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Chair

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): Welcome back, everyone, to our next five weeks before we have another constituency week.

I must say that last week was quite busy for me. I had a cold all week, too, so if I sniffle a wee bit up here today, please accept my apologies.

Welcome to meeting six of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), we are considering the main estimates for 2010-11: votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, and 125 under Canadian Heritage, referred to the committee on Wednesday, March 3, 2010.

Appearing this morning is the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

Welcome, Minister Moore.

We also have three department officials from Canadian Heritage: Judith A. LaRocque, Deputy Minister; Pablo Sobrino, Assistant Deputy Minister, strategic policy, planning, and corporate affairs; and Jean-Pierre Blais, Assistant Deputy Minister, cultural affairs.

Before I ask the minister to make his presentation, I will tell everyone that this morning the question period for each person is five minutes. That includes both questions and answers. I'm going to try to stick as close to that time as I can so that everyone has an opportunity.

Yes, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): My concern is that, as I understand it, the minister is only here for an hour.

The Chair: Correct.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It seems to me that it would be unfair to have a five-minute round of questioning. I think it should be seven-minute rounds. Otherwise, someone could talk the clock out, and I might not get a chance to get through my questions of interest.

The Chair: I will hold to the five minutes, Mr. Angus.

Again, Mr. Moore, the answers will be within that five minutes.

Thank you.

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages): I'll do my best to answer them in a yes-no fashion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Translation]

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee, I am very pleased to be appearing before the committee once again.

With me are Judith A. LaRocque, Deputy Minister; Pablo Sobrino, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Planning and Corporate Affairs; and Jean-Pierre Blais, Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs.

It's been almost a year since I was last here. In the last few months, our Government has been working tirelessly on many cultural issues, and today I want to share our accomplishments with you.

[English]

The most visible cultural and sporting event to take place in this country in the last decade was the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic winter games. The games brought with them incredible events—the Olympic and Paralympic torch relays, the opening and closing ceremonies, and of course the sporting competitions themselves.

[Translation]

This also included Canada's Cultural Olympiad, which featured approximately 650 performances and exhibitions. More than one quarter of the artists featured were from Canada's francophone communities. Our artists set the bar extraordinarily high, both entertaining and inspiring Canadians and people around the world.

This was a once-in-a-generation event that brought Canadians of all ages and all backgrounds together. These were truly Canada's Games—exceeding the standards of the International Olympic Committee and uniting Canadians in cheering on the remarkable athletes who made us so very proud.

[English]

Our government understands the vital role that arts and culture plays in the lives of everyday Canadians and the contribution it makes to vibrant communities across the country. We also understand the economic importance of the arts in Canada. Arts and culture in Canada represents over 650,000 jobs across the country. Its economic impact for our country is \$46 billion, almost 4% of Canada's GDP.

Throughout the last year, our government has been carefully charting a course that will allow our creative industries to become even stronger. Our economic action plan is investing in Canada's long-term benefits and strengthening our economy, particularly our creative economy. In the first year of this two-year plan, we delivered an unprecedented level of support for arts and culture in Canada. Since April 1, 2009, we have invested over \$53 million for 113 economic action plan projects in communities of all sizes across the country.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

This includes \$1.3 million in support for the National Theatre School in Montreal, so it can remain a world-class arts training school; \$1.8 million to the Vancouver East Cultural Centre to help renovate its 1911 York Theatre, which is about to turn 100 years old; approximately \$1 million for La Troupe du Jour to create a first-rate centre for its high-quality French theatre production—La Troupe du Jour is the only professional French language theatre company in Saskatchewan; the Garden of the Gulf Museum, located in Montague, Prince Edward Island, will be able to better display its artifacts and complete important renovations as a result of investments through our Economic Action Plan.

[*English*]

Moving forward, we're investing \$335 million in arts and culture, which includes cultural infrastructure, new arts facilities such as those of the Quartier des spectacles in Montreal, new investments in historic sites such as the Fort York Visitor Centre, the birthplace of urban Toronto, and renovations such as that of the Royal BC Museum, one of the oldest and foremost cultural institutions in Canada. These are just a few examples.

Through these projects we are providing our creative economy with a much-needed shot in the arm and building arts infrastructure for future generations. Last month's Speech from the Throne built on our commitment to Canada's arts and culture sector. It makes note of the several historic anniversaries that will bring Canadians together to celebrate our rich and diverse heritage. Plans are already well under way to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Canada's first English settlement, at Cupids in Newfoundland and Labrador; the bicentennial of the War of 1812; and the Queen's diamond jubilee, the sixtieth anniversary of the ascension of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We're also honoured that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will be in Canada during the summer of 2010.

The Speech from the Throne also repeated our government's intention to launch a digital economy strategy and to introduce legislation to strengthen laws governing intellectual property and copyright to encourage new ideas and protect the rights of Canadians whose research, development, and artistic creativity contribute to our prosperity and well-being.

[*Translation*]

Creators need the right tools to compete in global markets and build new business models. That's why our Government recently revamped and modernized several programs to assist the industry in this time of change.

Last month, I attended the launch of the Canada Media Fund, a public/private partnership which I am proud to say will invest about \$350 million in the production of Canadian content in this year alone. This means more choice, more Canadian programming, and more support for the future of digital entertainment in Canada.

We also announced renewed support for Canadian periodicals, books and music. This investment will ensure that Canadians have more access to Canadian cultural content than ever before. Our goal for these programs was clear: to cut down on red tape, and be more efficient in supporting community newspapers and magazines, more Canadian authors, and more Canadian artists across the country.

[*English*]

The result is this: magazines and non-daily newspapers now have a better program, which supports them in bringing quality Canadian stories and opinions to Canadians in the titles they choose to buy; independent artists and small labels will have more access to more market development funds for their music than ever before; fans of Canadian authors everywhere will continue to have access to a wide range of Canadian-authored books.

