



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

CHPC • NUMBER 047 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, March 21, 2011

—
Chair

The Honourable Michael Chong

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Monday, March 21, 2011

• (1530)

[Translation]

The Chair (Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage being held on Monday, March 21, 2011.

In accordance with Standing Order 108(2), we are studying the mandate and funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation today.

We have with us Jean-Claude Carrière, who represents the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, Temiskaming Region.

Welcome.

[English]

We'll begin with an opening statement.

Go ahead, Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): What's the schedule today?

The Chair: The chair is going to propose a slightly modified schedule. We'll have 45 minutes for our first witness and 45 minutes for our second witness.

I've just received notice from Madame Lavallée that she's going to move a motion concerning our study of the mandate and funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. So we'll set aside 15 minutes, from 5 o'clock to 5:15, for the consideration of Madame Lavallée's motion. After that, from 5:15 to 5:30, we're going to move to the consideration of Mr. Angus' motion concerning Sports Canada.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I guess they will have time to speak. Okay.

The Chair: Thank you for clarifying that.

Monsieur Carrière.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière (Community Project Officer, Association canadienne française de l'Ontario - Région Témiskaming): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, Temiskaming Region, would like to thank the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for accepting our brief regarding CBC/Radio-Canada's mandate and funding.

The ACFO Temiskaming Region represents the 7,345 Francophones and many Francophiles in southern Temiskaming, in Northern Ontario.

The ACFO Temiskaming Region is a non-profit organization that encourages and promotes the development and vitality of Franco-Ontarians in Temiskaming in social, cultural, religious, and educational spheres

Let's talk about the CBC/Radio-Canada's Role in Ensuring the Survival of Francophone Communities. For Francophones in Temiskaming, CBC/Radio-Canada plays an essential role in guaranteeing our survival.

As the public broadcaster, it shares information about what is going on in other minority communities in Ontario and across the country.

It also broadcasts information about what is going on in Quebec. Without CBC/Radio-Canada, it would be impossible for Francophone communities in Canada to showcase their culture, diversity, dynamism and socio-economic development, as there would be nothing drawing these communities together.

CBC/Radio-Canada must be given enough funding to accomplish its role as a Canadian Crown corporation. We have an opportunity to identify as Canadians through access to media.

In the Ontarian Temiskaming region, there are no established Francophone radio stations or newspapers. Over the years, three different newspapers have been launched by ACFO-Temiskaming, but all of them have gone under because there is not a large enough population base to sustain a French-language newspaper.

Therefore, if we want to read news in French, our only option is the French-language newspaper called *Le Reflet témiscamien*, based in the Quebec Témiscamingue region. While this newspaper occasionally covers events that occur on the Ontario side, it understandably focuses on events and issues that affect its target audience, that is, Quebecers in the Témiscamingue region.

Our region receives radio signals from the Quebec Ville-Marie station CKVM, an independent station that caters to its target audience, that is, local Quebecers.

We also receive CBC/Radio-Canada's CBON station, which is based in Sudbury and covers all of Northern Ontario. While its mandate is to serve us, reception is very poor in certain areas of Temiskaming, which causes many Francophones to turn to the Quebec CKVM station or to English-language radio stations for their news.

One of the reasons that CBON reception is so poor is CBC/Radio-Canada's lack of funding. How can we create a sense of belonging among Francophones when we are beyond the reach of our media?

It is important for us to have access to CBC/Radio-Canada radio and television stations so that we can receive the news in our own language.

If CBON does not receive adequate funding, Temiskaming runs the risk of having even poorer French-language media coverage of local events.

Our only other alternative for local news is the English-language radio station CJIT, which is based in New Liskeard.

The same can be said of local television. If CBC/Radio-Canada received more funding, we could have a local journalist that would tell us about local activities in our own language.

Francophone and Anglophone media do not report on the same aspects of a situation or the same realities. Therefore, it is essential that we have access to media services that understand our issues, our challenges and our aspirations.

Franco-Ontarians are fiercely proud of their Francophone culture and language and they are fighting to protect them.

It is important that we have access to adequate and professional French-language news. This creates a sense of belonging and unites us with the larger Francophone family across the country.

CBC/Radio-Canada can be the one to spark this pride and ensure our vitality. We, as Francophones, represent one of the founding peoples of Canada, but we are living in a minority situation. If Franco-Ontarians do not have a model or something to rally around, it becomes nearly impossible to ensure our survival.

The Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO), Temiskaming Region believes that CBC/Radio-Canada is an essential service for minority Francophone communities in Canada.

The government must provide adequate funding in order to ensure the long-term survival and financial security of the national public broadcaster.

It is wrong to believe that we can drain more and more funding from CBC/Radio-Canada and think that some other broadcaster will be able to unite Francophones established across our beautiful country.

Thank you.

• (1535)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrière.

We have 40 minutes for questions and comments.

We will start with Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Mr. Carrière. It's a pleasure to see you.

