting better at reflecting the cultural diversity of the country. It could improve. I think it would improve if in fact it were truly rooted in the communities. Many of our communities are increasingly diverse. Of necessity, then, a greater reflection of those communities would produce a greater reflection of diversity. One major concern we have is in fact the lack of rootedness established by the CBC in communities.

I can't remember the other question.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I wanted to know if you thought it was fulfilling its mandate.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: I don't think it's fulfilling its mandate—in any regard, frankly. Full disclosure here: I am an immigrant, coming many years ago from Ireland. I have lived in this country for 30 years, in literally every part of it. For a period of about 15 years I worked for the CBC in various parts of the country as an on-air person. I worked as a manager also, particularly in the north, in both the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. So I've experienced the CBC in a variety of ways.

I have to tell you that I am no longer as strong a consumer of the CBC as I used to be. I don't find it serves my needs. I find the programming has less and less excellence as we go along. I still have many contacts within the CBC, and I find that the morale within the CBC is not strong. Fewer and fewer people are being asked to do more and more, and with fewer and fewer resources. They do not have the time to do proper research all the time. They're constantly running around trying to find stories from newspapers, and not generating original research. These are vast generalizations, of course, but some at the CBC are saying it.

The fact is that the programming I hear is increasingly banal, particularly on CBC Radio One at popular times. I'm so tired of hearing people phone in and tell me about their first kiss, for heaven's sake. This is Canadian programming? This is not programming that is in any way curated. This is cheap programming. It fills time cheaply for the CBC. It buys a little more time for producers and journalists to do the work they're doing. I do understand why it happens, but I don't like it. I don't think anybody at the CBC likes it either, but it's a product of diminishing resources.

In that regard, I don't believe the CBC is able to carry out its mandate to the fullest. It certainly isn't doing it for the regions.

● (0940)

Ms. Anne Ironside: On the question about the regions, I think in B.C. it's been particularly difficult for urban B.C. to understand what's going on in rural B.C., and the CBC hasn't helped us much in that. I keep an eye on these things, because I'm interested in the whole question of the way work is flowing, and I've been amazed that the pine beetle crisis took a long time for Vancouverites to wake up to. Once again, the CBC didn't help with that.

It's interesting to me that in the *Vancouver Sun* this morning there's a big map of B.C. that says here are the bust areas, here are the boom areas, and that's great, but I wouldn't have got that if I had just sat and watched the CBC in Vancouver.

I am a big fan of the CBC, but I certainly think that Vancouverites are very smug and unknowledgeable about what's going on in the rest of the province.

Mr. Ian Morrison: On the distinctively Canadian question, obviously CBC is distinct; it's a question of degree. For us, the reason we're focusing our remarks on the English television part is that it seems to be the exception. Of course we are a group that can mention the anglophone perspective, but we're not really in a position to comment to you on SRC matters. But it's my impression as an observer that the French-language side of the CBC is much stronger in that regard than the English-language side, and that the radio side of the English is much stronger than the television side.

I remember the late Darryl Duke telling me once, with an ironic smile on his face, that when we get the next earthquake here in Vancouver it had better not be on a weekend, because CBC television won't be able to cover it. So it's the impoverishment of regional reflection, particularly in television, that's at issue. That is something that of course requires resources.

I am aware, through back channels, of a proposal that's doing the rounds to strengthen CBC English radio regional and to introduce programming capacity in ten large Canadian cities that now have

none, including Hamilton. So I see that as evidence that CBC's management is moving in the direction of addressing those.

On multicultural, I would say it's getting better.

Finally, to turn this into a recommendation, as you may know, every seven years all major broadcasters, station groups, have to go to the CRTC to have their group licences renewed. CBC was to have done that this year. Although it hasn't been published, I believe their applications are sitting in files at the CRTC right now and they've been given a one-year extension. The CRTC was too busy with other things. Well, when the CRTC does review the CBC's licence, they should ask exactly the questions that you're asking. And the CRTC and this committee should lean on or advocate or push or encourage the CRTC to do that job, not just in Gatineau, Quebec, but around Canada.

You may remember that in 1999 the CRTC did that. They came to the Landmark Hotel up on Robson Street, and more than a hundred people from Vancouver came and talked to them. They got a feeling about Canada. So the CRTC should be holding its CBC licence renewal hearings around Canada, not in the bunker in Hull. Maybe Parliament could tell them that would be a good idea.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We'll move on to Madame Bourgeois.

● (0945)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I find your comments this morning extremely interesting. They are music to my ear, particularly when it comes to culture. That is something very important to me.

I am from Quebec, where we are trying to preserve our culture. My impression is that you have a very deeply felt fear—and perhaps Mr. Boyles expressed this the best—of losing your Canadian culture to the American culture.

Could you please elaborate more on your explanations. Even though you spoke from the heart to tell us what is going on, I would still like to hear more about this.

[*English*]

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: Thank you.

Yes, I do speak from the heart. As an immigrant, I perhaps have a greater appreciation of this country than even those who were born here and take it for granted. I have lived in literally every part of it, and I have travelled to every part in which I have not lived, from sea to sea to sea. So I am a passionate Canadian. For me, the CBC is fundamental to the Canadian identity.

I am not going to be anti-American, because I'm not. It's an extremely interesting culture to the south of us, but it's huge and it is rapacious and it seeks to spread its culture wherever. I see this country as a very special country. When I talked earlier about this experiment...it's a wonderful experiment. It is an attempt to create a country that's different from anything that has ever existed on the face of the world before, in its inclusivity, in the kinds of relationships it can build, in the kinds of maturity of life in all its forms that it can provide for its citizens. It's not finding it easy, particularly as tensions mount outside of the country's boundaries amongst the relatives of those who now reside within the country's boundaries.

I believe we need to assert an identity that is enormously inclusive and tolerant and that enables people to share with each other their stories, their lives, their feelings, and their passions in a peaceful and effective way.

I believe we're succeeding to a very large degree. I believe the CBC is fundamental to that quest, and it disturbs me that the CBC is often looked at as just another commodity, just another thing that the state has to support.

CBC is fundamental to enabling this Canadian experiment to succeed, and I am utterly passionate about it. I love this country. I choose to live here. I owe so much to this country. It's a very special place, and I think we lose sight of that. I think we lose sight of the ability of the CBC, of the national broadcaster, to reflect this country to itself. We are not insisting that the CBC do it well enough and we're not funding them to do it well enough. That's the problem.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Mr. Boyles, you seem to be saying that CBC wants to compete with others. Do you think, in the name of culture, CBC should choose to provide service to all communities and disregard competition? Do you think CBC should opt for culture and broadcast everywhere in the regions? Is that what you are saying?

• (0950)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: I don't think the CBC should have to compete for commercial revenue at all. That's not its job, and it brings it into conflict with the commercial sector. The CBC needs to be properly funded so that it can do its job without having to be concerned with deriving money from commercial interests. That simply makes sense to me. It's then relieved of certain responsibilities and can then take on the responsibilities imposed by the mandate in a full and proper way.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Your comments are similar to those of Ms. Ironside, who is going for greater regional and local presence on the part of CBC.

Our committee has just come from Yellowknife, where we could see that some communities, including the francophones outside Quebec and aboriginals, are calling upon the CBC to provide local service in the regions. Would you agree to have the service expanded throughout the Northwest Territories?

[English]

Ms. Anne Ironside: I'm sorry, but the French is not coming through.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Perhaps Mr. Morrison could answer the question.

Mr. Ian Morrison: The simple answer is yes.

[English]

If I could magnify the answer and pick up a little bit from your interchange with my colleague, you used the words "fear of losing one's culture", English-taught. The English-speaking people of Canada have been exposed to American audiovisual culture much before anyone else in the world. In fact, the whole world is now exposed to it, but we were the first. We've coined the phrase "satellite rain" in Canada for that type of arrival. It means that English-speaking children who are 12 years old have gone to school for 6,000 hours but have watched 12,000 hours of television, of which 9,000 or 10,000 is life in Los Angeles or Miami. Audiovisual colonization is a major issue.

On the question of fear, a resource that you might find useful is on the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting website. All of the public opinion polls that we have commissioned for the past 10 or 12 years are up there. What Ipsos Reid, our pollster, is telling us is that around questions of culture they are noticing among anglophone Canadians that there is less of a negative fear factor and more of a positive patriotism developing, and it is just that the audiovisual system is not reinforced.

So if there was one thing your committee could do through this study, it would be to put before parliamentary decision-makers that what you have just described is the essential mission of the broadcaster.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Actually, Mr. Morrison, what you are experiencing as an anglophone Canadian is exactly the same as what we have experienced as Quebeckers.

I would just give you one example, and then ask you a very specific question.

This is the second time I have come to Vancouver and I have been trying to watch the news in French on Radio-Canada. When I go to the CBC website, I get the news in English. At the Radio-Canada site, in French, all I can find is cartoon characters. That is really quite something.

Although I am only visiting, and while perhaps it might not be possible to get RDI, the all-news network, I think I should at least be able to get the news in French. Like aboriginals in Vancouver and the Inuit in the North, I need to have access to the world and to find expression of my culture locally, regionally and internationally.

My question to Mr. Morrison is very specific. You said that someone in your group or one of your acquaintances had done a study of the Internet. If I understand correctly, Radio-Canada apparently invested \$20 million in developing the Canada.ca site.

• (0955)

Mr. Ian Morrison: No, that was the Radio-Canada.ca site.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: So it was Radio-Canada.ca.

You also said that in your opinion this was not a very good use of the money, because very few people could use the Internet and go to the Radio-Canada.ca. Did I understand you correctly? We went to Yellowknife to visit the Radio-Canada facilities there, and we were told that the viewership was very high. So could you give me some figures on this?

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: On the first point, by the way, I find I can never trust hotel televisions to faithfully reflect what is available in the surrounding population. Sometimes they do little things, like catering to American tourists, and that type of thing. It may well be that if you were not in this hotel, you could have received better services in the other official language. I'm not sure, but I've had trouble with hotels before.

But on your point about cbc.ca or radio-canada.ca, in the situation of a shortage, priorities have to be addressed. We advocate more money, as you know, but we believe that the CBC has not been forthcoming about the costs of its Internet operations. We have picked up bits of information about the number of employees, advertising availabilities on their site, and we're making an estimate that something in the range of \$20 million is being spent there.

We're asking why, if they can't afford to put Canadian programming on prime time on their largest television networks, they afford this. We're giving you numbers that show that, at any given time, only 2,000 Canadians are on there. Over a day, there are fewer than half a million Canadians, and over a month, four million Canadians.

The French television network of the CBC reaches five million Canadians each week. The English television network reaches 11 million Canadians. That's five times more than the number of people who read the *The Globe and Mail* or five times more than read *La Presse*, according to the data in our study.

Now, cbc.ca is the 20th largest website in Canada. We think it's wonderful. We use it. But we think you should be asking questions about priorities within the corporation, just as you should ask a question about how they can afford to invest in Sirius satellite radio and lose money on that every year when they can't afford to put television programs on in prime time.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: Just to follow up on the fear factor, I have to say that Canadian artists, in my experience, are not fearful. Canadian artists look around them and they find that they rank very highly among the artists of the world. Certainly Canadian artists are highly regarded and are all over the place in leadership roles.

What artists fear is that the institutions of their country do not fully support them, do not make their successes known within their

own country, so that very often they have to go somewhere else to keep being successful. And that's really unfortunate.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Savoie.

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm replacing Mr. Angus here today, and so I come perhaps as less as an expert in this issue than as an ordinary Canadian holding an elected position.

I found your presentations both really interesting and touching. When I was asked to come here today, I realized that I have gone from being a strong supporter of the CBC to being a strong supporter of the idea of the CBC. And I find myself, like Mr. Wilhelm-Boyles, listening less and less and watching less and less of the CBC. I don't find that it does reflect Canada or its regions, and it certainly doesn't appear to me to be serving the special needs of Canada.

Considering the increased number of channels and the accessibility we have to everything happening, to globalized forms of media, I have a couple of questions.