While we have increased funding for the arts in every one of our government's budgets, we have now renewed and stabilized funding for arts and culture programs for five years, until 2014. That's more support for festivals, for theatres, for museums, youth programs, and training programs for our future artists than at any time before in our country's history. This renewal was something arts organizations had asked for in order to allow them to plan their activities for the longer term. In uncertain economic times, our government fully supported this need for stability, which is unprecedented.

In total, our government invests more than \$2 billion every year in arts, heritage, and cultural programs. This includes a record amount for the Canada Council for the Arts and for the CBC, which also has benefited from the highest level of funding in its history. Today I am delighted to announce that 64 arts organizations have been granted \$14.9 million to leverage close to \$21 million in private sector donations to their endowments. With this announcement, since 2006 our government's investment of \$59.5 million in arts organizations' endowment funds has leveraged more than \$93 million in support from the private sector for arts and culture.

We're providing support for organizations such as L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Le Festival international de Lanaudière, the Vancouver Symphony Society, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, and the Canadian Opera Company. This is in addition to the 41% increase, from \$17 million to \$24 million, for the Canada Arts Training Fund, support that goes directly to the 36 schools across the country that have demonstrated that their training is the key factor in the success of their graduates.

•(1115)

[Translation]

As we make these new investments, we continue to manage tax dollars in a responsible way. This year, the Canada Council for the Arts, the CBC, the National Film Board of Canada and Telefilm Canada undertook strategic reviews of their direct program spending. Our government concluded that the programs delivered by these organizations were found to be in line with the priorities of Canadians and of the government.

[English]

In particular, the National Film Board has been a leader in terms of taking advantage of modern technology. Last year it put the better part of 1,500 films online for free via nfb.ca and also launched its free iPhone application. Early on, our government made the deliberate decision to increase funding for the arts in each and every one of our budgets. The initiatives I've outlined today illustrate our government's historic and continued commitment to supporting arts and culture in Canada. We recognize that rapidly changing technologies have implications for arts and culture and we've been charting a course that will allow creative industries to navigate this changing landscape with support from our government.

Thank you. I look forward to responding to any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We will go to Mr. Rodriguez, please. You have five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Minister.

We have only one hour set aside and approximately 40 minutes remaining. Why is it that you can only spend one hour with us today?

Hon. James Moore: I'm not sure why. My schedule called for a one-hour meeting. However, if you wish, I could return at a later date. If you want to waste time talking about my schedule...

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: No, but I would like you to come back, Minister. I have many questions for you.

Hon. James Moore: I am also available to answer additional questions in the House of Commons.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Naturally, but we have more time to discuss things with you here in this forum.

I'd like to touch briefly on the CBC/Radio Canada. It's not your favourite subject, but it needs to be addressed, given the current situation. Last year, following your refusal to provide assistance, the public broadcaster was forced to lay off hundreds of employees and to divest itself of \$125 million in assets. There was nothing for the CBC in last week's CRTC ruling. You continue to refuse to include the \$60 million for Canadian programming in the Main Estimates, which means that the CBC must come begging for money each year. Last week, we learned that \$96.5 million would be allocated to the CBC through the Canada Media Fund that you created. That is a \$12.6 million drop in funding over the previous year. This will mean

the loss of dramas, children's programs and documentaries. The result will be less, not more, Canadian content.

Given this outcome, there is one question that begs asking: why are you targeting the CBC?

Hon. James Moore: Frankly, you're playing with the numbers.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Not at all.

•(1120)

Hon. James Moore: Yes, you are.

The CBC's budget is being increased this year. A total of \$60 million has been earmarked in the budget for the public broadcaster. When the Liberal Party formed the government, there was never any kind of permanent fund. This is additional funding that is being allocated in this year's budget for Canadian programming or content. As you may recall, \$350 million in funding was announced last year through the Canada Media Fund. The original amount announced was \$310 million, but as a result of private sector investments, the funding now totals \$350 million, with one third of that amount earmarked for French-language programming.

As I see it, the CBC stands to benefit the most from this investment. And in each successive year, the CBC will receive the largest sum of money. The Canada Media Fund also has a new leader at the helm and a new governance structure. If the CBC wishes to continue receiving funding from this source, then it can continue to request it.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Fine.

However, the increase is mainly in the form of statutory salary increases, which is entirely different. Cuts have indeed been made. When we look at what has happened in the past, it's hard to be very optimistic about the future.

Quickly, I want to get to the Canada Media Fund which currently has a budget of \$350 million. Of that total, \$134 million comes from the government. Is that right? If we look at what the Economic Action Plan has to say about the Canadian Television Fund—it still goes by the old name—mention is made of \$100 million on page 292 of the French version.

So then, the Fund provides for \$350 million in total, \$134 million of which come from the government. Of these \$134 million, \$100 million are being allocated under the Economic Action Plan budget for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. However, when we look at your site—and no mention is made of this elsewhere—we note that the funding for plans and projected follow-up action decreases from \$119 million to \$20 million. Does this mean that currently there are funds set aside in the Economic Action Plan, that there will be nothing for the future and that culture will take a \$100 million hit? Would that be a correct assessment of the situation?

Hon. James Moore: We are deeply committed to culture and programming through the Canada Media Fund and we will continue to support these areas strongly.

[English]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: It's not in here. There's nothing here for the future. There's something for 2009-10 and 2010-11 coming from the action plan, but there isn't a page in your document. Do we have to get it from the Internet?

Hon. James Moore: I'm glad that you're looking past this year's budget and that you're already enthusiastic for next year's budget—

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I was looking for it, my friend. Why is there only \$20 million?

Hon. James Moore: I can assure you that we will have strong support going forward for the Canada Media Fund. This is our government's commitment. Our government helped create this program.

With regard to the CBC, we're putting a record amount of funding into the CBC. It's \$1.1 billion in a time of recession. We've decided to protect the public broadcaster and provide record funding. When the Liberals were in government, you cut the CBC by \$414 million, which led to 4,000 layoffs.

We're not going to follow your plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Thank you for the history lesson, but I don't believe that you were a Liberal minister at the time.

I have some questions about your current duties as Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. I'd like to know why the budget makes no provision for the future. Will the Canada Media Fund cease to exist when the Economic Action Plan has run its course? That's what I want to know.