You know that you have touched on something that is enormously important to me. I was the chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. I was my party's critic on these issues, and

deputy chair of the committee. This subject is particularly close to my heart. Like you, I think that the CBC has an important role to play when it comes to linguistic duality and promoting linguistic duality.

How is the francophone community doing in your part of the country?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: The francophone community is doing exceedingly well.

That being said, I would like to mention that Temiskaming has been receiving Radio-Canada television only since November 2010. Because we are located in a low-lying area, Radio-Canada Ontario airwaves have never reached us. They came from Quebec, from Rouyn-Noranda. The ACFO Temiskaming fought for a long time to finally get access to Radio-Canada radio and television.

We got radio in 1995. I don't want to go into the details, but we had identified a place to put the receiver. Because the resources weren't available, the receiver was located farther away. When we finally got Radio-Canada radio, there were complaints because people driving in their cars lost the signal and things like that.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Where did the news you received come from?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: In the beginning we received the news from Rouyn-Noranda.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Not Montreal? No one saying that Highway 40 was blocked?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: It came from the Radio-Canada station in Rouyn-Noranda. We received the news from Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Since November, have you been receiving somewhat more regional news?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: On television, we receive the news from Ontario, from Radio-Canada Toronto.

I will tell you why. A cable company in Sudbury, which has finally installed cable where we are, has bought it. Since then we have finally had Radio-Canada Ontario.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Do you get genuinely local news? Does Radio-Canada have someone in your region?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Unfortunately, we had someone for about a year and a half. Because the budget wasn't big enough, he was transferred somewhere else. So we have no one at present.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Was that recently?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I would say in 2003 or 2004.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: So there isn't anyone now?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: There isn't anyone.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Does the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario have contact with Radio-Canada to discuss its mandate or role?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We have good contact with CBON Radio. We have very good contact because I worked very hard to try to get Radio-Canada in the 1990s. The connection is now firmly established. I don't have any problems with radio.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Do you know whether there have been more institutional meetings between Radio-Canada management and leaders in the Canadian francophone communities, in particular in Ontario? I could also ask Radio-Canada that question.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: There have been on occasion. Last fall, we met with the manager of CBON and one of their journalists to discuss the issues. It happens on occasion: either we telephone the management, or they do it, as happened last year.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: It seems to me that this is something that has to be considered and done by legislation and not on occasion, as one side or the other chooses. Given that linguistic duality is firmly a part of the CBC's mandate, it seems to me that there should be statutory meetings. Maybe there are. I'm not sure.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: You know that Northern Ontario is a big place.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Yes, but I'm not talking just about you. It applies to francophone communities across the country. I think Radio-Canada has to strengthen its role in francophone communities outside Quebec.

• (1540)

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I read a recommendation in the Standing Committee's report from February 2008 for an office to be opened where we are in New Liskeard. Because they didn't have enough funds, that was set aside.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Have you read the five-year plan that the CBC has just submitted?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: No, I haven't had a chance to do that.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: It seems to place a lot of importance on the regional aspect, on Canadian content and linguistic duality, a presence in both official languages, that is. It seems to me that the CBC is moving in the right direction.

I hope it is going to have the funding it needs for those five years. It seems to me that it is moving in the right direction in that regard.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: As long as it isn't just lip service. For years we have been promised things and then we have been told that the budget wasn't big enough. That is what is a little sad.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Do you have any recommendations to make to the CBC?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I would recommend that it have more of a presence. Often, when I'm watching Radio-Canada, I see things going on in Timmins and Sudbury because they are bigger cities.

But there are things that happen where we are, too. For example, we have succeeded in hoisting the Franco-Ontarian flag in our municipality. What's sad is that neither Radio-Canada television nor Radio-Canada radio came to cover the event. It would have been very important to us for them to be there.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Of course.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Of course, I complained. The answer I got was that for budget reasons, they couldn't be there. These may be details, but they matter to us.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Thank you, Mr. Carrière.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

You have the floor, Ms. Lavallée.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Good afternoon, Mr. Carrière.

You recently said that a particular town is not part of your region. What is the central element of the region you represent.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We are located on the shore of Lake Temiskaming.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Right.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: The adjacent area is the Témiscamingue region of Quebec.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Right.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: The lake is what unites us, whether we like it or not. It's sad to say...

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Can you give me the names of the towns?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: There is New Liskeard, which became Temiskaming Shores after the 2004 merger. There are Ville-Marie, which you know, Rouyn-Noranda, Kirkland Lake and North Bay.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Yes, but Rouyn-Noranda is on the Quebec side.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: And Ville-Marie as well.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right. We are between North Bay and Kirkland Lake, on Highway 11.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: How many francophones are there in your region?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: In Temiskaming, there are 7,735 people who can speak French. How many identify as Franco-Ontarians, I don't know.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Let's say 7,300.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Do you have figures for usage of CBC services in French by francophones in your region?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Because Radio-Canada has not been available for very long where we are, I can tell you that it is mainly the elite who listen to it: teachers, nurses, people in the health care field. So-called "ordinary" people are not used to listening to this station and still listen more to English-language radio to get local news.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Right. And young people?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Do young people listen to the radio these days? They're always walking around with an iPod or some such thing. I'm not sure.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Yes, but to know what music to buy to download to their iPod, they have to listen to the radio, don't they?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I know that Radio-Canada station CBON often organizes contests to attract young people. That is one of the ways to do it. Recently, there was a game for high schools. If a high school student played, they had a chance at inviting an artist to come and perform at their school. It's a method that seems to work well.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: How many French schools are there in your region?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: There are a secondary school and five elementary schools, four Catholic and one public.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Do you have a college or...