First, there were a number of recommendations I heard made today and that I read about in some of the briefs to eliminate patronage appointments, to make CBC less dependent on advertising, and to ensure stable funding. Would that be enough to put us back in the right direction to have a CBC that really does respond to that mandate, or are we missing something else to get us back there? That's my first question.

• (1000)

Mr. Ian Morrison: There is the issue of leadership.

Ms. Denise Savoie: Could you talk about that?

Mr. Ian Morrison: Yes. Obviously, with all the money in the world, there still needs to be some type of vision, which is why in the end portion of our presentation we called on Parliament to take the lead in saying this is what we want in this institution and we would like the board of directors to come to us with a plan, and then that is something Parliament would consider investing in. This would take the spending up to something like the median for the western democracies. And your famous predecessor, Mr. Chair, and I think friend, Clifford Lincoln, was very proud of page 178 of that report. You were a member of that committee. That page shows where Canada is in relation to the western democracies, because in public broadcasting it's very modest. But the key is the leadership.

In my work I get to see other public broadcasters. I get to see some of the German public broadcasters, French, Scandinavian, Swiss, the Japanese. I do not mention the Americans. They have senior professional leadership that understands the business.

The tradition in this country has been for the Prime Minister to appoint the president of the CBC. His broadcasting experience has not been—apparently, if you look back—a criterion that is deemed important, and that even goes down to appointments that the president makes. I don't want to get into personalities, but you would need new leadership as an ingredient of basing this new case. It would be very important, and that goes back to a board of directors that is equipped to do its job—in the phrase we use, “the best and the brightest Canadians”—who would then go out and hire and, if necessary, replace the management. That's the missing ingredient.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: There's not much I could add except, as a one-time employee of the CBC, to tell you that I joined the CBC because of the best and the brightest. At the time it seemed to me that the best and the brightest either worked for the CBC or came through the doors of the CBC and became program providers on the CBC, and it was a very exciting place to be. I believe it has everything to do with leadership and vision.

During my 15 years or so of relationship with the CBC, I could name the people—I won't—who brought that vision and that passion for what we were doing and that understanding of the nature of the country and the nature and responsibility of public broadcasting. There weren't that many of them, but they did exist, and you knew there was different leadership at the top. You felt it, right down to Inuvik, for heaven's sake. You knew there was somebody there who cared, who knew what he was doing—and usually it was a “he”, of course, in those days, and I guess it still is—and was able to lead and provide the vision that we were able to follow. It has everything to do with that. Money alone will not get the job done, but without money, a leader is hamstrung.

• (1005)

Ms. Denise Savoie: I think it's Ursula Franklin who says we've gone from good governance to being administered. The value, it seems to me, with globalization and as we've embarked on many of these international trade agreements where we've divested of our government's ability to protect public interest.....

As we're reviewing the CBC's mandate—and you suggest it's fine as it goes, but it's just not able to fulfill it—is there a need or an interest in having our public radio have a mandate to protect our democratic institutions? Democracy and culture are closely related.

I look at another issue that's uppermost in the minds of many Canadians today, and that's our ability to fight climate change, so sustainability—are those issues that the CBC, within its mandate, should be taking more seriously?

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: The CBC, as the national public broadcaster, should be taking more seriously anything that's a major threat to the people of the country. Obviously something like climate change should be taken seriously. It's been on the horizon for more than 20 years, and only in the last year have we started taking it seriously. I think that's a dereliction of duty.

But there are other issues as well. After climate change, the most serious threat facing this country is, I believe, the increasing diversity of its communities. That in itself is not the threat; it's the ability of communities to deal with that and to live harmoniously. After climate change, this will probably be the issue of the next 10 or

20 years. I see certainly the CBC dealing with that, but I think more could be done.

I'm not sure what you mean here by defending democracy. I believe democracy is best defended by openness and broad consultation, by access to information, by discussion and debate with each other. I'm not sure if you were implying any kind of state regulation...?

Ms. Denise Savoie: No, no.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: Right. I didn't think you would be.

Ms. Denise Savoie: I was implying what you just suggested—that is, increasing that dialogue within Canada. Our community has become the whole world, but our physical community, reflecting each other, is missing.

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: Absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Did you want to reply to that as well? Please make it short, because I have a few questions I'd like to ask.

Ms. Anne Ironside: Okay.

I want to respond to your comment about democracy. It's so essential to have a media that represents a balance of perspectives. I think we have an example to the south of where media concentration has not allowed that balance of perspectives.

I had the great good luck of once meeting Graham Spry, who said, when he was promoting the concept of Canada having a public broadcasting system, that it was the state or the United States. That's the sort of fire in the belly he had.

As a citizen watching all of this unfold, I would say that from 1984, which is when Friends got going, you've had a slow hemorrhaging of that. I'm amazed they do as well as they do. I understand the morale is very low. I would hope that a leadership that communicated a real vision of the CBC's role in the world would do a lot to improve that morale.

Thank you.

• (1010)

The Chair: Thank you.

I am a member of Parliament from southwestern Ontario. Speaking of arts and culture, the Stratford Shakespearean Festival is in my riding. I live three miles from Stratford. There has been a lot of growth in the 50-plus years the Stratford Festival has been there. I do know that arts and culture needs to be nurtured, and there has been government help with the festival.

I'm going to make a couple of comments first. One, we're used to television being available over the regular airwaves, but when we get into cable and those types of things.... I had a call about three weeks ago from my mother. Since I've been a member of Parliament, one of the most interesting channels for her is CPAC. She never misses question period, and she's always looking to see me on television. It's a personal thing.

What happened was that she didn't have a box; she had basic television cable, and she got CPAC on channel 59, I think, or whatever it was. Her television went up to about channel 75. Wouldn't you know, they changed CPAC to channel 104. That is basic, and it is supposed to be provided for by the cable companies. Well, I guess it's basic cable up to channel whatever it is. She then had to go out and get a box. She got a couple of other things with that, but she pays an extra \$14-and-something now to get what should be basic. People should have that opportunity, I think, to get what is supposed to be a basic part of their licensing.

I just wanted to make that response.

Yes, Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Ian Morrison: The problem you're dealing with comes from what I describe as an unregulated monopoly. Ted Rogers is a great Canadian, but somebody working for him made the decision that this would drive the penetration of digital. It costs your mother \$14 a month, and it would cause other people not to see CPAC. If anybody says CPAC is not important to democracy, I'd argue with that.

I want to relate that to your CBC investigation. Oh, by the way, they didn't move just CPAC; they also moved the Ontario legislature to a place you couldn't get it. Maybe they didn't think that was important.

One thing that Rogers has done in Ontario, which we are getting a lot of complaints about, is that they have moved the carrier for radio stations to their digital. You have to pay more to get radio over cable, which is important in big cities with high-rises such as where we are here or in Toronto. And they've eliminated CBC Radio Two from the offering—they have CBC Radio One—and yet they have three Vancouver radio stations available to the people of Ontario on their cable system.

The CRTC has the authority to make sure this doesn't happen, and they have delegated it to the cable monopolies.

You're raising a big subject...maybe for your next investigation.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

I have one question, and then we'll have one small question from Ms. Bourgeois.

How should CBC take advantage of new media technologies to build audiences? I know it's something we've talked about, whether it's the WIPO treaty and all of this, but in the end there's always this new media thing. It's my understanding that we're on the breaking edge of new media. Someone related to us the other day that by the time we're done with this exercise and we bring in the report it could almost be redundant, because new media is changing so much.

Again, how can the CBC take advantage of new media? I know that in the one report here, it says it's very small right now. When we were in Yellowknife yesterday, they were trying to bring up their web page. They have a new person in charge, and they're trying to bring that in.

I put that question forward to you, please.

• (1015)

Mr. Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles: I have to confess to you that I haven't done enough thinking about that, and my constituency hasn't

done enough thinking about it either, because we're still concerned with the vehicles of mainstream performance opportunity.

There will be others. You will hear from other presenters, I'm quite sure, as to how they feel the CBC could take advantage, could better exploit new media. I'm just not qualified to do so this morning.

Mr. Ian Morrison: For example, to give some praise to the management of the CBC for a change, management on the English side of CBC Radio—I do not know the French-language examples in SRC's radio—have developed Radio 3, which is not broadcast over the air, it's broadcast on the Internet. It is targeting the young demographic with a style of music.

They are one of the leaders in podcasting. Millions of downloads are available on your iPod, or something like that, where you're listening, when you like, to a CBC-generated program that you get the same way as you get any other type of podcast. Half of those podcasts, Ms. Chalmers, the vice-president of English radio, tells me, are from non-Canadians. So it's becoming part of the Canadian outreach to the world.

When the CBC appears before the committee, ask those radio people about new media and building audiences. They're addressing their demographic issue through the web.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question is to Mr. Morrison. Earlier, during your presentation, you mentioned that Mr. Rabinovitch had made a compromise at one point and had allowed for a 30-minute regional newscast.

Could you tell us more about this?

[*English*]

Mr. Ian Morrison: First, I'll just go back. Mr. Rabinovitch was appointed at the end of 1999. Shortly thereafter, the CRTC came down with its licences for CBC for the next seven years. He held a huge press conference in Ottawa, which was very well attended. I think *Le Devoir* had a cartoon about this, where he attacked the CRTC, and they called him "Rambo-binovitch" and had him with a machine gun, walking into the office of Françoise Bertrand. You may remember this, as I read your newspapers.

What happened after Mr. Rabinovitch got in was this. He was upset, in my understanding, at being instructed by the CRTC to do more regionally relevant programming. He was quoted in *The Globe and Mail* as saying, "I have a mandate from the Prime Minister"—meaning that Prime Minister Chrétien, who appointed him, had told him that he didn't have to do what the CRTC told him. So he decided he was going to take CBC English television out of the supper-hour news, which means that from 6 o'clock to 7 o'clock in Vancouver, you used to get—in fact, we've given you a year 2000.... The programming starts at 7 o'clock, so it won't do the job.

He announced that, and a lot of people were upset. We were upset, but more importantly, your committee was upset. I distinctly recall a crowded Commons committee room where Rabinovitch and his then vice-president, Harold Redekopp, were brought in, and they were perspiring at the end of three hours. I had to stand; there were no seats available. Mr. Lincoln was in charge, and with Andy Scott, who's one of your colleagues on this committee today, he went after Rabinovitch very hard.

So finally he went back to the board and then came back and said they would do 30 minutes of local programming and 30 minutes of national programming out of Vancouver, called *Canada Now*. It's that compromise that they have now cancelled, and they're going back to what existed when Rabinovitch arrived.

It's the failure of leadership, but it's a win for local programming.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Excellent.

Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentations and for your answers here today. I know everyone around the table has more questions, but we do have a presentation coming forward. We've allowed an extra 20 minutes, so I think we have to get ready for the next presentation.

Thank you very much for today.

We'll have a five-minute recess.

• (1020)

(Pause)

• (1030)

The Chair: We welcome our next set of presenters. We're off schedule a bit, but we will give them some time because we can run the next session into the hour and a half we had scheduled for lunch.

I will go with the first presenter, who is from Music BC.

If you would, please go ahead, sir.

Mr. Bob D'Eith (Executive Director, Music BC): Thank you very much.

My name is Bob D'Eith. I'm the executive director of Music BC. We're a non-profit society that supports and promotes the spirit, development, and growth of the B.C. music community provincially, nationally, and internationally.

I'm also a music lawyer. I've been a music lawyer for 17 years. I'm on the national advisory board for FACTOR, the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Recordings. I'm also a board member of CIRPA, the Canadian Independent Record Production Association. Amongst other things, I'm also a recording artist. Hopefully I bring an interesting perspective to the table today, and I'll try to keep my comments as brief as possible so that we can get to questions.

In terms of the mandate, one of the things that we feel is very important, obviously, is to have Canadian subject matter in CBC's mandate. But we really think it's very important and it's incumbent on CBC to stress world-class production first.

Without question, it's important to have Canadian subject matter. That's what happens with CBC news. It's world-class and world-respected. It's a unique Canadian perspective on the world. We don't have the same jingoistic flavour as the U.S. has with their network news. We have one of the best newscasts in the world.