Hon. James Moore: No. The Economic Action Plan is a two-year initiative.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Where is the money? The Economic Action Plan is a two-year initiative that wraps up in 2010-2011.

[English]

But after that there's nothing. Where is it?

[Translation]

Hon. James Moore: You'll see in next year's budget. I am pleased that you are happy with this year's budget.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Lavallée, please.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had been prepared to speak for seven minutes, but I'll see if I can keep it to five minutes.

First of all, since you don't often appear before the committee, I have a gift for you. Last time we met, I wanted to introduce you to Fred Pellerin, an extremely creative Quebec artist. This young person has helped to bring back the art of storytelling and has created art with the legend of Saint-Élie-de-Caxton. He boasts an amazing French vocabulary and a regional accent so thick you could cut it

with a knife. I'd like to present you with a gift of his DVD. I've already viewed it and now I'd like you to view it as well. You will find it very entertaining.

However, the artist won't be receiving any royalties, since I'm giving you a DVD that I've already watched. No doubt you will download it onto your iPod, and no one yet pays royalties for that. Nevertheless, I'd like you to have it. However, I want you to think about this artist who will not be receiving any royalties, even though he is the creative talent behind this effort. The same holds true for the video artists, the photographers and the sound and lighting technicians. They will not be receiving any money either.

Hon. James Moore: Perhaps I should buy the DVD then.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Perhaps, but let me continue. I would in fact be very happy if you purchased a copy, but you can also pay royalties through your iPod. In addition, since this artist has quite a thick, I am also giving you the companion book entitled “Comme une odeur de muscles” to enjoy. It will allow you to follow along with the DVD. Copyright is not a problem in this case. I have not copied or shared this work. It has most likely been digitized by Google.

Google sent a letter to the Association des éditeurs du Québec advising them to take legal action if they were not happy about this. I didn't hear you say anything about this state of affairs, Minister, and it saddens me. Artists are saddened as well. Specifically, I think about the publishing community that is forced to do battle with Google on its own, without your support.

I am very happy to present you with this CD. Unfortunately, it also comes with a DVD. I did not even look at it for fear of violating the Copyright Act. Fred Pellerin has also put out a CD of old, remixed French-language songs. One of these songs is entitled “*Mommy*”. As you can see, the DVD has not been opened. Be careful, because the labels and price tags have not been removed. I want to be sure that I do not violate the Copyright Act. I also want to be sure that this artist gets his due. There is a protective device in place to prevent you from downloading it onto an MP3. I know that for a fact, because I have tried and failed.

You have to understand that when artists feel that they are not protected, they take action to protect themselves. You can try it and get back to me, but it's important to understand why these measures are in place. One of the songs, *Mommy*—which happens to be the only song in English—is a patriotic song about French that decries the assimilation of French by English. I'm sure that as Minister of Official Languages, you will find it interesting. It is required listening.

I have something else I'd like to say, because there is more to life than gifts, even though they make our host more receptive. I'd like to talk to you about digitization. In your opening remarks, you stated that you want to bring in a digitization strategy. This was also mentioned in the throne speech, but there is no sense of any true intention of devising a real global digitization strategy. You do little things and come up with ideas. You have taken money away from musicians—and that's all they had—and put it into record digitization. Not that there is anything wrong with that, but you cannot rob Peter to pay Paul. I don't have time to say everything I have to say on the subject, but we need a real digitization policy. You cannot become the kit-gadget minister who is only interested in putting forward initiatives of little value, or in tweeting about things that have not been well thought out, that lack inspiration or that are trivial. We want a genuine digitization strategy.

Is my time up?

• (1125)

[English]

The Chair: One minute.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: I have only 30 seconds to put my question. Correct?

I know that you will be given enough time to respond. That is why I'm pushing it a bit.

[English]

The Chair: You have 30 seconds left.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: The industry committee is conducting a major study of foreign ownership in the telecommunications field. Mention is made of this study in the budget and in the throne speech. We are not seeing you go out either and defend culture in the face of foreign ownership. That is a fact.

[English]

The Chair: Your time is up, and I don't think the minister has any time to answer. This has taken five minutes.

Mr. Angus, please.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I welcome the minister. I have sat with my honourable colleague for a number of years, and she's never given me any gifts.

I would like to ask whether, when you've finished listening, you can lend it to me so I can hear. I don't think that contravenes the Copyright Act, but I'd love to hear it anyway.

I'm pleased to have you here. There are many questions we could ask to try to get clarification. I'm interested, and I was looking through the estimates, because money in the arts sector will go a long way wherever it is placed. I know that certainly the small museums are still reeling from the cuts of a few years ago.

We're still reeling from the loss of our programs for international promotion of the arts, as well as the musical diversity cuts.

Then I see \$25 million that has been floating out there for the Canada prize for the arts. I don't really see any timelines on that. I don't really know who is administering the fund. The fact that this is coming has been kicked around for a while, but where is it, who is going to administer it, and how is it going to work?

Hon. James Moore: It is coming, and the question of who will be administering it will be answered very soon. That sounds like a dodge, but I assure you it's not. We're going to have an announcement very soon on that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: We've talked to various people in the arts community, and they're concerned because they figure this is going to be a fairly costly prize to administer.

The administration will take a fair amount of work. We're taking \$25 million—I don't have a problem with the prize—for what will be essentially international cultural tours, and in the city of Toronto... I think after two years of floating this out there we should know what body it will be, how they're going to be accountable, and what the costs are.

Hon. James Moore: The government, my department, and I take and understand well all the concerns you have about administration and making sure we're not reinventing the wheel and making sure that the Canada prizes will be done in a way that's efficient, effective, and beneficial to artists. I can assure you of that.

When you see what we're going to be announcing very soon, I think you'll see that all of that has been taken into account. We've established, as you know, prizes in medical excellence. There's the Glenn Gould Prize and all kinds of prizes in arts and culture. There are lessons to be learned from them, and we're not going to be reinventing the wheel. We will keep the administrative costs very low.