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We have a college...

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: I don't dare say "cégep".

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Collège Boréal has a campus in our town.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Right. If I understood what you told Mr. Rodriguez correctly, you are served by the Toronto station.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: For television, yes, that's the case.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: You are served by the Radio-Canada station in Toronto?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Only for those who subscribe to cable. Otherwise, if you have satellite reception, there's only one hour of broadcast time, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Radio-Canada news from Toronto. Otherwise, there is no access to Radio-Canada Ontario.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: What Radio-Canada stations do you receive?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: The ones from Montreal, Winnipeg, the West, because with the CRTC and Bell ExpressVu... It's limited.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Yes, but under the CRTC's regulations, the cable company is ordinary required to offer you, by satellite, for example, because it seems there is no problem with cable, the Radio-Canada station that is in the same time zone as residents of your region.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We receive broadcasts only from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., because we are offered Radio-Canada Outaouais. That is what was decided, rather than offering us Radio-Canada from Toronto.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Right. So you would prefer the Toronto station to the Outaouais one?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes, because the entire North is covered from Toronto, while the Ottawa station focuses mainly on the Outaouais region, which is less a reflection of our situation.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: You don't seem to be satisfied with how your region is covered by journalists. You mentioned your flag earlier.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes, it was an anecdote to show that sometimes, because there is no budget and we don't have a journalist on site, we have to persuade the radio station of the importance of some activity or other when we shouldn't have to. We send out releases and other invitations but if they don't answer because the budget is limited, we have to put up with that.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: I can tell you that that is how it is in nearly every region. You send out releases and the journalists make a choice. I am not defending Radio-Canada and I'm not saying you are better served, but that is the reality. The journalists make a choice.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Sad to say, but that is kind of how it is. If a francophone knows that they are going to be heard or seen on Radio-Canada, that's a good incentive to listen to that station. But if

it rarely covers events happening in our region, or covers them only a little or almost not at all, how can we encourage people to listen to it?

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: What do they do, then, when they aren't satisfied with the coverage by Radio-Canada? How do you say it in proper French, they "switch" to English?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right, and unfortunately, that is what happens.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: In recent years, has it improved or has it deteriorated?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: No, it has improved.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: In what way?

• (1545)

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We didn't have television before. We have been getting radio since 1995. Before that we had nothing. We can see there has been an effort to cover our region better.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Have you compared the coverage your community is offered—it's actually a small francophone community, 7,300 people—with what is offered to communities in other provinces? Do you have contact with francophones in other provinces?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I talk to...

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Lavallée.

Mr. Carrière.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: You can answer because the time I am allowed is up.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Right.

I have had the opportunity to attend meetings with other representatives of French Ontario or with Acadians. It seems to me that they are better served, yes, but you would have to ask them the question.

The Chair: Right, thank you.

[*English*]

Mr. Angus.

[*Translation*]

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

Good afternoon, Mr. Carrière, and welcome to our committee.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I would like to follow up on something my colleague Ms. Lavallée asked you. You said that the francophone population of Temiskaming is 7,000 people, is that right?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That is just for Temiskaming South. I didn't include Kirkland Lake in that.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Yes, but the population in the region of CBON is comparable to the francophone population of Abitibi-Témiscamingue, with Sudbury and Timmins, is that right?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I think so. There are about 150,000 or 158,000 people.

Mr. Charlie Angus: For the francophone communities, it's comparable to Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the northeastern region of francophone Ontario.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes, that's about right.

Mr. Charlie Angus: In your region, is there a private radio station?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: No.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is there a private television station?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: No.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Is there a newspaper?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: No newspaper.

Mr. Charlie Angus: The Conservatives suggested that private broadcasters could do a better job than the CBC. Explain to us what the result of that would be for francophone communities in the North.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I don't think a private company could do the same thing. Radio-Canada or the CBC has a mandate to cover all of Canada. It is already set up. Why break something that is working? It may be working badly, because it doesn't have enough money, but why break something that is working and start over with something that we aren't sure will work?

And also, how are you going to make sure that they are really going to provide something that's good quality? I don't know how you do that.

•(1550)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Private radio or television stations broadcast news and entertainment, but explain to us what the role of Radio-Canada is in developing Franco-Ontarian identity and culture in the very large, very rural and very isolated regions.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Mr. Angus, if I listen to Radio-Canada and hear that francophones are engaged in some particular battle in Timmins, for example, it gives me ideas. Seeing the vitality of francophone communities elsewhere in the country, it's a pleasure to see.