That's why we have so many great comedians. We have a unique perspective. Anything we produce is uniquely Canadian, inherently. I think it's really important for CBC if they can recognize that you don't have to produce something that gets points on the mandate.

A good example might be *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, which gets a lot of points on the mandate. It's ethnic, it's the Prairies, and it's regional. It gets all these things, but I think CBC has to flip a bit and think more in terms of excellent production first that is Canadian. It's more about strategic planning.

This applies to music as well. My primary focus is on the music industry, not on other sides, so I'll try to focus on that.

The mandate of CBC should be developing and promoting Canadian recording artists, composers, and live performers, whether they're in an orchestra, a rock band, a jazz band, or whatever. Whatever genre they are, the fact that they're Canadian and producing music makes the music inherently Canadian itself. On multicultural, French-language, and aboriginal music, I obviously think CBC has to play a stronger role in making sure these art forms are expressed not only to Canada but to the world, because we have an incredible mosaic of music within Canada.

The music industry is challenged right now by digital technology. Digital technology has caused a massive contraction in the music industry in terms of the industry side. Retail stores are closing down. Major labels are losing billions of dollars. Right now we're in a position in which we're looking at major layoffs and major problems in the music industry, so we're in a transition. However, what has happened on the positive side is that the major labels have lost their stranglehold on the music industry, and that has given an opportunity for the independent community to grow.

The business model itself is changing, and the Internet is really driving that right now. While the majors are only reporting 5% of legitimate download sales, in some cases the independent sector is reporting that 50% to 60% of its sales are online. Terry McBride of Nettwerk Records is now saying that maybe only 15% of a record label's revenue should be from traditional sales.

In my report, I gave a press release that just came out from one of our local promoters. The whole thing was about MySpace and YouTube. There was nothing about anything else but the impact that was being made by the Internet.

What does all this mean to CBC? We've already seen cbc.ca, galaxie.ca, and of course, Radio 3. I would really encourage CBC to continue to enhance and develop the Internet presence, to create a community within this society, because right now we are seeing Canadian music going out all over the world on the Internet, and I think CBC could play a major role in that.

• (1035)

The challenge, I think, in listening to CBC Radio 3 is that it jumps around from folk to rock to everything. It's very hard to do that. Then they broadcast it on satellite radio, and I think the problem is that's not the way most people experience music. They don't jump around the way CBC Radio 3 is doing in terms of its broadcasts. If they are broadcasting on satellite radio through Sirius—I'll have some comments about that—I just think it's extremely important for CBC to continue developing online communities.

As for the traditional English radio, CBC Radio One and CBC Radio Two, in my report I printed out basic programming in a given week, and there's a clear emphasis, it seems, on classical and jazz music, which we support 100%, but I really believe that contemporary music, especially popular music, tends to be relegated to midnight, four in the morning, and other shows. It doesn't seem to be as much of a priority. I don't think just having it on the Internet on Radio 3 is enough. I think Radio 3 is only broadcast on Sirius satellite radio, and we don't think this is a sufficient commitment to all genres of Canadian contemporary music.

That brings up the CBC's involvement with Sirius radio. We definitely feel there are two points here: that CBC being involved with satellite radio really undermines the basic mandate of CBC. Satellite radio plays 95% American programming. There are a few Canadian channels on satellite radio, but Canadian music becomes ghettoized, in my opinion, and what happens there is that again the U.S. influence has dominated. I think satellite radio has really gone around the CRTC Cancon regulations. Of course it's been approved, but I don't think CBC should be involved in Sirius because of that.

The second thing is that the whole industry knew that satellite radio had a limited market potential. Huge amounts of money are being thrown out the window on satellite radio, and we don't feel that Canadian taxpayers should be involved in investing in satellite radio for the CBC.

One thing I thought I'd bring up in my report as well is that there seems to be this feeling that commercial radio can take care of genres that are on commercial radio. I've given a number of examples of commercial radio, and you'll see by some of the percentages that only 6.1% of all commercial radio is independent music. In fact, with indie rock it's only 1.7%; all the rest are major labels. Most artists out there are independent, and they're growing more and more. As the majors collapse, they're all becoming independent. We're seeing sometimes 2% of commercial radio supporting our budding recording artists. I think CBC needs to fill that gap more. I think it's very important to do that.

One of the things CBC could do is dovetail with Canada Council and FACTOR. We're putting millions of dollars into the music industry, so let's support them. Let's support FACTOR, let's support Canada Council, and let's do some programs around FACTOR and Canada Council. We're putting money into developing these artists; why don't we do something with CBC? Perhaps Radio Two could be involved with that in a more committed way.

Another point we'd like to make is that we really think the BBC is a wonderful model for the CBC to look at. I think I've given some examples of what the BBC director-general, Mark Thompson, has said with regard to music and their mandate. It's really interesting to see, with BBC, because the focus of their purpose and values, the way they set it out, is quality. They want to be a world leader. The word "British" only appears once on the entire page. BBC is distinctly British, but their focus is on quality first. They want to be a world leader in production.

• (1040)

CBC is known for some things—incredible news services, *Hockey Night in Canada*, documentaries—but I don't think the world sees it on the same level as the BBC. That is the challenge for CBC. I think it can be up there with BBC, as our Canadian artists are some of the best in the world.

As for BBC's support of music, they really embrace all genres throughout all of their programming. One thing that's really interesting is the way they weave music into the fabric of their productions. They really go out of their way to make sure British music is throughout all of their productions and is promoted in such a way.

Another thing the BBC does very effectively is digital services. Their multimedia marketing is excellent. We should really look at that model.

Another point is that on CBC television there isn't one program devoted to showcasing new Canadian musical works. This needs to change. BBC has weekly television series with live music, sometimes in prime time, sometimes late at night. It's a constant throughout BBC television programming.

I have a couple more points. First, on CBC records, I've tried very hard to find in the annual report any statistics on the financial success of CBC records. My understanding is that it's not a profitable business. If there were some statistics to go against that, I'd be happy to look at them. We have a very vibrant independent recording industry, and I don't think CBC should be subsidizing Canadian music in competition with independent labels. CBC should focus more on production and recording, and let the industry deal with the commerce of music.

Finally, I'd like to address the CBC and artists' rights. I talked with the Honourable Hedy Fry prior to this and I did not bring up copyright, but this is very important. One thing the CBC should never do is ask artists to waive their rights. A case in point is CBC Radio 3, which recently asked artists to waive their rights to receive royalties. It's our opinion that certainly with CBC this should never happen. We expect it from the commercial broadcasters, but we don't expect it from CBC.

I know there are a lot of things there. I'd like to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to come here. We had only a week to prepare, but we did our best to put something together for you. If there are any questions on any of those topics, I would be very happy to answer them.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for that presentation.

I think we'll go to the next group now, after which we'll take questions for both presenters.

New Media BC, go ahead, please.

Mrs. Lynda Brown (President, New Media BC): Thank you, and thank you for the opportunity to present this morning.

I'm Lynda Brown, the president of New Media BC. I'm joined by my colleagues Adam Gooch and Phillip Djwa.

We'd like to do a couple of things today. We want to show you some of our visual media and what's happening in Canada. We want to give you an overview of how the sector is growing in this country, because it's quite critical to this discussion. Then we'd like to give you some real-life examples with a small- to mid-sized enterprise that Phillip represents, and then discuss in some detail any questions you may pose.

First I'm going to show you a DVD, and then we're going to move into the formal part of the presentation.

[DVD Presentation]

•(1045)

So that's, in part, how our sector is seen by the rest of the world at this point: as a leader in digital entertainment production, which is one of the subsectors in digital media.

I'm just going to switch over to our PowerPoint presentation now so we can walk through an overview of the Canadian sector.

“Digital media” is really the term we're using these days. “New media” has become a little bit redundant. So when we talk about “new media”, we're really talking about “digital media”. They've become one and the same.

Nationally, we have agreed across the country that digital media falls into five dominant subsectors, and the six that are presented there. Generally we combine mobile content, digital film and animation, e-learning, web design—or what's called interactive design—and video games to represent the digital media industry. It's predominantly seen as the use of interactive digital content for the purposes of informing, entertaining, and educating. The term “interactive” is obviously very key to this definition and to the terminology of “digital media”.

Today—very briefly, because I know we're running short—we're going to give you a quick overview, look at some of our strengths, and tell you what we're working on as a national strategy. First of all, though, because we're all from Vancouver, we wanted to give you an idea of what's happening here.

Vancouver represents Canada's largest digital media cluster, with over 1,100 companies working in the region, generating about \$2.1 billion. We're home to four out of the five world-leading game publishers. We have an over-25-year history in this sector. We also have some very prominent and internationally renowned e-learning tools, such as WebCT, and a strong reputation in the e-learning sector.

We have great strength in digital film and animation. Vancouver, as you may know, is the third largest North American production centre for film and television. The digital film and animation sector that we represent has definitely benefited from that. Now, with the merger of Rainmaker and Mainframe, we have the largest digital effects and animation studio in Canada, a world-recognized studio. We're launching a graduate program—the first of its kind, a master's degree in digital media—that will start in September of this year. We also have electronic arts largest studio in the world. It has 2,000 employees currently and is growing quickly.

We've been recognized internationally as a hub, a hot spot of digital media, right here in Vancouver. A very popular business magazine called *Fast Company* looked at the bohemian index to find clusters to watch. Vancouver, along with Montreal, was noted as being very prominent.

If we look at Canada overall, we have some very particular strengths. I think the first video showed you that we have huge and internationally highly recognized strengths in digital entertainment, but that's not all we're doing. We also are known for strength in new IP—or intellectual property—and original content production, and that's becoming increasingly key in this multi-billion-dollar market.

There is the emerging mobile factor. There is a growing market for the information and entertainment that you use on your BlackBerry and on your mobile phone. Canada is seen as leading some initiatives in this area.

If we look across Canada, we've got approximately 3,200 companies working in this sector, from coast to coast. We just completed a study called the Canadian Interactive Industry Profile, which goes into detail on this industry. I'd be happy to provide that after this presentation.

By and large, the industry across Canada is generating a significant amount of revenue, but I think it's important to note that the majority of our companies are still small to mid-sized enterprises, staffed at the under-20 or under-30 employees mark.

•(1050)

We have approximately 52,000 people working across Canada in this sector. Our friends in Montreal are also well recognized as a leading visual entertainment centre. And Toronto, of course, with its strength in film and television, has become the hot spot for convergent activities.

We're also seeing some very nice incubation programs out of Alberta and Manitoba, such as the Fortune Cat Games Studio, which is an investment program in original IT for game developers. That has been very successful and has been looked at internationally as a viable model.

The Chair: I don't want to interrupt your presentation, but we want to make sure that this is relevant to our study on the CBC. Are we going to have that in your presentation? Is that going to come?

Mrs. Lynda Brown: Yes. We're almost finished this part, but we thought it was important to tell you what's actually happening in digital media, because it does inform your discussion.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Mrs. Lynda Brown: Thank you. I'll move it along.

One of our capabilities, as you can see, is that we are well known for having strength in both content development and original IT. A number of international companies have located here. We all know that Canada is a wonderful place in which to live and do business. If we look across the country, as I've touched on, we have a real hub in Montreal. We have some very progressive things happening in Manitoba and the prairie provinces. In Atlantic Canada, they have a small but growing cluster that has focused on some original IT, and also secondary and tertiary studios that are serving them well.

Just so you know where this workforce is coming from, you might be surprised to learn that we have close to 160 training programs that are producing the people who work in this sector. We are known for having a culture of innovation and storytelling—that's part of our heritage.

I'm just going to skip over the next part, which talks about the graduate program we're starting. New Media BC in particular, you might have heard, is leading a proposal that has been presented federally to establish Canada as a world centre in digital media, to build capacity in the industry across all levels. The discussion we're having today is very important to this project. As you can see, the development of what we want to do internationally in positioning Canada as a world leader is going to rely on indigenous programming and having an ally such as the CBC to help us develop capacity across the country.