This will be a clear, long-term benefit and a real winner for the arts community. I can assure you we're conscious of the dynamics.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you for that answer.

I was a little surprised by your statement that the CBC is receiving record funding. Two weeks ago, it lost 35% of its funding envelope from the Canada Media Fund. When that guarantee was announced, CBC said it would be able to compete because it is first and foremost in prime-time drama and comedy. It didn't mind losing the guarantee, and it expected to be able to compete fairly.

The government has, as you said, increased funding from \$300 million to \$350 million, but CBC has just found out that it is now going to lose \$12.6 million in funding under the Canada Media Fund for this year. That amount represents three half-hour comedy shows, 1.5 one-hour dramas, or 36 one-hour documentaries. Radio-Canada would lose 20 hours of children's programs or 15 documentary programs.

The reason is that the rules aren't in place for administering the money for new prime-time innovative drama and comedy. Specialty networks are still making money off the Canada Media Fund. The private networks are doing fine on that, but CBC has been given the message that it's losing \$12.6 million.

What's going on with this fund that it doesn't have the rules in place?

• (1130)

Hon. James Moore: CBC was told a year ago that it was losing its guarantee envelope. This is nothing new.

If it was surprised by that, I'm surprised that it was surprised.

Mr. Charlie Angus: No, that's not what I asked.

I said that it had ended, so now it's going to compete.

Guess what? There are no rules in place for prime-time comedy and drama. What's going on here? I thought that was what it was supposed to be. Now it's facing a \$12.6 million shortfall, so I asked...

You had a year with your pals at the BDUs to set this up, and we're told that everybody else can get money, but prime-time drama and comedy are just going to have to wait. What took a year when you don't have the regulations in place?

Hon. James Moore: No, the guidelines are in place. The Canada Media Fund governance is in place, and the Canada Media Fund is established now. The money is on the table, and they're moving forward. They are receiving applications and money is going to be flowing.

Mr. Charlie Angus: And CBC is losing \$12.6 million in funding because the rules are not in place yet for prime-time innovative drama and comedy.

Hon. James Moore: By the way, this represents less than 0.1% of CBC's overall budget—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Oh, this represents a major kick. Remember, the last time we were here we were dealing with \$171 million that CBC lost because you didn't think it was in their best interest to get bridge financing.

This \$12.6 million would represent 20 hours of children's programming on Radio-Canada.

Hon. James Moore: That is an incredible—

Mr. Charlie Angus: I think that is an extraordinary amount at this point, given that—

Hon. James Moore: With respect, that's an incredible distortion of things. The \$171 million shortage has been dealt with in other ways than bridge financing.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Well, certainly, they fired a whole whack of people and cut programming. I'm listening to shows from 1945 on CBC.

The Chair: Mr. Angus, your time is up.

Hon. James Moore: You're also watching American programming, which is CBC's choice, not the government's.

The Chair: Okay, we'll move on.

Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for attending this morning.

I just want to go back to Madam Lavallée's line of questioning, because you never got an opportunity to answer. I think what she might be getting at is the digital memory levy, or the iTax, as it's been coined. I think that's what she's getting at. Maybe you'd like to share some of your thoughts on that.

Hon. James Moore: I would.

First, if you don't mind, I will respond to Mr. Angus that on the Canada Media Fund the dominant concern raised by the Auditor General with regard to the old structure was the appearance of conflict of interest. We have the governance right. This fund was on the brink of completely disappearing. We brought the partners back to the table. We established a fund of \$350 million this year that will support the creation of Canadian content.

Funding for CBC is still on the table and will go up every year going forward. One-third of the envelope is reserved for French language creations, of which one has to assume that CBC will very well be a large beneficiary thereof. We have more money on the table than ever before. The guaranteed envelope isn't there, but there is more money on the table for CBC and all broadcasters than ever before. This is a good news story, so to spin it as you have is not true.

With regard to the bridge financing, we didn't go that route. We went a different route. It wasn't a loss of employment. They sold some assets that they, frankly, weren't using anyway. They had some empty floor space in downtown Toronto that they are now leasing out, and they have found ways to make things work because of the leadership of Hubert Lacroix and his team. I have to say they have done a great job of managing a shortfall that, by the way, everybody in the broadcasting sector felt, and we worked with them through that. In my judgment, it's a success story, and if you read Hubert Lacroix's annual report, he describes it that way.

[Translation]

Thank you for your comments, Mrs. Lavallée. I always appreciate receiving gifts.

I am very pleased to see that you are prepared for the debate that will take place over our copyright bill and our digital strategy program.

[English]

With regard to digital strategy, I would want to say this both to Madam Lavallée and to the entire committee. The idea of a digital strategy, which includes copyright as well, is to recognize that this is a flowing river that is going to change over time. The idea of necessarily saying, as any government, that we have the perfect digital strategy forever is the wrong way to look at it. We don't know where technology is going to be. We don't know where new platforms are going to go.

Five years ago, for example, the largest selling mobile device in Canada was the Motorola RAZR. Now they're invisible. BlackBerry comes up with a new model every three months. The iPhone is coming out with a new model in June. The iPad has come out. There are all kinds of platforms. Android...Microsoft has a new phone.

The digital universe is changing in ways that none of us can predict two years hence, let alone ten years hence. The reality is, what the government needs to do is not say that we have a digital strategy that will necessarily work for the next generation, but to set in place a mindset—in the approach to government programming, the way we develop legislation, and the way we look at how government operates and funds things—that forever recognizes a tectonic shift in how people are consuming Canadian content, multimedia, and arts and culture, and to support the creative economy not only in the way in which citizens consume their information and data and entertainment but in how Canadians are creating it to put it out there for Canadians and the world.

This isn't about having a digital strategy that we can cement now that will be forever *au courant*, but having a way in which a government thinks about recognizing a massive shift that's going on in the way in which information is created and consumed. That's what a digital strategy is about.

Of course, there are some contemporary issues that we're going to have: the transition to digital television and copyright legislation. Having a digital approach to things means recognizing that all government programs, from the Canada Media Fund, to our book fund, and to our music fund, which now has an envelope for helping people market things online...everything has a component that recognizes the digital fact of today and the future.