And it brings us together. We see that we aren't the only ones fighting against assimilation, against the things we're concerned about. Having examples that don't come just from Ontario but that may come from Acadie or Western Canada tells us more about ourselves and about how to help ourselves. That's very important.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Assimilation has always been a serious threat to francophone communities in the North. Is there a spirit of economic, linguistic and cultural confidence now in the francophone communities in the region?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I think so. I think there is a little more confidence. The big problem we have noticed is that the birth rate is very low. Why is that? I think it's a problem throughout the western world.

The most difficult thing is when there are mixed marriages, exogamy. When a person marries someone who speaks a different language, how do we get them to keep both cultures? That is the issue now. It is important to show that French-Canadian and Franco-Ontarian culture are as important as English-Canadian culture. That is our challenge. People want to identify with a winner. If a Franco-

Ontarian doesn't show that they are proud of their culture, there will be a problem. What we have to pass on is pride in our culture. That is our challenge. We need a strong Radio-Canada helping us. That is better for us.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Right, thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Galipeau, you have the floor.

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome, Mr. Carrière.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I listened carefully to the brief you presented to us. I very much appreciate your sharing it with us with a brave heart.

I have learned from my friend that we are intending to privatize. I have never heard that from this side of the table. Let's not start a witch-hunt with all that.

In one sense, I have also experienced the worries you have shared with us. We are the only two Franco-Ontarians at this table today.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Where do you come from, Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I come from St. Isidore. When I was born, it was called St. Isidore de Prescott.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: But Prescott was defrocked.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Royal Galipeau: My father used to say that we French-Canadians were schizophrenic, that we needed protection from a saint and an Englishman. Eventually we defrocked the Englishman.

I have to tell you that the most significant event in the last 20 years was the ice storm in early January 1998. It was a crisis, locally. I listened to Radio-Canada day and night to find out what was happening. I learned every day what was going on in Plateau Mont-Royal, but for what was happening where we were, we heard nothing about that.

I talked to my friends at the presbytery or elsewhere. I asked them how they were getting news about what was going on in our backyard. They were listening to CFRA.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: It wasn't a very good thing.

CBON is a good thing. Are there people who call it "c'est bon"?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: There used to be a program called *C'est bon le matin*, it's good in the morning. Mostly people say C-B-O-N.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Well, you are doing very well this morning.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: In Montreal, it's *C'est bien meilleur le matin*, it's better in the morning.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Royal Galipeau: With René Homier-Roy.

Well, naturally, the government doesn't manage the CBC, nor does this committee.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: So much the better.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: So much the better, yes.

You came here to share your reactions with us. Is there a recommendation you would like to make to us so we can add it to the mix?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Mr. Galipeau, nothing is sadder than when we call our national broadcaster to tell it that something is happening in our town and they can't send us anyone because they don't have funds.

Then I have to tell my community that they couldn't come because they didn't have enough money. It feels a little Mickey Mouse. That's what's sad.

Yes, we are a small region and we may not have as many francophones as elsewhere. But I think I am just as important on the Canadian playing field.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: The CBC is talking to us about its five-year plan.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I haven't had a chance to look at it.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: I think we should make sure you get a copy.

I would be interested in knowing your reactions to the five-year plan. I would like to know whether you think that the plan is going to mean a better chance of solving the problems you identify.

• (1555)

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes, I would certainly like to see the five-year plan and be able to give you an answer.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Can we ask the clerk to make sure that gets done?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't intend to use more time than necessary. I have said what I wanted to say.

How much time do I have left?

The Chair: Thirty seconds.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Mr. Galipeau, I had a chance to read the committee's report in February 2008. I read it Sunday afternoon, because it is over 200 pages long, to at least try to understand what had been done. That's why I mentioned that at one time New Liskeard had had a chance to have a bureau, but financial reasons prevented that from happening.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Thank you, Mr. Carrière.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you, Mr. Galipeau.

The Chair: Ms. Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: You have five minutes. Each member has five minutes.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Good afternoon, Mr. Carrière.

I would like to tell you about my experience. Before I became the Liberal critic for La Francophonie, I was the Liberal critic for official languages. At that time, I travelled from one end of Canada to the other to meet with francophones from Canada, and obviously anglophones from Quebec. Two things struck me and I was told them over and over. The first is the old story of the abolition of the Court Challenges Program of Canada. Then the government restored it, in a way, but that caused great harm to French-speaking and English-speaking minority communities across Canada.

I am sitting on this committee for the day. I see an institution that I respect enormously, for a number of reasons, and that is maybe also going to lose a lot of blood and have its wings clipped. I think that institution has created a Canadian spirit for anglophones from sea to sea. It has also created a francophone spirit, a minority spirit, certainly, but francophone nonetheless, in all of Canada.