I'm going to end the PowerPoint part of that presentation here and move on to some of our thoughts around the questions you've posed, and we're all going to contribute to that.

Let me just tell you where we are in the process. We are drafting a formal document to present to you, but that is not completed yet. In fact, we didn't know that we were confirmed to present this morning, so I hope you will indulge us as we work through our thoughts on your questions.

Before we move into the questions, I'd like to introduce my colleague Phillip Djwa, who runs a very successful digital media company. He's going to give you some insight as a small to mid-sized enterprise in the questions you've posed and his role in that.

• (1055)

The Chair: Will this relate to our CBC study?

Mr. Phillip Djwa (President, Agentic, New Media BC): Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: Great. Thank you.

Mr. Phillip Djwa: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to talk to you about the CBC mandate.

My company, Agentic Communications, is a web development company. It's very representative of the majority of companies across Canada, as far as the interactive profile has revealed. We're a small business employing fewer than 20 employees, but we are still generating a significant economic impact across Canada.

As we know, the CBC needs to offer Canadian programming to all citizens. To remain relevant to Canadians, the CBC should be reaching out to address Canadians where they are. And that often is through different platforms, as we've seen. As the CBC's Robert Rabinovitch reported in his October 27, 2005, statement to this committee, CBC must be a leader in developing "specialized content for new platforms, like podcasting, satellite radio, and the Internet". To some degree, this is actually occurring. CBC Radio 3, *Bande à Part*, the sadly defunct *Zed* television program, and the powerhouse that is cbc.ca have all provided additional value to Canadians online.

However, this is not the only opportunity that CBC has to offer Canadians. Many of the web initiatives on CBC are directed to supporting broadcast on radio and television. A project such as the CBC website *Censor This!*, which was an online initiative investigating issues of censorship that supported over 17 radio programs over a week in March 2007, is an excellent example of how an online initiative can support a larger vision of programming. None of the programs themselves could have supported the large-scale vision of censorship.

The CBC citizenship website is another example of unique Canadian content that's been created specifically for the web. CBC Aboriginal, which is another website property that CBC has launched recently, provides another example of how the CBC, in an online environment, can reach out to new audiences.

There is excellent online content being created at CBC North. As you may have seen in your trip recently, it has generated content specifically for the web on Canadian issues of interest to all Canadians, as has the new media pod in Halifax.

However, this is not enough. I think a key issue is that there's a lack of original Canadian content directed and developed specifically for the web. CBC has indicated to our industry, through informal conversations, that they would be willing to support further commissioning of original and unique Canadian content for the web if there were a revenue model for it.

I think, members of the committee, that there is a way, and that is to develop potentially an Internet broadcast licence. While this is probably a larger issue than this committee can address, I think there needs to be a coordinated effort to potentially complete the following.

First, amend the Broadcasting Act to include digital media as well as radio and television in the CBC mandate to encourage that unique digital media development. This would be different from the original proposal released last year in regard to supporting digital media as an adjunct or supportive role in radio and television. I think it's really clear to see, as we've seen in the presentation that Lynda provided to the committee, that there is significant activity in this sector that can really be addressed online and only online. There are enough content providers across Canada that can actually pull this off.

Second, encourage the development and distribution of an Internet broadcast licence that would be targeted to creating original Canadian content for the web. This could be achieved in a number of different ways, and we could talk about that as we get to some questions.

Last, encourage the private industry telecommunications providers to develop and sustain a fund to provide grants—not recoupable advances—to Canadian Internet content providers to create original Canadian programming online.

That concludes my brief presentation to the committee. Again, I'm very happy to be here to explain, or to talk, and to take any questions on those issues.

Thank you.

•(1100)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Lynda Brown: Thanks, Phillip.

We have a number of responses to the questions you've posed. I don't know if you would prefer to move to your questions.

The Chair: I'd prefer to move to the questions, because we have, I'm sure, some other questions around the table. If questions have been asked that you want to respond to, and we come to the conclusion of your time, you could forward those answers, I'm quite sure, to the clerk. Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Thank you.

I'm really pleased about the digital presentation, because I think this is key to where we need to go if we're going to distribute Canadian content that will be respected around the world. So I'm pleased to see you bringing this forward and some ideas on how we need to make this so—for instance, amending the act, etc.

I think Bob touched on something that is very important. Most of us sit here and talk about the CBC, and we continue to talk about CBC radio and CBC television, but those are not the only media anymore. If the world is going to see CBC and listen to CBC, we can no longer limit ourselves to just getting a million people watching *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. We have to look at how we are seen around the world as an international entity. To do that we have to talk about this new digital media.

You haven't mentioned something that Bob mentioned. Music is key, but I think Bob mentioned the idea of a copyright act. The U.S. has strong copyright legislation and we don't. If we're going to start getting into digitalization, we need to talk about how we can protect

the creator and find a balance between protecting the creator and at the same time distributing broadly and widely.

I just want to ask Bob a question about the Copyright Act, and if you have a comment on it. I think it's key. How do we do it? We should have done it 100 years ago—well, I'm just kidding, but we should have done it yesterday. Talking about doing it tomorrow, I gather that digital media is changing every day as we speak. We're running to catch up. So I think this is a very key part of how the CBC can sustain itself.

Everyone talks about funding. You talked about a new way of funding, and I remember that the 1996 Canadian broadcasting report on the CBC talked about it. People said earlier that we should no longer do commercials—the BBC doesn't do commercials—because having to get commercial advertising means we have to do the great dumbing down. We have to be popular and go into some sort of competition, with the dumbing down of the media we get from around the world—some of these really ridiculous programs we see.

If we're going to have programming integrity and deal with quality, as Bob said, so people around the world can eventually look to the CBC as a place where you can have quality, everyone will want to watch the CBC. It's not only about Canadians telling stories to each other, but Canadians seeing the world from a Canadian perspective and presenting the world to others from our perspective. That is a huge piece of what we have to do.

So I would like to hear Bob talk a little bit about how we could deal with funding the CBC without having to go to advertising. There have been many suggestions. One of them in 1996 was to have a communication distribution tax levy, which the BBC does. The BBC is funded through a levy. Each person in the United Kingdom pays a tax to allow the BBC to exist. The BBC is then responsible directly to Parliament, and it reports every year to Parliament on how it is fulfilling its mandate.

I would like to hear someone discuss how we could do this with the CBC and create a body that is responsible to Parliament. Parliament would decide who was going to be the head of the CBC and who was going to run it. They would need to have the ability to do so and not just be some bureaucrat whose name is put forward, but somebody with an understanding of broadcasting, all digital media, etc.

How you see that happening? Do you think it's a good idea to create the CBC as a body that's directly responsible to Parliament, reports once a year, does away with advertising, and gets a tax levy from Canadians to fund it? It's a big question. Every time you talk about a tax levy everyone says, "Oh my gosh, no more tax." But if we want to create something that can stand on its own and be like that great body, the BBC, then we need to be able to talk about the CBC and its future, and not just how to keep it running along on its old track that it's been running along on for so long.

I'm going to open it up for you guys to just throw in what you have.

•(1105)

Mr. Bob D'Eith: Thank you very much for the question. There are a lot of questions there.

First, if I could briefly address the Copyright Act, the United States has the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. It has done for some time. Whether you agree with it or not, at least it has created some certainty in the area of digital rights. We don't have that in Canada. It's desperately required, and part of the big issue does actually talk about what the Honourable Hedy Fry was saying in terms of funding.

Because right now there's so much rampant piracy on the Internet from all areas of media, there really needs to be some consistency and a way of monetizing the Internet. We could find that there are revenue streams out there that will be coming online that could really help enhance CBC's revenue. Those models will obviously be developed by the new media community. But without certainty of law and without a way of enforcing that, it can be very difficult to have that monetization.

The other issue we found with CBC Radio 3 is that even CBC asking artists to waive their rights...they can, because there's no certainty. And here is CBC asking what we would expect from the other commercial broadcasters, but this is CBC.

So I think changes to the Copyright Act would be very important, not just for artists' rights, but also for monetization in helping to fund things.

As far as funding directly is concerned, you were saying you would take the position that there might be a separate levy of some kind.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I'm asking you to comment on the BBC model and whether it's applicable to Canada.

Mr. Bob D'Eith: I agree that it would be great to have advertising and what not out of the picture, and just fund CBC directly. I think that's a wonderful idea. I think having a public broadcaster is essential to Canada and our Canadian identity, and I think having that accountability to Parliament is not a bad thing.

This is off my topic, but I would want to make sure CBC remains impartial in terms of news coverage and isn't somehow beholden to Parliament, because I think it's very important to have that freedom to say whatever the news service wants to say. But as long as those rights are protected, I think some sort of direct funding in the way you're talking about, that model or some sort of levy, would be great. But there are other revenue streams that we're probably not even thinking about, especially from other areas like new media that will be coming online.

• (1110)

The Chair: Okay, we will have your response. We have to try to keep this a little bit short so everyone gets a question.

Mrs. Lynda Brown: Those are some very good questions that have been raised, and I think we both have some comments on that.

With regard to the copyright issue, protecting the rights of producers, especially as they move their IP across multiple platforms, is critical. What we're finding with digital producers, especially in digital film and animation, is that when they go to broadcast sale, the broadcast licence will require that they give up all digital rights to that IP, and that's been quite problematic for them as they try to leverage that into other channels. So it is an important

question that I think we need to look at and have further discussion on.

I think the BBC model, switching to funding without advertising, which I believe our industry strongly supports, is a very interesting one. I think digital media, as related to the CBC, also provides some other opportunities for user-pay and value-added services that might bring in additional revenue streams that we might not have considered for CBC, but that could augment that.

I'm going to pass it to Phillip at this point.

Mr. Phillip Djwa: The current licence per television set in the BBC is £130 per year. If you were to times that by the number of television sets in Canada, you'd probably end up with over \$1 billion, which is significant and obviously an opportunity to address some of the chronic underfunding CBC has been dealing with in the last few years.

Certainly you could extend that to looking at Internet provision in this country and ISPs. If there was \$1 or \$2 per Internet provider per month in the same model, you could also generate a significant opportunity to develop unique Canadian content.

I think what we're seeing in the industry these days is that through sliver castings or snacking, people are looking at very fragmented audiences, looking at very small bits of content. The CBC can really benefit from the huge properties they have currently on radio and television and leverage those online, but there needs to be a way in which they can encourage and develop content in a much broader and more plentiful way.

One of the ways you can do that is to encourage the generation of that content. If content providers have an opportunity—I think there are so many small companies that would be interested in participating in that, as well as internally at CBC—to develop that kind of content and provide it online with some kind of compensation, and that could be simply in its generation, you could have a vibrant and exciting property online.

I think one of the important things to understand as well is that the fragmentation of audiences really benefits the web in the sense that, as we've seen with television programs on CBC television, popular does not necessarily equate with important. It's really an interesting aspect to consider that online we can see that addressing issues...say, for example, the CBC archives online, which provides in-depth and teacher resources in an excellent manner on issues that are of importance to Canadians. This is not being done by many of the other private broadcasters. CBC does have a unique and powerful role to play in this area.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Bourgeois.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question is to Mr. D'Eith. In your presentation, you said that CBC should be recognized for its quality.

How do you define quality?

[English]

Mr. Bob D'Eith: The quality of music?

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Yes.

Mr. Bob D'Eith: That's a very good question, and a tough one to answer. What quality is, is very subjective. It's hard to put into words what quality is. If we see, for example, some of the BBC programming, I think a lot of it is how attractive it is to the world to see and how relevant it is to the world. If we look inward only and produce Canadian content only, without thinking about how we're going to export this to the world, I think its effect on our sovereignty and our cultural identity is lost.

I'm not saying we shouldn't do Canadian programming about Canadians, I just think it's more strategic thinking. We should be thinking strategically about the quality, in the sense of how we can get this out to the world and be appealing to the world and still have a Canadian identity. I think it's a bit of a flip-flop. Instead of doing programming that gets so many points on a mandate, we have to do this and this and this in terms of regionalism and ethnicity and all these things. I think those things will come naturally if we focus on Canadian producers. They're inherently Canadian, and we produce things with a Canadian world view. It's important for us to grow up as a nation and take pride in who we are and not have to think inward and stereotype ourselves. I think that's one of our problems: we tend to stereotype ourselves and then export that. That's not who Canadians are.