• (1135)

The Chair: You have 45 seconds.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you.

Minister, you talked a little about the endowment incentive component of the Canada Cultural Investment Fund, which is \$14 million for 64 different arts organizations. This is something that's really working. Can you expand on that a little?

Hon. James Moore: How much time do I have, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Hon. James Moore: The website at www.pch.gc.ca has all the details. It has worked very well. We're very pleased with the responses we're getting from Canadians. It's something we're going to continue supporting and improving upon.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Dhalla.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.): Thank you very much for coming to the committee today, Minister.

I want to touch on an issue that has actually been raised by many of my constituents in Brampton—Springdale. We have a very multicultural, multilingual, and multi-religious riding. Community channels are very important to many of those constituents and to Canadians. Canadians pay almost \$133 million in subscriber fees for community channels. Over the past few years, we've seen a reduction of almost 86% for distinct community TV services. In a province such as New Brunswick, where there were nine community TV channels at one point, we have only one at this particular point.

We've also seen that only 30% of current community programming is actually produced by local community members. Seventy percent of community programming is produced by staff versus the

local community on the ground. In the past 20 years, the CRTC has only assessed this three times. I want to know your thoughts on this.

I know in the past few weeks, in particular, CACTUS has raised this issue. I believe a hearing is going to be held by the CRTC on the 26th. They have been asking for further information through the Access to Information Act, but they have not been able to receive it.

What are your thoughts in terms of more transparency and accountability? Does the department have a particular vision on how to work with these communities and cable companies to ensure we increase community programming and actually get more volunteers on the ground to produce local content for local community programs?

Hon. James Moore: Thank you for the question.

I can tell you that I come from a very diverse riding. About 40% of my constituents are visible minorities, many of whom are new Canadians. There are more Korean Canadians in my district than in any other district in the country. The value of local broadcasting, especially for new Canadians in the language in which they are most comfortable, is critical.

By the way, we actually saw some success in Vancouver with the broadcast in Punjabi of the gold medal hockey games for the Olympics. It was a huge success for them and others.

It's very important, but I think the first thing is to get the assessment right. I know the CRTC is now looking at this. We look forward to their report. We'll obviously react to the report with the responses that are needed in terms of funding or talking to our agencies about how they may want to approach things differently.

Going back to what Charlie said about the Canada Media Fund, they have an independent board that governs and decides how the money ought to be directed and funded. They have to do it within the context of guidelines from the government. We have guidelines that we give to the Canada Media Fund, as I said. For example, one-third goes to French content. It's certainly a fund that could be considered over time as a source of funding for non-official language broadcasting endeavours.

• (1140)

Ms. Ruby Dhalla: In terms of the department, I know the cable companies have not handed over documents that have been requested numerous times.

Hon. James Moore: I'm sorry. Are you saying they haven't handed it to the CRTC?

Ms. Ruby Dhalla: They haven't handed it to CACTUS. Do you foresee the department perhaps working with CACTUS and other organizations that are interested in this to ensure greater transparency and accountability?

They found logs. The cable companies are apparently not even keeping proper logs. They have community programming, but instead of involving local TV content, they actually bring people on as guests and say that constitutes community or local programming. Canadians in those particular communities are ultimately losing out.

Perhaps the department can look into this further and work with some of the organizations on the ground, such as CACTUS and other stakeholders who are interested in ensuring better programming.

Hon. James Moore: Jean-Pierre Blais, from my department, deals with this file. He may have more to add.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blais (Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs, Department of Canadian Heritage): Yes, we're obviously following the file quite closely. We've seen it. You'll of course understand this is at the heart of the regulatory issue among the community channels, the cable licensees, and the CRTC.

We're following the comments being made, but we are waiting because the minister can't interfere. The CRTC is an arm's-length organization. We're monitoring it, but we're waiting for the CRTC to fulfill its process. They're the ones with the statutory mandate to ensure that broadcasters and licensees, such as cable licensees, are meeting the regulatory obligations.

Ms. Ruby Dhalla: I want to make a very quick comment, just to wrap it up before we have to go to the next question.

It is a regulatory issue, as you mentioned, but I hope that through the Canada Media Fund and the guidelines the department establishes and the investments they make on behalf of all Canadians there is going to be a greater emphasis and effort to ensure that all broadcasters meet some of these requirements. This is going to be the only way that ensures that people on the ground actually get the opportunity to watch programming that is culturally and traditionally sensitive.

I can tell you, on the ground, people are watching programs, as James said, in their own language for their community, so community programming is incredibly important. Hopefully the department in years to come can play a leadership role in establishing that.

Hon. James Moore: By the way, the CBC has a role to play in this, and they do play it. As you know, they broadcast in eight aboriginal languages in the north, so this isn't just a private sector concern.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Lavallée, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: I want to come back to the issue of digitization, to the transition to digital broadcasting.

I was trying to explain to you, using specialty music as an example, that there is currently nothing for digital broadcasting. All you are doing is taking money already allocated to creative programming and to broadcasting and putting it into music digitization.

You did the same thing with the Canada Media Fund. There was no increase in funding, or additional money for the creative and

production processes. However, a substantial portion of the money in the Canada Media Fund had been earmarked for digital gadgets. I use the word "gadgets" because it is impossible to develop a digital broadcasting strategy by neglecting a large segment of the population that has yet to keep pace and that cannot be overlooked.

For instance in 16 months—August 2011 is really just around the corner—9% of Canadians and 15% of Quebecers will not have access to digital television as we know it today. As far as telephones are concerned, 13% of Quebecers own a smart phone, but only 8% of them know use it to access the Internet. So then, all of the current talk about "web episodes" and "mob episodes" will mean nothing to them. They draw a blank when they hear these expressions.

So then, the small scattered steps that you are taking do not constitute a comprehensive digital broadcasting strategy. There is no sense of any real strategy or vision.