Mr. Carrière, what I am hearing from you makes me very afraid. I am afraid when I hear what you are saying about an isolated community in Northern Ontario, where the young people are already suffering a phenomenon called "language loss", which amounts to culture loss. It is inevitable when they listen to radio and watch television in English. Our generation does the same thing, but it's worse for young people. Once they have lost their language, it is almost lost forever.

I know the CBC is not run by the government. We all know it, but we also know that what the CBC can do also depends on the budgets it is allocated by the government, is that right?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: This government may intend to cut its funding, which would hurt everyone and would hurt your community in Northern Ontario enormously.

Do you want to say something about that?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I might not want to paint such a black picture. That wasn't my intention in coming here. What I really wanted to do was show the importance of allocating solid budgets.

I read somewhere that the CBC was created in 1929 because the American influence on Canada had been realized. That is one reason why the CBC was established in 1936. I don't want us to forget that now, in 2011. America is still just as close.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: It is closer to us.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: It may be closer, true.

Yes, I have satellite television, but I don't get any American station. That is a choice I decided to make. We should be proud of what we are. Either we are Canadians or we aren't. I think that shows the importance of the CBC/Radio-Canada, we must not forget that. It unites us and shows us a different image. Yes, I am in America, but I am also Canadian.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: It isn't just the question of America, I agree with you. It's also a question of getting news, of seeing yourself reflected in the information you get, local information from your region.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Receiving information from Quebec, that isn't so bad.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: But in a country as rich as ours, we should be able to tell people who are isolated, as your community is, that they can get information that relates to them directly.

• (1600)

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We want to get information that makes us proud to get it, in our language, too.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: There you are.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: News is not handled the same way by an anglophone as by a francophone.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: That's to be expected.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Did you read my brief? I wrote it with passion because that's how I am. When I go to meetings where there are anglophones, I have to be careful, because I speak with passion. People think I am losing my temper, but I'm not. That's how we are.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: It's a question of culture.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: You know, we talk about the dominant culture. It is true that in Canada, English is the dominant culture, because we are surrounded by so many anglophones. That's to be expected. But we, and I think I speak for several of us on this side of the table and maybe even for the people on the other side of the table, we want there to be some protection for minority cultures.

We have seen a government apologize to aboriginal children. That was a good thing.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: But rather than wait another 50 or 60 years for other cultures to disappear, it might be time for this government to do something concrete. That is why you came here, Mr. Carrière.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Yes, that is why I came here, Ms. Folco.

Where I come from, people say we don't need to learn English because it's like a disease. It will come on its own. We are surrounded by what is going on around us.

As well, we have learned that in order to do better economically, it is best to know both languages. I say all the time that I like my country so much that I learned English and French. When people criticize me, that's my answer.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Pomerleau.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Drummond, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Carrière, for the presentation you made with so much feeling.

You were right to point out that the CBC originated from the need of English Canadians to distinguish themselves from the United States and protect themselves, culturally, from the invasion of American culture. If I am not mistaken, that need, among English

Canadians, is probably 100 times stronger for you. You are completely isolated. You need to protect yourselves from anglophone culture if it becomes too invasive.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I don't think the important thing is to protect ourselves, Mr. Pomerleau. The important thing really is to show that we are proud of what we are.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That is the image that has to be presented. We have to show that we are winners. If we show that you have to constantly fight to go and buy a stamp in French, there is a problem. I should go to the post office and be greeted in French by the clerk. They should give me that, no? I am fully Canadian.

That is what I try to show my young people. I tell them to be proud of what they are. I ask them to stop asking for it, and demand it. Why am I not offered it? Why do I have to ask for it? I always have trouble getting people to understand that.

When you are proud of what you are, you attract people. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. So if we can show that we are a dynamic, winning culture, we won't need to worry about assimilation anymore.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: That wasn't the case until today. Isn't that right?

You also talked about marriages...

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Exogamous marriages.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: Exogamous marriages. I wasn't familiar with the word.

First, we certainly can't prevent marriage.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That's right.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: We can't prevent the heart from loving. If someone falls in love with an anglophone, that is who they're going to marry.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Exactly.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: That being said, obviously in situation where people are in the minority and they marry people from the majority, if the children have one language to learn, it will be the majority language. Assimilation will take place in one or two generations. Even Jean Chrétien acknowledged that assimilation of francophones was inevitable in the long term.

So what do you propose to do with these marriages? We can't prevent them.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: I have some statistics. When a French-Canadian man marries an anglophone woman, 20% of the children will speak French. When a francophone woman marries an anglophone man, 80% of the children will speak French.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: It's the mother tongue.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: The mother tongue is very important. Do you see the difference?

That's what means that a man might be called Mr. Carrière and no longer speak French, while Mr. Robertson spoke French because his mother was francophone. That is what we are seeing now.

How do we show these families, who have the chance to have an exogamous family, the importance of speaking English and French? They would have the chance to pass on the two most beautiful cultures in the western world. That's what we have to get people to understand, both anglophones and francophones, the importance of learning both languages.