•(1115)

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: You also mentioned that the mandate of Radio-Canada or the CBC should be changed so that international type-programming could be produced, so that we would have an excellent product.

I should start by saying that I am a sovereigntist from Quebec. So my assumption is that Canadian producers do an excellent job that can be exported throughout the world, whether we are talking about the work of Quebecers or that of Canadians from Ontario, Manitoba or British Columbia. When it comes to culture, I think that Canada has a good reputation among people elsewhere because they know we do excellent work.

Do you not think that the emphasis on excellent and international-type productions could result in some elitism? For example, the Canadian School Sport Federation will provide funding to elite athletes who will travel throughout the world to show that Canada excels in particular sports. However, by being elitists, we will not be helping our actors, the grassroot people who work for Quebecers and Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Bob D'Eith: I think I followed most of that. I wonder if the chairman could help me focus that question a bit. Would that be all right?

I apologize. I should have plugged in my translation device.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I can repeat what I said, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

Mr. Bob D'Eith: It was very elegant.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Think about excellence.

[English]

Mr. Bob D'Eith: Sorry, my apologies. I thought I was going to do so well with my French today. Being a true Canadian, I—

The Chair: I was listening too, but you were so eloquent that I missed the question.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: I would point out that I am working for Canada.

I will repeat my question because I think it is extremely important that we not repeat the same error as was made in sport or other types of endeavours outside Canada.

You spoke about moving to excellence. When we value excellence above all else to show the world that we are very good, is there not a danger of elitism and of no longer working for the people who really need help—both English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians?

[English]

Mr. Bob D'Eith: That's what I thought you said, but I wanted to be sure. That's another excellent question.

Yes, of course there's always the potential to be seen as elitist, but I don't think we need to be the opposite, which is provincial and small. Our artists in the music industry are the best in the world. In fact we have more multi-billion-dollar selling artists in the music industry than the U.K.—Céline Dion, Avril Lavigne, Nickelback, and all these wonderful groups.

Nickelback was just another indie band from Vancouver. They used to back up my band in the nineties. I know Chad well. He's worth \$50 million now. Great. Fantastic. I think they've been an amazing Canadian success story, but they started as an independent group.

I think I said in my presentation that we should put excellence first and produce quality, but we should be supporting independence. I think you can have quality independent production. It doesn't have to be small, and there doesn't have to be a lack of quality. At the same time, I think you need to balance that. There are certain sectors of the community, especially in the music industry, that need help and support. And that's....

Go ahead and cut me off. I'm sorry about that, sir.

•(1120)

The Chair: No, I was responding to more questions from here.

But just to keep things moving, did you folks have something to respond to that? It was primarily a question to Bob, but....

Mr. Phillip Djwa: Sure. Thank you.

I think one of the interesting things is that we definitely need to work on the capacity of youth and people from different communities—for example, in Quebec—through programs like the First Nations SchoolNet, which develops capacity for aboriginal youth to create video and audio, which is something they can pursue at home in the remote and rural communities of Quebec. But what happens when those kids need an opportunity to intern or to work in an industry? I think the CBC can play a role in that. I know that's something the CBC has been doing, but could do more of, in developing the capacity of youth and providing internship and opportunities in new media. That could be a very successful opportunity for building a grassroots aspect.

The Chair: Great. Thank you.

Mr. Adam Gooch (Program and Communications Manager, New Media BC): May I add a comment?

The Chair: Yes, one short comment.

Mr. Adam Gooch: I'll try to be brief.

I agree with Bob's point regarding the CBC mandate and scoring points on having productions meet certain points in order to get air time. I agree that Canadians are inherently Canadian and that if they produce content, it's going to reflect who we are as a nation and, more importantly, as individuals. That's where new media's strengths lie, in creating community out of individuals who come together, whether they're niche or whether they're a larger segment of the population.

I also agree with Bob in addressing the last question. We have the talent, as individuals and as Canadians, that can be globally and internationally recognized.

To go back one more question, I think one of the barriers for content producers that we've had in this, to address the notion of what is quality, is that while we have the talent, while we have the storytellers, while we have those ideas, the funding or the financing to create really high-quality production values is missing.

So we have a lot of these independents who are able to publish now via new media, but they're still recording off their laptops in their basements. If we were able to find support for these people, for these storytellers, to augment the production values of what they have to say, I think on the international stage we would start to be that leader. Already you've seen from our presentation that the industry is becoming a leader. We just need to have the support in-house of showcasing that talent here at home.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Savoie.

Ms. Denise Savoie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In our efforts to be globally recognized, I think we have to appreciate that even within our country perhaps we don't recognize each other. We have stopped telling each other the stories that would allow us to know each other, from coast to coast and regionally.

I'm concerned that in our search for increased funding that Ms. Fry was referring to earlier, and chronic underfunding of the CBC in the past decade—it certainly hasn't been a priority—in our thirst for extra funding, we begin to compromise Internet neutrality by corporatizing it. I'm just wondering if, in some of the comments you

made, charging fees and so on for certain productions could lead to compromising the Internet's neutrality. That's the question.

The other one is that you've both mentioned cbc.ca and the expansion of it. Given the presentation we had earlier, the cost it has, the amount of money that has been expended to that by comparison to the CBC's overall funding, and according to surveys, the disproportionately low use it is receiving by comparison to others, I'm wondering, given the underfunding, which hopefully will change, if that's the best way to go.

We heard this morning, for example, that the CBC has asked to reduce the over-the-air transmission. We heard this morning that there are even some cities that have lost the CBC, the possibility of receiving it. I'm wondering if we're jumping too fast, too soon, without appropriate levels of funding before rectifying the huge problem that is plaguing the CBC and risks making it irrelevant. At some point there will be nothing left to defend if we keep going in that direction.

So I have a number of questions.

• (1125)

Mrs. Lynda Brown: Very serious questions to consider, indeed.

My first thought on this is that when we're talking from a digital media perspective, I think what we're saying is that there are models in the marketplace. And there are emerging models, especially with regard to Web 2.0, that could indeed help the CBC and provide additional avenues of funding without compromising regional access and equality of access to that.

I think we're in this interesting transition with the CBC where it's mostly been a push technology, mostly broadcast, that has been trying to serve an audience without necessarily knowing where that audience is and what it wants. What we're seeing in digital media is much more of a pull, for a push-and-pull relationship where user-generated content is very important to what's happening online and in digital media today. Through the development of a community worldwide in digital media, there have evolved different business models and different ways of funding that community, while still retaining equity of access.

So with regard to some of our comments earlier on, Net neutrality is definitely an important issue, but I don't think it's a linear equation. I don't think, in considering the role of the CBC, we can say that we need to address this first, and then this, and then this, because we'll have lost our opportunity. I think we have to look at both, and at the same time.

Mr. Phillip Djwa: Net neutrality is very important. I don't think we're suggesting....

My personal opinion is that it would be a mistake to allow the telecommunication providers in Canada to charge a levy and then use that to essentially eliminate Net neutrality. I think there is an opportunity for those to generate a fund and provide grants to content providers, in much the same way as other organizations or bodies do. It could be through a partnership. For instance, if we did do this Internet broadcast licence, it could be a partnership through Telefilm, the Canada Council—the arm's-length organizations that have an understanding and a relationship with the content providers in this country.

In regard to funding, yes, I think there has been chronic underfunding. If you only have a dollar to pay for something, you still only have that dollar. New media, unfortunately, has not been cheap, but then neither has television and neither has radio; it's just a question of what's important. If we believe in having a Canadian citizenry that is aware of and understands the issues and challenges and successes and the diversity of Canada, then we need to have a strong public broadcaster that offers all those opportunities.

We're simply saying that Canadians are still watching television, Canadians are still listening to the radio, but they're also doing this whole other breadth and depth of activity that we need to address. The only issue is the one you've brought up: are we jumping too fast? Well, we're just following where Canadians are going. That's the most important message.

• (1130)

Mr. Bob D'Eith: It's an excellent question.

On the Internet neutrality issue, I'll defer to the experts on the new media. The Internet is now. If we don't do it, we'll lose out. My kids don't listen to radio. They do everything online now. They spend 90% of their time online. That's the new generation; it's not me. But certainly, if the CBC wants to be relevant, they have to have a presence.

As for the cost, that's a management issue. As far as I'm concerned, you can spend any amount of money developing properties on the web, but do you have to spend that amount of money? No way. It's a question of management. CBC has to look at production costs online and it has to get that in order. It has to be there. It's essential that it be there for music, for every part of it, and for providing great content. Content is king. If we provide world-class content, people will come to the website. There will be eyeballs. You don't have eyeballs without content, and that's what we have to focus on.

Ms. Denise Savoie: I have one other question.

Just to understand where you're coming from, that was a great little video, and lots of fun, but I'm just wondering, did you consider its content to be inherently Canadian because the word "Canada" was up there a few times?

Mrs. Lynda Brown: Absolutely. You know, we have this discussion within our community quite often. Digital media is sometimes seen, I think, as maybe a lower form of Canadian cultural content. But everything you saw in that reel was Canadian made, Canadian produced. People were drinking Canadian water and living in Canada when they did it.

Ms. Denise Savoie: They were shooting each other a lot.

Mrs. Lynda Brown: That's very limited. I think Canada actually has a huge number—a majority—of game developers who don't focus on violent games. I think that's something to be proud of. There are some of those, but not very many. The majority focus on very redeeming qualities.

So yes, we do think very much that is Canadian, and the marketplace that we play in is global. There is no digital media company in this country that can produce for a domestic market and survive.

So I think that goes back to Bob's point: we are inherently Canadian. I think what's important, and why I wanted to show you that reel, is that the rest of the world sees that as the benchmark. The rest of the world sees what we're doing in that area as something to emulate, and it's Canadian produced. I think that's something we should support and look at growing further.

Mr. Phillip Djwa: I would add, as a quick comment, that six out of the ten highest-selling video games in 2006 did not involve any kind of violence. There's a whole new area of serious games that have a whole different aspect. So the notion that video games are made up of only violent first-person shooters is not true anymore. The industry has developed. The thing is that Canada has the capacity, as demonstrated by the international success of these video games, to create uniquely Canadian content in a very viable way. We have world-class people here who could work on issues that are relevant and important to Canadians. The most important thing is that they want to. Everyone would like to do this, but again, there isn't the opportunity at this point.

Ms. Denise Savoie: Don't mistake what I'm saying. I don't think all video games have to be violent. It was more a question about the particular video and your perspective that you showed this morning, and your perspective on what constituted Canadian content. You answered my question.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have a couple of comments, and I don't really need answers to them. The WIPO Treaty, I think, was signed back in 1996 or 1997, or around that time. I've been on the heritage committee for four years, and I think about three years ago was the first time since 1996 that copyright was dealt with, under the WIPO Treaty. We did a report at that particular time, and afterwards a bill—Bill C-60, I think—was brought forward that didn't resemble the report that we had sent in at all. We were quite concerned as a committee at that particular time. Bill C-60 died on the order table.

I think something that has been talked about by this committee is that it's one thing to sign a treaty, and it's another thing to ratify it. I think by the time we ever get it ratified, it will have to be revamped again, because new media is moving so quickly, as evidenced by any presentation that I have heard. Hopefully we can come across with a bill that is a living bill, and that can move along, rather than having these great expanses of nothingness that cause us to get so far behind.

Again, I thank you very much for your presentations this morning and for answering the questions, and I wish you all the best.

We will now take a five-minute break before our next presenters. Again, thank you on behalf of our committee.

• (1135)

(Pause)

• (1145)

The Chair: We welcome our last presenters for this morning. As we said earlier, we'll carry on and we'll give everyone a chance here this morning to bring their positions forward.

You're testing me here this morning, as an anglophone who got kicked out of my French class in grade 9, but I am going to try to introduce each group.