Hon. James Moore: First of all, I disagree that our efforts have been scattered. Our departments have been focusing on a process and on a policy. Our budgets and policies reflect our desire for Canadians to be able to access Canadian content using whichever platform they choose.

This is not a change that is being driven by government or by a small niche market. It is being driven by young people, by the new generation that wants to choose the way it will access Canadian content. The government is not the only party responsible for this change.

The CBC is probably in the forefront of this movement. CBC officials understand that in Quebec and across the country, the demand for new digital technologies is strong and they want Canadians to be able to access Canadian content using whichever platform they choose. Government funding is not earmarked entirely for digital content creation. However, some money has been set aside to ensure that this area is not overlooked.

• (1145)

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: How much new money will you be allocating to digital broadcasting in order to ensure that this process works properly and to stop taking money from artists and producers?

Hon. James Moore: First of all, there is the Canada Music Fund.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: In the case of the Canada Music Fund, what you did was take \$1.3 million from the Canadian Musical Diversity Program, which has been eliminated, and divert it to music digitization. That is what you did.

Hon. James Moore: That's just an example...

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: And a fine example at that, Minister. There is no denying it

Hon. James Moore: Give me a chance to respond.

In fact, the members of Musication, FACTOR and SOCAN requested this. Musicians everywhere requested this to meet their needs. We listened to them and gave them what they asked the government for. That's one example.

Secondly...

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Excuse me, but they never asked for funding for specialty music to be withdrawn.

Hon. James Moore: Yes, they...

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: They asked you to withdraw funding for specialty music?

Hon. James Moore: I attended those meetings, but you did not.

That's one example.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: No, but I'm happy that you told me.

Hon. James Moore: I can give you a second example. A total of \$310 million was invested in the Canada Media Fund. The total amount in the Fund is now \$350 million. That means \$40 million more on the table for creating Canadian content, including electronic content, which is important for the future and for Quebec.

If you really want to portray yourself as the defender of Quebec's creative community, you should look beyond Quebec's borders and to the world where you will find a huge market for Quebec, francophone and Canadian culture. We have established government policies and made investments to create new markets for Quebec content.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: You did away with programs such as Routes commerciales and PromArt which were specifically designed to market our cultural products abroad. The Quebec government was forced to spend an additional \$3 million to help Quebec artists sell their cultural products to foreign markets.

Hon. James Moore: With all due respect, I think you do not have a clear understanding of the issue. This money was invested elsewhere to assist our artists internationally. Among other things, we increased funding to the Canada Council and increased its capacity to help our artists internationally. We are not just talking about airline tickets, but about the international market, which also includes the electronic market. We have taken effective action in this area, with the support of Quebec artists.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: That's all well and good, as he describes it, but...

[English]

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up.

Mr. Del Mastro, please.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Obviously, we jumped around a little bit there. Madame Lavallée is well aware there was a five-year extension of, as well as a dramatic increase in the overall funding of, the Canada Music Fund. Of course, FACTOR did appear and talked about its support for specialized music.

I'd like to pass off to Madam Glover, who I know has a question for the minister.

[Translation]

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): Welcome and thank you for joining us again.

I for one am very pleased to hear you say that you are focusing on the national scene. I am from Manitoba, which is home to a large francophone population. Manitobans enjoy listening to Quebec

music, so I thank you. This envelope must never be reduced, otherwise, as francophones or francophiles outside Quebec, we will be adversely affected. I do not want to see this happen in my lifetime.

I would like to talk a bit about the Olympic and Paralympic Games that wrapped up two months ago. The Games were a resounding success—everyone says so—not just in terms of the sporting events where Canada won 14 gold medals and a raft of other medals, but also from a cultural perspective. I have a question for you about the cultural side of these Games.

During the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Cultural Olympiad showcased some amazing artistic talent. Could you describe for us how this program worked and name some of the artists who performed during the Winter Games?

• (1150)

Hon. James Moore: The Cultural Olympiad was a resounding success. As you know, some of the people seated at this table were opposed to the idea of the government investing in the Olympic Games. Be that as it may, the Cultural Olympiad was a great success. The Olympic Games were not just a sporting event. They were a Canadian event and for that reason, it was vitally important to include culture. Vancouver and the greater Vancouver area played host to over 300,000 visitors. They were able to attend hockey games during the day and show their pride in our team. We wanted visitors to be able to see Canadian productions in the evening. The whole event was a resounding success and it really did not cost all that much. I believe some 600 or 650 artists gave 2,500 performances in the region in January and February, and in the case of the Paralympic Games, throughout the month of March.

It was an extraordinary event. I saw performances by Dallas Green, Alexisonfire, Yann Perreau, comedian Louis-José Houde and Mes Aïeux. The Cultural Olympiad benefited from our investment in the Place de la Francophonie. The government made a commitment to the Olympiad. The idea came not from VANOC or from organizations, but from Vancouver's small francophone community. Members of this community came up with the idea of setting up on Granville Island, in close proximity to the athletes' village, a venue for showcasing Canada's francophone community during the Olympic Games. Close to \$8 million was spent on setting up this venue, which was an overwhelming success. Francophones from across the country and francophone athletes attended performances in French. There were Acadians, Franco-Manitobans, Quebeckers, Franco-Ontarians, and so forth. It was a truly special event.

In my view, the Olympic Games gave everyone in Vancouver and the surrounding area an opportunity to see firsthand the excellence of the francophone cultural community across Canada. The francophone presence in Vancouver is minimal. Yet, I know for a fact that many French CDs were sold during the Olympic Games. People bought francophone and Quebec CDs. It was a great success. I am just as proud of our cultural successes as I am of our victories in the field of sport.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: A number of French-language media were in attendance. I was very proud to see our French-language media so well represented thanks to FrancoMédia funding. After the Winter Games were over, people reported that they were very pleased with the francophone media's coverage of the event. I hope you had a chance to hear the francophone Métis from Saint-Boniface. They were amazing.

[English]

The Chair: We have to conclude on that. I think you can probably respond somewhere down the line.

We will go now to Mr. Simms.

I'm sticking quite tightly to the five minutes.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Is a fee a tax?