I can travel around the world because I speak both French and English. Doors open everywhere. I don't have to worry when I have French and English. I might still have to learn Chinese, Russian or Arabic.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: In five years, we will be there.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: In five years.

• (1605)

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: You also explained that you lived in a low-lying area. Well, not you personally.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: That is what we were told.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: My question is technical. How is it that the radio waves from the other stations, like the anglophone radio station or the one from Quebec, can reach where you are while the ones from Radio-Canada, which should cover you, don't get there? Is it badly located?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: In 1993, Benoît Serré was the Liberal M.P. Did you know him?

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: Yes, Benoît Serré.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: The ACFO in the Temiskaming region had been fighting since 1972 to get Radio-Canada. Mr. Serré told me they also didn't have the CBC. So he went to see the anglophones. That is how we got the CBC and Radio-Canada. It was a matter of an antenna.

Studies were done and there had to be an antenna. There was a change of government—from the Progressive Conservatives to the Liberals at that time—when we had almost got our antenna. But we lost it because of the budget cuts that followed the change of government. So we didn't get it.

When it was decided to install something, it wasn't put in the right place, because of a lack of resources. That's why people in the Témiscamingue region in Quebec receive the CBON signal better than we do in the Temiskaming region, because of the low-lying area. I have no technical knowledge, so I'm explaining it as best I can.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Do I have any time left? Yes.

We will soon be switching to digital. Will that benefit you in terms of the reception of Radio-Canada airwaves, or will it put you at a disadvantage?

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: We are told that it is going to benefit us. We are told that, but we have been told it for a long time and I will believe it when I see it, or rather when I hear it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Carrière.

Mr. Galipeau.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: First, there was another witch-hunt, in the last round, about budget cuts. I would simply like to reassure you, Mr. Carrière, by telling you that we made commitments to Canadians

that we were going to maintain the CBC's budgets and maybe even increase them.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: For five years, that is exactly what we did. I think that if people want to scare you by talking about budget cuts, they should look in the mirror, because that is exactly what they did when they cut the CBC/Radio-Canada budget by \$400 million in 1997.

You came here today to present a very important argument to us. You are already feeling some concerns and we are doing you no favour if we conclude this meeting by adding to your concerns. I would simply like to be a little more reassuring.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: We have not cut the CBC's budget and we have no intention of doing that.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Now, the CBC, with the budget it has, which is really quite substantial, will have to manage to notice that the 7,500 francophones who live in your region are just as important as the 7,500 francophones who live in Plateau Mont-Royal.

Thank you.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Galipeau.

We are going to stop there. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Jean-Claude Carrière: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: We are going to suspend for five minutes.

•

_____ (Pause) _____

•

• (1615)

[*English*]

The Chair: Welcome to the continuation of the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. We're here to study the mandate and funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation under Standing Order 108(2).

In front of us today, on our second panel, we have Mr. Ian Morrison, spokesperson for the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting.

You may begin with an opening statement.

Mr. Ian Morrison (Spokesperson, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting): Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The last time I was at a parliamentary committee it was your committee. It was just another committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee, thanks for inviting Friends of Canadian Broadcasting to appear today.

[English]

Friends of Canadian Broadcasting is an independent watchdog for Canadian programming on radio, television, and new media. We're supported by 150,000 Canadians. Friends is not affiliated with any broadcaster or political party.

You are studying the mandate and funding of the CBC, a subject dear to Canadians' hearts. Since early in the 1990s, Friends has periodically commissioned public opinion research on broadcasting issues. You can find it in the resources section of our website, friends.ca.

I want to take a moment to summarize a recent survey we commissioned from Pollara on Canadian attitudes and expectations towards public broadcasting: 88% of Canadians believe that as Canada's economic ties with the U.S. increase, it's becoming more important to strengthen Canadian culture and identity; 78% tune in to some form of CBC programming each week; 81% believe that the CBC is one of the things that helps distinguish Canada from the United States; and 74% would like to see CBC strengthened in their part of Canada.

Finally, here is a question that might interest a group of parliamentarians: "Assume for a moment that your federal MP asked for your advice about an upcoming vote in the House of Commons on what to do about CBC funding. Which of the following three options would you advise him or her to vote for? Decrease funding, maintain funding at current levels, increase funding?" The data were: 9%, decrease; 31%, maintain; and 47%, increase. There's a message here: CBC is popular with Canadians of all political persuasions.

Friends has appeared before this committee on several occasions to underline our strong support for the CBC's mandate, as expressed in section 3 of the Broadcasting Act. In our view, a key point is the large gap between Parliament's intentions and what CBC actually delivers daily to Canadians, particularly the mandate to reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions. Also making up this gap is the English television network's failure to be predominantly and distinctively Canadian, especially in prime time.

This committee has been a source of valuable and comprehensive information about public broadcasting. For example, there is the graphic on page 178 of the Lincoln report comparing public investment in public broadcasting in western democracies as a share of GDP. These data show that CBC funding is near the basement, like the Ottawa Senators, with only Portugal, Poland, New Zealand, and the United States investing less than Canada in public broadcasting. So there's a disconnect between public sentiment and government investment, and this disconnect has become more severe in recent years.