First, I'll introduce all the groups. The Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique will be first, then Le Canard Réincarné. The Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver will follow next.

That's my best effort this morning, and I apologize for that. My wife is taking French lessons right now. If I had a little more time, I would also do that.

Welcome this morning—and it is still morning. First of all, the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, please.

Ms. Yseult Friolet (Executive Director, Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Translation]

I will be making my presentation in French.

Thank you for this invitation and for the opportunity to share our thoughts on the role of public broadcasters in the 21st century.

As you know, the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique is the advocate for the francophone community in BC. Our role is to promote, represent and defend the interests of francophones as well as protect our community's linguistic and cultural heritage.

Our federation includes 37 members, organizations like the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver. The centre's representative will be addressing the issue of Radio-Canada's cultural expression mandate. We, for our part, will focus on the way in which it reflects the francophone communities' reality in BC.

There are 64,000 francophone community members in BC. We now have new statistics and by next December, we'll know the actual number of francophones, those that qualify as francophones and those that are francophiles. For the time being, we know that the 2006 figures show our community is growing.

It is also important to add that there are many bilingual people in British Columbia, which broadens the francophone environment in the province. There are over 270,000 who can communicate in French, representing 7 % of the population in BC. That amount is not negligible, especially given the fact that these 270,000 people make up Radio-Canada's listenership.

These days, all broadcasters are in a state of flux. That is what we heard this morning: there is this pressure of new technology being

brought to bear on them, forcing them to make technological changes and other more fundamental changes.

Consumers like ourselves are left with no other option but to comply or to change our listening habits. Clearly, the questions you are asking us are of great importance for the entire Canadian public, but they are also of specific concern to francophone-minority communities.

French-language options we have are very limited. The decisions made by broadcasters serving us therefore have an even more direct effect on us. Official language communities depend almost exclusively on Radio-Canada and on the way in which the Crown corporation carries out its mandate.

Our communities need their national broadcaster, perhaps even more so than the majority would. Radio-Canada gives us a chance to hear our own voices. It is the medium which allows us to know ourselves and to be known.

When it comes to providing services, I would like to start by answering this seemingly self-evident question. Radio-Canada radio and television must be available everywhere in Canada even in remote regions. By definition, a national broadcaster does not simply justify its existence based on ratings, and its presence throughout the country is a societal decision. Canada is not the only country to have put forward this basic premise. Moreover, I would add that the people who came here this morning told you the same thing.

The same goes for RDI. Access to this channel ought not to be a costly option for viewers which would be offered by cable distributors who don't see the point in it.

CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate is national, and the Crown corporation must make sure it covers all of the Canadian territory, even where our geography makes its broadcasting somewhat costly at times.

Let's now move to the issue of content. To carry out its mandate and to show the government that it is meeting its responsibilities, the Crown corporation is constantly making adjustments to its website, its program schedules, its broadcasting times, its content and the length of its shows, focusing on the importance of partnerships it is developing with its English-language counterpart and on the structure of its administrative or human resources sections. Everything is in constant flux.

• (1150)

It appears to us that federal budgets are too often the engine behind these frequent upheavals. When the federal budget made deep cuts in 1995, production was centralized in Montreal. Regional productions are increasingly rare, thus reducing regional representation.

In reality, communities like ours, which receive the service, receive very little advance notice and are not consulted. Decision makers simply organize an annual tour to inform the community of upcoming changes. But our community turns to Radio-Canada not only for news, entertainment and general culture, but we also consider it as a transmission, growth and development tool.

The Crown Corporation is one of the pillars of Canada's official language policy. It is the instrument which should allow francophones in nine provinces and three territories to speak with Quebecers and create a greater degree of solidarity within the Canadian francophonie.

That is why the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique created a media committee in 2002. The committee's mandate was to consult francophones and francophiles in British Columbia to find out what their opinions, perceptions and needs were regarding broadcasting. We also wanted to basically assess how the community was reflected within a larger context.

In 2002, as in 2007, most of the criticism we received was directed at the content of our programs. For instance, francophones don't feel the regional news really addresses their daily lives or concerns. The newscast out of Vancouver swings, with few exceptions, between two very different poles, namely a French version of the CBC newscast with basically the same issues being covered. French regional news looks like a translation of the English news, or sometimes like a diluted version of the national newscast out of Quebec, with too much information about Quebecers and very little or non at all from other francophone communities.

People have said that the national broadcaster has become "montrealized". Our communities are not reflected in the programs they watch. They don't relate to the issues because they don't see how national or provincial events affect them, either socially or politically. Things which affect our community are not reported often enough or even identified.

Radio-Canada seemed to have partly understood this when it created shows such as *L'Ouest en direct*, which allowed us in British Columbia to know when and where to watch TV to find out what was happening in the western francophonie, and not only what was happening in Quebec. Unfortunately, the broadcaster decided to cancel this reliable show. So the program is gone, and our regional news is drowned out by national news. However, some people like this, and the new model lives on. For instance, Ontario does not receive the same regional news as the Outaouais or Ottawa.

I would like to continue this digression with the theme of regionalization. Our communities are never as well served as when they hear their own artists or experts, or local folks speaking about local, national or even international events.

That is why radio programs, especially the three program schedules which are currently broadcast live from Vancouver, are the strands which help weave together our francophone community in British Columbia. These programs allow their hosts to talk about local events or to give a local perspective on national or international events. The programs address issues affecting our community, our school and our community centres. They report on news events which reflect our concerns, and they provide analysis about our reality and its richness. Lastly, they meet the particular needs of our region.

● (1155)

It is obvious that this local programming requires financial resources for every region, for every province or territory that can at times seem excessive.

I come back to our initial assertion, namely that the national broadcaster cannot only be a slave to its ratings. People cannot continue, in the offices of Radio-Canada in Montreal, to repeat that a disproportionate percentage of the Crown corporation's audience lives in Quebec and that therefore we must be realistic. The Crown corporation must reflect the different needs and circumstances of each official language community, including the particular needs and circumstances of English and French linguistic minorities as the Broadcasting Act tells us.

I would like to make a few recommendations. It seems to us that the CBC/Radio-Canada should develop an accountability framework in cooperation with the CRTC that would allow for the definition of both qualitative and quantitative objectives in a better reflection of the regions, whether it concerns the content, the newscasts, drama or variety shows. The appropriations allocated to Radio-Canada by the federal government could be subject to rigorous accountability on the part of the Crown corporation, which would involve the implementation of measures and of producing a better reflection of the regions and of the French linguistic minorities.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about technological changes. CBC and Radio-Canada have created an exceptional broadcasting tool for themselves that continues to contribute to the enrichment of the programming and to the broadening of news broadcasting; I am referring here to their website.

On these sites we have unlimited access to what is broadcasted and researched across the country and beyond our borders. It is no longer possible to say that what is said and what happens in Newfoundland is never heard on the West Coast. All one has to do is go find that information.

This tool is of course not used by the entire population for all kinds of reasons, but public broadcasters were quick to see what the benefits would be to the general public, and the investments they make in this would certainly be money well spent, and it contributes to supporting the public broadcaster's mandate.

I thank you for having listened to me and I am ready for your questions, if any.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

● (1200)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll move on now to the next presenter. Please start.

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu (Principal, Le Canard Réincarné): Is there technical support available? I have a PowerPoint presentation, and I just need it hooked up so I don't have to worry about it.

[Translation]

I would like to welcome all of our visitors.

I am pleased to welcome you in French. Welcome to the fresh Pacific air and welcome to the counter media from homeland of adbusters.org and Greenpeace. Welcome to the *Media Carta*, the charter of the media, of adbusters.org. Welcome to Tyee.ca, which is the last media to stand up to CanWest, in English. Welcome from the last resisting Gaul who is operating the only new independent media in the entire Canadian West.

[English]

Welcome, fellow citizens, *francophiles*.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman and honourable members of the committee, I would first of all like to thank you for your willingness to listen to my comments amongst the three other representatives of the organized francophonie.

I prepared an eight-page brief of which you probably have a copy. I will give you an overview of it in the following PowerPoint presentation.

As a new media that is somewhat of a "go-getter", I will carefully present my credentials. At the outset of the presentation, I will do a preliminary analysis of the media situation: setting the context in a minority situation. The next four components will deal with the main themes of the study, mainly the public mandate of the CBC/SRC, the fiscal situation, the services offered and the emergence of new media.

Let us move now to my credentials. I am a citizen, a professional and a member of this community in western Canada for the last 27 years. I am very much a cross-breed and I married outside my culture. My two children are francophiles. My wife is an anglophone, originally from the West Island of Montreal. I am a tech worker. I work in telecommunications in the private sector, on electronic issues for small and medium-size businesses. I have never worked in French. My training is in engineering and in requirements analysis.

I consider myself to be both a digital migrant and a digital native. I live with two children who are now grown up who truly are digital natives. I would point out to the committee that I do not believe there is a single digital native in this room. That is quite worrisome.

I consider myself to be a digital migrant through my profession. I was of course born with a mechano set in my possession and not with a personal computer, as is the case with the generation of digital natives.

I am a big fan of public radio. I reconnected with my French some years ago. I thank Radio-Canada for having allowed me to keep my French after 27 years.

There is a proverb that says *Spare the rod and spoil the child*. Also, I am a fierce critic of the new media, in terms of the services offered here, and this has been the case for several years, as the decision was taken not to regulate in this area. I said that I reconnected with French: I can therefore say that I am an activist. The alternative is to be assimilated. That is what Statistics Canada will reveal next December when they publish their statistics on francophones.

I have been running *Le Canada Réincarné* for three years now. It attracts between 30 and 40 visitors a day. I have a Google ranking that compares with that of Radio-Canada in the region, that is to say a six. That is comparable to a Tyee, to our friends at the CRTC and to the Association de la presse francophone. My new media is largely a blog. It participates in a forum, and an aggregation of web feeds RSS. I have dabbled in Internet radio and podcasts. I offer a community calendar, polls, manifestos and campaigns.

As you can see, I like to stir things up. I write articles. For example, the brief has now been available for comment for several weeks. I am not operating in a vacuum. I have the support of *Impératif français*, a Quebec non-governmental organization that is dedicated to the defence of the French language. I'm associated with the *Réseau des médias alternatifs du Québec*, the RMA. I am also associated with the *Express du Pacifique* which recognizes the contribution of blogs: how we can now re-engage francophones. I am quite active on the Net, compared to other media, which gives me a Google ranking of six.

The next component deals with preliminary analysis. I believe that several of you have already seen the brief and that several have seen the PowerPoint presentation.

I will not be telling you anything new, after two hours of presentations this morning, in saying that our world is fundamentally a multimedia one. I will probably not be telling you anything new either in saying that there's a greater and greater number of digital migrants and digital natives.

Perhaps I will be teaching something new to those who are listening less attentively this morning as far as Web 2.0 is concerned. I will sum it up as an active and selective commitment to the media. Perhaps I could inform you that we are very far behind as compared to the majority, be they anglophone or francophone, whether we are talking about Quebec or France.

I could count on my fingers the number of francophones who are active on the Web in the entire Canadian West. I can count on my finger tips the number of letters from western readers that are on the pages of our papers. I can tell you that there is absolutely no hot-line in all of the Canadian West to take the pulse of our community. I consider these to be significant delays by comparison with the majority.

I would say now that in a minority context, there are really two groups. There is one group that I think of as the organized francophonie, that lives somewhat in a bubble, in a certain way, and is not assimilated. There is the other group of young people, entrepreneurs, professionals and high-tech workers, who are being assimilated at a worrisome rate. And I believe that the public broadcaster has played a part in the assimilation of francophones from the first group that I described, that is the young professional entrepreneurs and workers from the high-tech sector.

Radio-Canada's dominant position has always been that the Crown corporation has maintained a linguistic connection, but I believe that as far as digital migrants and digital natives are concerned, the linguistic connection has not been maintained. Therefore, if there is a message I would like you to take back to Ottawa, it is that our public broadcaster has to bear some of the responsibility for the assimilation of francophones and the Canadian West.