Hon. James Moore: What are you talking about? Do you mean your iPod tax?

Mr. Scott Simms: No, I'm just saying a fee. I don't care if it's a driver's licence or a gun licence or whatever it is.

Hon. James Moore: It is a kind of tax then, sure. It depends. To the consumer, it can be a tax.

Mr. Scott Simms: The fee is a tax, then. All right.

Hon. James Moore: It depends.

Mr. Scott Simms: What does it depend on?

Hon. James Moore: It depends on the purpose and how it's being used. It depends on who you're talking to. Consumers often see it the same way—not always, but often.

If you pay a toll, that can be seen as a fee. If it's going to pay for a bridge and is time-limited for a particular budget, it may not be, but if you're paying a fee for an ongoing service—for example, the air security charge—and it's dedicated to that in an envelope and it's transparent that it's for that envelope, it may not be seen that way. It's in the eye of the beholder.

Mr. Scott Simms: It's beholding your eye. In several cases...

My colleague has said that it's out of pocket, so that's it, period.

I think if you have a dedicated fee, it's not necessarily a tax if it does a good thing. Is that right? I don't mean to chase you around in circles, but there are a couple of things in here that we get caught up on when it comes to these fees and who is paying for what. We have a levy that's being talked about here, or a tax, depending on what you want to call it. Would you call it a tax?

We had a major decision, or lack thereof, concerning fee for carriage. This was a hands-off decision that basically said that negotiations will take place between two people. They are very distinct. They have their own opinions, and they are very strong. You have been drawn into that to an extent. I don't know what you can comment on that, but some people would say it's a tax while others would say it's an ongoing investment in local television. In your eye, where does it sit?

• (1155)

Hon. James Moore: I don't agree with you that there are two groups—

Mr. Scott Simms: I didn't say an opinion; I just asked you a question.

Okay, there are two... Never mind; carry on.

Hon. James Moore: My opinion is that what we Canadians received in the report from the CRTC is the end of the beginning of the debate. This is going to be a long process. It's before the courts now.

You asked me to comment on something that, frankly, is still evolving. The CRTC has put forward a mechanism, and we don't know the outcome of that. We don't know what negotiations might look like. We don't know what the court of appeal is going to say in terms of mandates and the capacities of people to do certain things. We're a long way from being able to judge what the outcome of all of this will be, quite frankly.

What I was going to say was that I don't agree with the assessment that there are two groups. I don't know if it's yours or whatever, but I don't think it's quite true that there are just the broadcasters and the cable and satellite companies. I think the biggest group is made up of consumers. In my judgment, they're the biggest unrepresented stakeholder group, and they ought to be constantly referred to in this dynamic.

Everyday consumers want to have, as Ms. Dhalla referenced, the dynamic to have local diversity and content and multilingual services. Consumers are also worried about their bottom line and being able to save for retirement and have affordable services.

Mr. Scott Simms: But they're going to pay more, right?

Hon. James Moore: We'll see.

Mr. Scott Simms: One of the issues I'm very concerned about is the digital transition in general. I don't see any hands-on here from the Canadian government in the transition to digital. I'm talking about 2011 and the August deadline that has been put forward.

What is the government doing to help these people make the transition to digital?

Hon. James Moore: How much time do I have?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Hon. James Moore: There are lot of lessons to be learned about what others have done in the U.K. and the United States, and we're taking those into consideration. We have until August 2011.

Minister Tony Clement has his digital strategy, which I think he's launching in the next month or so, and it will be a key component. We want to make sure that all Canadians are aware of the transition coming in 2011 and that they prepare for it. We want to make sure they have the hardware in their homes to receive digital signals and that they call their local cable or satellite companies to ensure that they have the equipment they need for ongoing television reception and that rabbit ears—

Mr. Scott Simms: How much money do you want to invest in this? How much money do you think we should be investing in this?

Hon. James Moore: That's an impossible question to answer without having done an assessment.

This is an important question. The CRTC says 9%, but how many people who are not prepared for the digital transition are people who voluntarily choose not to, young Canadians who now use iTunes instead, or young people who just buy DVDs and watch them on their own, independently? How many people, frankly, are members of religious communities who just choose not to consume television? How many people are new Canadians who don't want to buy big cable packages because there's not much in there that is in the language they choose? And let's be honest, a lot of them are people who are economically struggling and aren't going to be purchasing new television sets for the digital era.

So the 9% number may be true, but the dynamic of that and how big of a demand there is and how much concern there ought to be needs to be taken into consideration.

So does geography, by the way. Most of the 9% is in urban centres, which says that probably a dominant cohort of the 9% is young people who aren't interested in television any more because they see it as an old technology, or people who economically have bigger struggles that we need to probably spend more time worrying about than TV.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Bruinooge, and then we'll finish with Mr. Angus.

Mr. Bruinooge, please.

• (1200)

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Thank you, Minister Moore, for your presentation. Personally, I found it to be very good and I very much appreciated it.

Hon. James Moore: I promised him Carole's gift.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rod Bruinooge: In relation to the \$350 million for the Canada Media Fund that you announced, I think it was on April 1, you talk often about different formats that this money can be made available to, other than what we appreciate as being maybe traditional media formats. Could you expand on that statement a little and talk about how you see some of that capital being invested in other forms that we don't necessarily often talk about as politicians?

Hon. James Moore: I don't know if this comment will get me in trouble, but here I go. I joke sometimes with Minister Clement that I decided to get involved in politics in order to support my technology habit. Anyhow, you can get me going, talking about technology and devices. Actually, it's a very exciting universe, what the possibilities are.

One of the members we appointed to the board of the Canada Media Fund is Glenn Wong, the former head of Electronic Arts. Not only is he a very high-quality appointment, he's a very bright guy and he'll add a lot to the team at the Canada Media Fund. But the reason I wanted to appoint him is because I want to send an important signal that platforms are all merging.