Friends routinely tracks CBC's parliamentary grant, factored for inflation, in order to identify changes in CBC's purchasing power. On friends.ca, we have graphed these data over the past 21 years. Under each of the Mulroney, Chrétien, Martin, and Harper governments, CBC has lost financial capacity. Canadians can hear and see this gap every day. Regional programming is weaker and its reach is declining. More foreign content is televised in prime time,

and repetition of programs is increasing. Ten years ago in prime time, CBC's English television network broadcast 27 hours of Canadian programs and only one hour of foreign programs each week. Last year, seven hours of foreign programs appeared in prime time, 25% of CBC's prime time schedule. I want to explain: that's seven to 11, times seven days a week. This comes after a recommendation from your committee that CBC television should be 100% Canadian in prime time. Each of you will probably have your own anecdotes on the results of underfunding.

●(1620)

Earlier this year, New Brunswick residents learned that CBC proposed to end over-the-air television transmission in Moncton and Saint John next September, leading to a storm of protest at the CRTCC.

A few years ago, residents of the Comox Valley lost their over-the-air CBC television signal after an antenna fire, and it has not been replaced.

CBC seems to be backing out of affiliate agreements in several communities, including Peterborough and Kingston. Examples abound of parts of the country that are denied CBC services, all because of the shortage of money.

Friends welcomes this committee's recent recommendation that "CBC/Radio-Canada's core funding be increased to an amount equivalent to at least \$40 per capita." This would be a good first step in addressing the funding gap, raising Canada's per capita support for its national public broadcaster to half the OECD average.

Your recommendation is popular with Canadians. Pollara found that 54% of Canadians support this committee's recommendation that CBC funding be raised to \$40 per Canadian; 20% of Canadians believe that your \$40 recommendation is too low; and the balance, 26% of Canadians, believe that your recommendation is too high.

In our watchdog role, we keep close track of politicians' statements about broadcasting and cultural sovereignty. Our website is full of examples from years gone by—Liberal years—but today I want to focus on the current government.

Prime Minister Harper came up strongly on our radar when, as opposition leader in May 2004, he said, and I'm quoting literally:

I've suggested that government subsidies in support of CBC's services should be to those things that...do not have commercial alternatives.

He then added:

...when you look at things like main English-language television and probably to a lesser degree Radio Two, you could look there at putting those on a commercial basis.

In seeming contradiction, a few months later Harper said:

...we would seek to reduce the CBC's dependence on advertising revenue and its competition with the private sector for these valuable dollars, especially for non-sports programming.

In office, the Prime Minister has gone silent on this file, at least in public.

But troubling signs have emerged from Conservative Party fundraising letters, where public broadcasting has been featured. For example in September 2008, on the eve of the general election, Doug Finley, writing as the campaign director of the Conservative Party, sent donors a 2008 national critical issues survey, and promised, "I will personally share the overall results and any comments with the Prime Minister."

Question 5 read: "The CBC costs taxpayers over \$1.1 billion per year. Do you think this is: a good use of taxpayer dollars; a bad use of taxpayer dollars".

This context might help you understand our concern when we read the transcript of your November 23 meeting, with the following question from Mr. Del Mastro to a Corus executive, and I'm quoting from a part of the question. The question is about 300 words long.

...maybe it's time we get out of the broadcasting business and get into investing more money in content?

And:

Maybe I wasn't clear enough. The \$1.1 billion, plus a whole bunch of other stuff that we're investing into the public broadcaster: should we look at reorganizing that in some fashion so we could put more money into content?

Getting out of the broadcasting business—do you want me to stop, Mr. Chair?

• (1625)

The Chair: No, I'm just giving you a signal to wind up.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I have about one and a half minutes to go. Will you let me do it?

The Chair: Make it shorter than that.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Okay. I'm going to have to cut a quote from the late Dalton Camp.

Getting out of the broadcasting business sounds a lot like killing CBC Radio, CBC Television, CBC News Network, cbc.ca, and their French language counterparts. This disturbing comment was coming from the mouth of a parliamentary secretary who has a seat at the table beside the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

We also noted that twice in question period Minister Moore was invited to dissociate himself from Mr. Del Mastro's comments and he failed to do so.

As you know, last month.... I'll forget about Jason Kenney saying what he said.

Eighty years ago, a Conservative Prime Minister introduced public broadcasting to Canada. I would like to conclude by quoting another prominent Conservative, the late Dalton Camp:

Owning one national communication facility, such as the CBC, which owes nothing to Mitsubishi or General Dynamics or Krupp, is surely worth keeping. What we know about the CBC, in a world in which economics is power and so much power is out of our hands, is that the CBC would never wilfully betray our national interest or sell off our Canadian heritage. And we are its only shareholders.

When you hear people talk about reducing the role of the CBC, or selling off its assets, look closely at who's talking—it won't be a voice speaking for the people of Canada, but for the shareholders of another kind of corporation.