Let us now talk about the public mandate. I would remind you that the regulatory body, the CRTC, chose some years ago not to regulate new media. I believe it is because they in no way recognize that a minority linguistic situation exists. I am not talking about the regions, I'm not talking about the north shore or the Gaspé; I'm talking about a minority context in which Radio-Canada is our only linguistic and cultural connection.

The CRTC also did not recognize that Web 2.0 really is a means of cultural expression. The new generation of digital natives and even the digital migrants will express themselves in this way.

In the mandate, there is a reference to making services available throughout Canada by the most appropriate means. This of course is decided by Montreal and Ottawa. There really must be some recognition, some new way of proceeding, once it is recognized that a minority context is threatened.

We have a dysfunctional governance structure whereby the people making the decisions largely live in a majority context and understand very little about what happens in a minority context, and undeniably, what happens in the Canadian West.

There is talk of a public mandate that would be strengthened through partnerships with private broadcasters. I would like to tell you that there must first of all be a recognition of a citizen space, a non-governmental organization space perhaps, before talking about the private broadcaster. Before having private broadcasters, there has to be a market.

The second lesson: you cannot put the cart before the horse in a minority situation.

In truth, there is no financial portrait. Perhaps there might have been one had there been regulation a few years ago, in terms of new media and if we had created a market, if we had managed to create a citizen media. We did not do so.

As far as we are concerned, at this point in time, new content is really required in order to interest francophones in a minority situation, that is the digital migrants and, in particular, the digital natives.

I will remind you of the environment now. We know that people see themselves on sites like Wikipedia, Meetup, MySpace and PaceBook. This is becoming somewhat commercial, but there are presently very few spaces where people can meet using these new methods which, of course, will bring about physical encounters. We do not live only in the virtual world.

I will make one comment on the financial portrait. I would like to talk about Web traffic. Web traffic is fundamental. We cannot talk about a financial market if our public broadcaster does not share their Web traffic with us. They do not share their ratings with us very

much either. Web traffic, for an entrepreneur, is fundamental. In my small business, I took my Web traffic into account. I think that this should be recognized by our regulatory agency. If we play catch-up to compensate for the fact that there was no regulation earlier on, there may perhaps be a financial portrait.

Regarding the services offered, I will not be telling you anything new by saying that the media that is most often used is accessible in virtual time with a menu of subjects, and a community of interest that is dispersed. Time is a limited resource, in Vancouver as well as in Montreal or in Ottawa. We do not watch the news over a family dinner, if we are able. People who are in their cars, who are mobile, will always have a need of what we call hot media, and that will very likely be traditional radio. Those media will stay.

I may be teaching you something new in telling you that audience commitment to media must be encouraged, to the public broadcaster. With the new media model, the presenter becomes a kind of blogger who puts information into context and seeks commentary from the audience. That truly is a Web 2.0 situation, where interaction is created. The most fundamental change is that the audience determines the programming and the content. That is a good way to appropriately reflect regional diversity.

The fourth lesson: with the new media, it is the audience that leads, even in the minority situation, if we can obtain their commitment.

As far as the emergence of new media is concerned, the problem is not really emergence, but urgency. The regulatory agency is always slow to react to changes in the market. There was no regulation. We must catch up and do so now, we must talk about urgency, transparency and the obligation to base its services on Web 2.0 structure, rather than an extended bureaucracy that is out of touch or a regulatory framework. We must realize that the world is now in a Web 2.0 framework.

The paradigm shift is enormous and the process is slow for organizations like the CRTC. This has brought about the creation of broadcasters, in Quebec, like RadioPirate and XFM. The paradigm shift is also enormous for the public broadcasters and the interest groups. In the past, in terms of the rhythm of the Internet, one year was an eternity. Now, one year is a millennium. We are talking in terms of months today, and the regulatory body is carrying out studies that take an eternity.

The paradigm shift in terms of citizen media and programming is also enormous. Citizens have always been accustomed to listening to what their public broadcaster told them.

On that note, you may believe that there is a great temptation in the Neo-Conservative and Neo-Liberal program to do some clear cutting, to cut everything. The deregulation of new media, where there were never any regulations, has not worked. At this point in time, we must update our linguistic and cultural connection.

In conclusion, even if our public broadcaster is our main lifeline, the majority will have to stop treating us like leopards by continually sending missionaries to our media. Majority must ensure that the public broadcaster recognizes the citizen space, their new media and the potential for renewal for francophones living in a minority situation.

I thank you for having listened to me.

•(1215)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much for that.

Our next presenter, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Houle (Executive Director, Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver): Good afternoon. Everyone is hungry and therefore you'll be pleased to hear that my presentation will be brief.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today. It is a great pleasure for me to speak on behalf of the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver about the role for a public broadcaster in the XXIst century.

Allow me to begin by briefly describing the organization I represent, the artistic community in British Columbia, and the proportion of francophones and francophiles of metropolitan Vancouver.

Since 1975, the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver has been programming annual French language cultural activities. These include activities such as the Coup de coeur francophone series, the Nouvelle Scène concerts, an art gallery, library and video library services, educational services and programs, children's day camps, integration and reception services for new arrivals, a community Internet access site, and the list goes on. The Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver therefore provides professionally crafted cultural activities and shows. We give the people of Vancouver access to francophone linguistic or cultural artistic products in the areas of visual arts, media arts and the performing arts.

At 24,100 artists, British Columbia is the province of the highest percentage of its population involved in artistic professions—1.1%. Artists make up 0.08% of the total active population in Canada. Out of all the major Canadian cities, Vancouver has the highest concentration of artists. Seven thousand two hundred and fifty artists live in Vancouver, that is 30% of British Columbia artists.

In the Vancouver region, francophones represent 2% of the population. That population is increasing. The francophone population in metropolitan Vancouver went from 27,245 people in 1996 to 29,795 people in 2001, that is an increase of 10%. That represents 50% of the francophone population in British Columbia. Furthermore, there were 133,525 individuals speaking French in metropolitan Vancouver in 1996, and 147,775 in 2001, that is an increase of 10.5%. That is equivalent to the size of the population in cities such as Abbotsford in British Columbia, Kingston in Ontario or Trois-Rivières in Quebec. The metropolitan Vancouver region therefore contains a sizable pool of francophones and francophiles searching for a cultural life that takes place in French.

For more than 30 years the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver has been ensuring French language arts and culture broadcasting in its municipality. We are dedicated to the development and vitality of a francophone cultural space in Vancouver. Our initiatives frequently involve close collaboration with CBC/Radio-Canada. We think it is important to share with you our thoughts on

how CBC/Radio-Canada fulfills the responsibilities under its legislative mandate, but also on our own involvement.

First, we are of the opinion that CBC/Radio-Canada is principally and typically Canadian by both the proportion of its programs with Canadian content and its ability to provide programming that reflects the interests and values of Canadians. We believe that Radio-Canada reflects Canada inclusively and we must acknowledge that it takes the country regional diversity into account, at both the national and regional level. We acknowledge that it attempts to meet specific regional needs. Including television and radio programs that cover the western regions provides us with an opportunity to appreciate regional diversity. On the other hand, providing greater coverage of the country can make it difficult to ensure listener loyalty and to achieve that critical level of local visibility that is necessary for insuring that local viewers relate to those programs.

I will come back to that aspect of Radio-Canada's mandate during my presentation when I talk about the relevant of regional programming.

We all agree that Radio-Canada actively contributes to cultural expression and exchanges in various ways. There are local programs such as *Zigzag*, which covers artistic activities in the four western provinces; *Ceci est un TEST*, which gives a platform to young musicians; *ONVIVA*, in which youth from western schools talk to us about their culture; the *MUZIKLIPS* competition, which gives a new artist an opportunity to record a sound tape and to produce a first videoclip; and the *Arts et spectacles* clips in the *Téléjournal/Colombie-Britannique*, which provide the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver with an amount of visibility, which is never enough for a producer, but which is satisfactory.

•(1220)

Radio-Canada provides services in French and in English and we acknowledge that it attempts through these services to reflect the specific situations and needs of both official language communities. One of the immediate consequences of the draconian reduction in its budget in the mid-1990s was its inability to meet the specific needs of the minority francophone communities. Centralizing operations in large urban centres often involves budget cuts that affect its ability to provide adequate coverage to these communities.

We are of the opinion that Radio-Canada holds the same quality standards for its services in French and in English. Radio-Canada contributes to a shared-collective conscience through its historical programs as well as its news coverage in all its shapes. Providing visibility to individuals who embody our hopes, and to events that foster community relations and solidarity can only serve to inspire and stimulate our feeling of national identity.

In order to ensure the survival of minority communities Radio-Canada must maintain its services throughout Canada. That would be difficult if those services were no longer included in its basic services. Through the diversity of its programming, the active involvement of diversified cultural communities in its programming from its design to its broadcasting, Radio-Canada reflects the multicultural and multinational nature of Canada.

In conclusion, I would like to point out to committee members that it should no longer be necessary to prove that regional programming is relevant. It is obvious that ensuring Radio-Canada's active regional presence as well as significant visibility to those individuals contributing to the vitality of these communities can only foster their development.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

I just have to say, Ms. Fry, that the last time you asked about 10 questions in one. Could you shorten them a little? I ask that the responses be directed to the question. That way we can each get a question in, because we only have roughly 20 minutes for questions and answers.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Sometimes when I know I have only one question, I try to get as many as I can into the mix.

The Chair: I noticed that.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I want to ask some very important questions of the francophone community here.

Radio-Canada does represent fairly well what goes on at Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver, but given that the community in British Columbia is very diverse and spread out across the province, do you believe that Radio-Canada is able to do its job in representing the community in Campbell River or the community up north, and is able to represent that community to Vancouver? It represents Vancouver to those communities, but is it able to represent those communities to Vancouver?

Do you believe that francophones across the country, in Ontario and in Quebec, know and understand through Radio-Canada what the situation is here in British Columbia? Do they have a sense and understanding of the diversity of the francophone community here in B.C.? Do you really believe you are reflected to the national medium in the same way as the national medium is reflected to you?

I want to ask that question because I don't get that sense.

•(1225)

Mr. Alexandre Houle: Are you asking me or the federation?

Hon. Hedy Fry: I'm asking anyone.

[Translation]

Ms. Yseult Friolet: I have been living in Vancouver for approximately 30 years. I arrived there in 1976. I therefore witnessed the development of radio and television in British Columbia. Services are being cut. In 1995, we almost lost our news bulletin, which is 22 to 25 minutes long. It was going to be merged

with Regina or Winnipeg's programming to cover Western Canadian news.

Ms. Fry, in these circumstances of attrition, it is questionable how representative events that occur in Campbell River, Prince George or even Maillardville truly are. There are a few cultural shows on television. Alexandre could tell you more. But there is very little in the way of news. I can tell you, as a representative of the francophone community, that the community is still not being represented even though it should be under Radio-Canada's mandate.

My colleagues could tell you that the same is true for the other provinces, except in some areas where there is more broadcasting time, for example, in Moncton. Perhaps there are more resources there. It is my view that Radio-Canada has failed by not allowing that transfer of and access to programs produced in other provinces.

Radio-Canada's programming schedule shows that the Moncton or Ontario news is not necessarily accessible, thereby preventing us from understanding what specifically is happening in those areas. I don't think that Quebecers, be they from Montreal or Val d'Or, have any more access than they do. Has Radio-Canada contributed to making people more aware of the Canadian francophonie? I think there have been failures in this area. Is that due to editorial choices? I wouldn't want to say.

Regardless, it certainly is linked to technical resources as well as the centralizing of all French programming in Quebec and Montreal. Past cuts are also a very significant factor.

Mr. Alexandre Houle: The Centre culturel francophone in Vancouver is truly privileged because it has access to Radio-Canada's infrastructure in the province's largest urban centre. Compared to other regions, we indirectly benefit from significant coverage.

Our presentation was only on the interaction between the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver and Radio-Canada. I cannot speak on behalf of people in the regions. I am not able to do that. However, I can confirm that it is easier for the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver to disseminate its programs throughout the province than to receive similar information from the other regions.