If you turn on an Xbox 360 and you go to the Xbox live menu, you'll realize that personal computers, television sets, phones, and game consoles are all merging, and they're all very quickly becoming basically the same thing. The goal of the Canada Media Fund is to recognize some shifting technologies and the fact that we don't know ultimately where consumers are going to end. It's probably going to end, I suppose as we transition, as a mishmash of things. Some people are going to say they're more comfortable watching television on a set, on a couch, with family—that environment. Some people will say they prefer to watch television on their laptop when they fly, and they're going to want to consume television that way. The idea is to invest and support the creation of Canadian content and to make sure it's available on multiple platforms.

One of the criteria for receiving funding is that you're creating shows that will be available on multiple platforms. The private sector and public sector do this already, and we want to encourage more of that. For example, I'll talk about CBC. *Q*, with Jian Ghomeshi, is a radio show that's available online for free in video podcast. Because I'm usually working, I never have the opportunity to listen to *Q*, as it's broadcast live on CBC, but I watch it all the time in video format, usually on my phone. Here is a traditional radio show being broadcast in video that I'm watching on my phone. You get the dynamic of it: content that is created for one medium, but I'm consuming it on a different medium that it wasn't originally intended for. It's all because the CBC has decided to embrace new media and push it forward in that way. They've done a very good job of that.

On the CBC as well there's Evan Solomon's show, *Power & Politics*. I never watch it just because of the time of day it's on, but I listen to it all the time. I download it in audio format and listen to it on my iPod. So I listen to a television show on a device that wasn't created when the idea of a politics show was first invented, and I watch a television show on a device that was invented before the radio show was ever designed.

All these platforms are combining. You can watch movies on your video game console. You can listen to radio shows through your television set. We don't want Canadian content to lose out on this dynamic. We want to make sure that people are embracing and pushing this forward.

In the private sector, we announced the creation of the Canadian Media Fund last year on *Flashpoint* on CTV. *Flashpoint* is a very successful show; it has done very well on CTV. It's on Friday nights. They show it on prime time. I think their longer-term success has been to break down a lot of barriers. You see *Flashpoint* streaming live on the Internet. You can download episodes one-off if you want to and make them portable. They've allowed people to do that.

This is an important universe, and we want to make sure that funding is available so that Canadian producers and content providers are keeping in mind that the audience isn't just metro Vancouver or the francophone in Quebec, but is global. To be able to show your creativity and excellence to an international audience, you have to embrace new technologies and make sure you're doing it effectively. We want to encourage that, so we're funding that, and we're doing it with the Canada Media Fund and the music fund. We're doing it in every way we can.

The Chair: Thank you.

The final question is for Mr. Angus, please.

• (1205)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The Telecommunications Act was defined as a national priority because control over Canada's telecommunications sector, satellites, cable, and broadcast was considered essential for national sovereignty.

The government has made it very clear that it's looking to bring in foreign competition. We're now looking at changes to satellite phones and so on. We're dealing with a vertically integrated market, so your ISPs or your telephone servers who run your radio stations are tied into your newspapers and television.

My question is simple. Given the fact that we are creating a precedent, do you believe that Canada should still maintain Canadian control and Canadian sovereignty over our broadcast and media industries?

Hon. James Moore: I think any changes that are even considered should only be considered through the lens of answering the question whether they benefit Canada. Benefiting Canada means Canadian content, making sure that any operation in Canada respects the best interests and the guidelines that were set out and decided for by the elected government, reflecting the best interests of Canada for our official languages, respecting our diversity, and supporting Canadian content.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Up until now—until you just said that—it's always been about the consumer: you're the minister of the consumer and no taxes.

If a bid came forward at this time, would you suggest that we change our laws, or do you think the laws that have been put in place to maintain our broadcast and media sovereignty should stay in place? Is it yes or no?

Hon. James Moore: You can't ask for a yes or no on something that isn't real. Obviously, I can't answer a hypothetical question on something that isn't actually before us, but any possibility of any such change would have the best minds...yes, consumers, but what is in the best interests of Canada is our first thing. Frankly, I can't answer a hypothetical question about what—

Mr. Charlie Angus: But would you consider it if it came forward? Would you look at it? You wouldn't say, well, that's against Canadian law, that would be extraordinary, we'd never do this; it would go against where we've been as a country and where we've been in our media policy. You'd say, well, it would depend. "Depend" means we don't have to talk about AT&T taking over CTV; we just have to ask, if a case came, would you consider it?

Hon. James Moore: These questions are not mine. There's a CRTC process for anything you're describing. That's point number one, but number two is that we will always take action based on what is in the best interests of Canadians.

For example, we announced yesterday the Amazon decision. We didn't just say, "Amazon, come on in"; we said that Amazon can establish a warehouse in Mississauga. And through that process Canadians are going to be better off, because of the investments we're going to get in Canada. So—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Theoretically, it could be the same for media.

Hon. James Moore: I don't answer theoretical questions, Charlie. You're asking me to prejudge a process that—

Mr. Charlie Angus: The CRTC couldn't make the decision. You would have to override the CRTC, as you did with the telephone decision: you overrode the CRTC. So it would be a government decision.

All I want to know, when I go back to people, is whether to say they overrode the CRTC on the telephone decision because they want foreign competition, but don't worry, they're not going to do it on broadcasting. I'm not hearing that. I'm hearing that it's hypothetical, that it's case by case.

Would you intervene and say we like this, if Goldman Sachs wants to buy up Canwest tomorrow? That's not hypothetical; it's very practical. Would you support it or would you not?

Hon. James Moore: Charlie, we cross bridges as they come. As I said, there's a CRTC process that takes place. Don't prejudge the CRTC process.

You're asking me to comment on a hypothetical sale of a hypothetical asset to a hypothetical buyer in a hypothetical dynamic through a hypothetical CRTC process. When we actually see pieces and we actually have something to talk about, Charlie, we'll talk, and you'll be one of the first people I call.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Just before I close the meeting, I would like to remind everyone that my riding of Perth—Wellington has the Stratford Shakespeare theatre, which is one of the greatest theatre groups in the country—

An hon. member: No, no, you have that kid.

The Chair: Yes, and we have Justin Bieber too.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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