I can also say that the Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver has no visibility outside British Columbia, let alone Vancouver. We are bombarded with programs from Quebec, which is often much appreciated, but we would like this to be mutual. We have as much to contribute to Quebec's francophone community as they have to us.

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu: The question as I see it is: Are we reaching the viewers? They don't simply break down according to regions or within Vancouver centre. We're talking about 30,000 compared to 60,000. Generations are also an issue. There are the digital natives and the digital migrants.

The situation is also very different for those who, like those living here, are perfectly bilingual. The media environment has become progressively more competitive. One can choose between Radio-Canada and CBC, but there are also other choices, such as those provided by the web. A perfectly bilingual individual may drift to the English media and I think that is unfortunate.

• (1230)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Bourgeois.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I am truly sorry that you were invited just before lunch time. I don't think it was intentional on the part of committee staff. We are tired and unfortunately we are meeting with you just before lunch, when you are the ones whose culture and language are the most threatened here.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I think I can ask of you to do everything possible to allow us the time to ask all our questions and to give these individuals all the time they require to answer—even if that involves putting off our lunch—because they are the most affected by this. I know that you are a good person and that you will do this.

[English]

The Chair: I don't have a problem with that, but I have to put a limit on it so we don't run straight until 1:30.

[Translation]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: No, I know. However, I would like them to have the same amount of time as the other witnesses had. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and gentlemen, I used to be a history teacher. You remind me very much of what I used to teach my 4th year high school students when I taught them about assimilation.

Mr. Houle, yours may be the only brief that is different from the others. You said earlier that you are in downtown Vancouver. Perhaps that is why your experience is not the same, but I do feel your complaints about Radio-Canada are rather timid.

However, Mr. Beaulieu, your brief was one of the first I read, because you sent it in advance. I underlined things, I devoured it and this morning, I feel some cynicism regarding your experience with Radio-Canada.

I am not familiar with your report, because we did not get it ahead of time, but my first question will be to you.

This morning, when I turned on my television here at the hotel, I looked for Radio-Canada in French, and all I found were cartoon characters. I switched to CBC and I got the news in English. So my

impression was that there was an effort being made to make me feel like a child.

Does it make sense that I got cartoon characters on French-language TV, while on the English network they were broadcasting the national and international news? That is my first question. Do you get cartoons in Vancouver between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m.?

Ms. Yseult Friolet: I do not know how much you have travelled throughout the country, Ms. Bourgeois, but there is no doubt that Radio-Canada or the Broadcasting Act have no control over cable companies. So we do find that in hotels sometimes the French channel is eliminated in favour of the cartoon characters you described. I do not know what program you saw this morning.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: It was cartoons.

Ms. Yseult Friolet: That is really too bad.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: It was the animated film *101 Dalmatians*.

Ms. Yseult Friolet: Our federation has often spoken out against this practice. Unfortunately, we have no power in this area.

If you have an opportunity to look at the programming schedule while you are here—or perhaps Ms. Fryor Ms. Savoie, who are from the region, could show it to you—you will see that the French channels are being placed higher and higher up on the dial. Now they are around 102, 103 and 104. So that makes things very difficult. People have to be quite well off and have a good cable company in order to have access to French-language stations.

• (1235)

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: What you say about cable companies and the programs they present is extremely important. You are the first person who has answered this question when I have tried to ask it.

Ms. Yseult Friolet: I'm very pleased to hear that, Ms. Bourgeois.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Finally, we must realize, Mr. Beaulieu, that we have a right, a historic right under the Canadian Constitution, to have programming in French and to protect our language. I guess you know that! Since 1763, since the conquest, we have had to be able to seek out Quebeckers and French Canadians as well so that we could be a genuine Canadian people. An attempt was made—at least through legislation—to protect their language. You tell me that Radio-Canada is not doing this. What exactly are you saying? That the French language is not being protected? That assimilation is occurring at a tremendous rate?

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu: I think the Charter of Rights was a great idea at the time. It will not be a source of information for my children, nor for digital migrants or digital natives; it may be a source of information for interest groups, lawyers and judges. Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that the Charter is a failure.

I talked about the importance of the media. It is important to recognize that in an evolving world, we need up-to-date media. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is probably doing something comparable to what it was doing 10 or 20 years ago, with the exception of regional content, which is poor, as has been mentioned. This really is unacceptable. We are losing all our dynamic people to more competitive media.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: That brings me to my final question.

I devoured the brief and scribbled notes on it as I went along, and as I said earlier, I felt that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was trying to control things: that this Crown corporation wanted to keep a tight grip on all forms of broadcasting.

In your brief, you seem to be saying that a number of people don't actually want to become competitors but rather helpers, or supporters, of the linguistic communities, and that they have not been able to do so because CBC controls news broadcasting.

Is that correct? Have I understood your point?

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has not kept up with the times. I have to say that, once again.

I often use the very sobering analogy of the *Pravda*, the soviet regime's propaganda organization. This comparison might hurt a bit, however sometimes, there is a slant that CBC adopts outside Quebec, and there are some places about which no reference is made.

What's more, proponents of this message make sure that only good things are talked about, so everything is hunky dory. Unfortunately, to really engage people, you have to talk about things that they care about.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: And yet, you said:

The approach where you have a broadcaster and its program director who want to keep a stranglehold over the content and participation is outdated.

That sort of thing must go on, because you referred to it in your brief. Do you have any examples?

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu: There's one point I didn't express well at all in my presentation and it's probably the most important one: the public broadcasting organization is having a lot of trouble getting the dynamic content that is expected. They must realize that they need to promote programs with more hard-hitting content, content that has an edge, as you say in English.

I remind you that the French may not always be the best. I know that in Quebec alternative media is being discussed at great length. And so, CBC needs to acknowledge that medium.

The point that I'm trying to make with this brief is that the party line is set, and we're not going to start encouraging people to click on links sending them to websites over whose content and editorial slant we have no control.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you, that's clear.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Savoie.

[Translation]

Ms. Denise Savoie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to thank you for your presentation.

As a French speaker from the West, the portrait you have painted seems a quite accurate picture of the situation that I myself experienced. I went to the West coast about 30 years ago and I took advantage of French Radio-Canada's success which helped me develop and continue to live in French. So, I benefited from CBC's

good work in our community. The budget cutbacks which began around 1995, when the Liberal government was in power, really affected our public broadcaster. And now, the current Conservative government is trying to undermine the Internet's neutrality. So, we're concerned about our culture from this point of view.

You suggested instituting an accountability framework. You did a good job of stressing how important regional programming is. I have noticed on several occasions how irritated francophones outside Quebec are when they hear reports about what is happening with the Mont-Orford Park. They're irritated because they don't hear about what is going on locally, and about parks in their region; they hear about the temperature in the Saguenay but not about the temperature in Vancouver. You talked about developing a standard-based accountability framework.

Could you be more specific about what these qualitative and quantitative standards would be, and how they would improve things?

• (1240)

Ms. Ysult Friolet: We would both like to answer that question, Ms. Savoie. I'll respond first and then I'll ask Ms. Sotteau to talk about the quantitative and qualitative side of things.

Now, section 41 of the Official Languages Act sets out the terms of reference. Section 41 is a little more substantial than it was before the new legislation came into effect. Section 41 states that departments and agencies, such as CBC/Radio-Canada, must contribute to enhancing the vitality of francophone communities, not only within Quebec, but also in francophone communities outside Quebec, as you pointed out.

We've seen the effects caused by attrition since the 1990s. So, we would like to see a change. The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, which you've perhaps heard from or will be hearing from shortly, advocated the development of an accountability framework. We agree entirely with the federation on this point. Such a framework may improve the situation or enable us to make choices which better reflect the community here, where we live, and help others, including Quebeckers, get to know us better.

You gave the example, Ms. Savoie, of news broadcasts about the Mont-Orford Park. Something very important happened in Vancouver last fall, it had to do with water. Based on the most recent statistics, there are three major cities in Canada: Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. On our television news they talked about the water problems we were experiencing. I would hardly be exaggerating when I say that the news reached French speakers just a tad later, and appeared as just a regular news item.

Now, that's not an editorial comment, but I do know what Canadians want when they "channel surf", as digital migrants, to use Mr. Beaulieu's expression looking for as much news as possible, which is what most viewers do. As francophones, we certainly have Radio-Canada. And I think that the accountability framework may be helpful in this regard.

I'm sorry, I thought I had introduced Ms. Sotteau earlier. She works with us at the federation and she may be able to say a little more about quality.

•(1245)

Mrs. Christine Sotteau (Government Relations Coordinator, Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique): It's a suggestion, as Ms. Friolet said, that every francophone community outside Quebec has made. Basically, it's a way of holding the CBC to account.

Yseult talked about the Official Languages Act, but we're also dealing with a Crown corporation and, of course, the Broadcasting Act. So we think this would help CBC, the community and the CRTC to consider best practices. For example, what's the best way of reflecting the francophone community's reality, and of working on a strategy to reflect this reality?

Do we really understand? We can't blame CBC for anything. We realize that the very restrictive budget cutbacks have made things increasingly difficult. For example, using a camera to cover a francophone event is a luxury, when there aren't enough cameras in the newsroom. So journalists just end up automatically covering something that the anglophones have already covered. There are too many reports which are of more interest to the anglophone community because the same camera is being used. We don't have the flexibility to make personal choices which better reflect the francophone community's reality. Being here today to cover your presence in British Columbia is the result of a choice: we're talking about a video camera which is being used for francophones and not for anglophones. Sometimes we'd like to be able to do things differently. But we have no choice, we quite simply cannot. There are all manner of constraints, and I think that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation needs to think about these issues and make strategic choices. Then it will have to abide by these choices.

Is that okay? I hope I've answered your questions.

Ms. Denise Savoie: Yes you have, absolutely.

Do I have a minute left?

[English]

The Chair: I'll give you a very short one, and then I'll make a statement. I'll hold my questions.

[Translation]

Ms. Denise Savoie: Mr. Beaulieu, unfortunately, I am not a digital native. So some of your suggestions may have escaped me, but I would like to come back to the whole idea of having a citizen space.

Could you say a bit more about the role CBC could play in all that, and tell us what it would mean?

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu: French and French content not only have to be promoted within CBC, but also... As you say in English, they need to walk the talk. You need to promote people who are active in French, and I'm not just talking about people at CBC, our official spokespersons or writers for *L'Express du Pacifique*. We need a broader base, francophones should be called upon to write in French, to meet in French, and this no longer happens.

When I hear the term "accountability framework", it gives me the shivers. Once again you would have francophones switching off because of all the red tape. We already have a regional panel at CBC which hasn't done a thing, and which doesn't broadcast anything on the web. In my opinion, an accountability framework, is all about Web 2.0, and counting the number of hits and being transparent with its viewership. This is the best way of determining whether the public broadcaster is doing a good job. But if the public broadcaster doesn't welcome this feedback and continues to censor it, and if it doesn't have its own ombudsman and transparent and accountable processes, well, then it will be tough.

Ms. Denise Savoie: So you're talking about making a better use of the web in order to democratize broadcasting.

Mr. Réjean Beaulieu: If francophones set up blogs or "wikis", then CBC needs to talk about it. We're given websites from Quebec. There's a CBC editorial which talks about good websites, good addresses, but they aren't local addresses. They're addresses set up by active people in Quebec. And that's a pity, because francophones from here won't be interested.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much. I've really appreciated your presentations here this morning and your answers to the questions.

When we were in Yellowknife the other evening we listened to a lot of people and gave them their time. I'm sorry we couldn't do that today. We could probably spend hours with every witness we've had here today, so thank you for coming.

In the north, in Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories, we have some 11 Innu languages along with French and English. I know it has to be a big problem to serve all the people of Canada. We have a bilingual country, and Vancouver is a hub of more languages.

We've heard about new media for a long time, and I appreciate the various presentations today on new media. Thank you very much.

Our next presentations will start at two o'clock.

The meeting is adjourned.

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