Merci, monsieur le président.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison.

We'll have about 40 minutes of questions and comments, beginning with Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, thank you for being here, Mr. Morrison.

You quoted many documents. Can you table those documents for all members of the committee?

Mr. Ian Morrison: It will be necessary for the clerk to have them translated.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: They will translate them, and we will get them eventually.

What's the biggest threat to CBC/Radio-Canada now or in the near future?

Mr. Ian Morrison: We think there are two really big problems. One of them I had time to refer to in my brief remarks, and that is the gap between its mandate and its resources. The evidence of CBC dealing with that gap is visible for all to see.

But I'll take a moment to refer to the other problem with the CBC, and that is a problem that goes back to the beginning. The president and the board of directors of the CBC are appointed by political patronage. This has yielded some good and some bad appointments. The problem is that on average, the person who is in charge of the CBC is not a person who is experienced in broadcasting.

The current president, for example, is, as you know—he's been here—a very affable and professional person with legal experience in mergers and acquisitions law. He's never run a company. He's never run a broadcasting company. He has no experience with radio or television, marketing, production, or anything else.

We think the board of directors of the CBC—and by the way, this has been covered in past reports of this committee—should be chosen from among the best and brightest Canadians, and we believe that the board of directors should have the power to hire and fire the president. We believe this accountability is lacking right now, effectively.

I remember when Mr. Angus asked Mr. Rabinovitch once, when he was here, who Mr. Rabinovitch considered to be his boss. It took Mr. Rabinovitch a few seconds before he said that it was the people of Canada and this committee. To my amusement, Mr. Angus said, "You mean I'm your boss."

The CBC president is not accountable to anyone.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Okay, and thank you, Mr. Morrison.

I agree with the fact that we should get the best people on the board. But I have to say that I've been working with Mr. Lacroix for a while now, and I think he's doing a very good job, personally.

That being said,

• (1630)

[Translation]

the government often says that it is investing more than ever in the CBC/Radio-Canada. You have heard a little about that. From what I understand from your presentation, that is simply not the case. In fact, in real dollars, there has been a decline in the budget actually available to the CBC for programming, for content and production. It is receiving less today than it received...

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: As you know, Mr. Rodriguez, when you measure dollars over time, you have to factor in inflation. In the case of Canada, it is the consumer price index. You can get it from the Bank of Canada website. When you want to compare the main estimates, tabled a couple of weeks ago, of \$1.074 billion, with the main estimates of 10 years ago or 20 years ago, you have to factor in the value of inflation. Essentially, the purchasing power of the federal grant to the CBC since the 1990s has gone down something in the range of 50%.

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: So the CBC is less rich today than it was one or two years ago and we could go back in time.

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: As I said in my remarks, that applies to the Mulroney years, the Chrétien years, the Martin years, and the—

[Translation]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Today, the CBC/Radio-Canada has less money. So it is not true to say that it has more. In real dollars, it has less money.

I think another important aspect is to make sure that the CBC also has predictable, long-term funding. One of the difficulties we have often discussed with people from the CBC is the problem of being able to predict how things are going to go, when they don't know whether they will have the same budget or they will have \$60 million more for programming. They have to reserve studios, sign contracts, and so on.

What we believe in and what we want to offer the CBC is stable, long-term funding, which should help in the planning process.

Do you think the \$60 million that is renewed every year, and we are still waiting for the government's answer, should be included in the main estimates?

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Morrison, go ahead.

Mr. Ian Morrison: How about a one-word answer: yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Morrison.

Madame Lavallée.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Thank you. Welcome, Mr. Morrison.

Have you read the five-year plan that the CBC has presented here?

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: No.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: You haven't read it. That's too bad because I had a lot of questions to ask you about it. Certainly the CBC would like to have stable funding and would like the \$60 million, which I might call unpredictable money, paid year after year at the last minute by the government, to be included. Obviously, you agree that the CBC should get stable funding, established for the next five years?

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: That is consistent with recommendations of this committee over the years, too; it's not a new idea. It's something that has been suggested for quite a while.

The problem is that it's a bit of a vocabulary question. By that I mean that no one is going to take away the sovereign capacity of the Minister of Finance to make fiscal decisions. A government can say it is going to provide stable funding and then, because of circumstances that it deems priorities, decide to not do it. The government is sovereign.

So I think the real issue is not just the question of stability but the issue of resources. As I tried to point out in my short presentation, based on committee data that this committee has generated, there's an underinvestment in public broadcasting in Canada.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Thank you.

You aren't wrong when you say that the government can finally do what it wants even if it agrees to accept the five-year plan and promises stable funding over five years. It's true that it can change its mind halfway through, but its reasons need to be better than they ordinarily are. That creates pressure.

Mr. Ian Morrison: The contribution can be better guaranteed.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Yes.

I would like to address the subject of the \$40 per capita. I don't know whether you have read the last report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, last June, about television and issues related to local television. It talks about funding for the CBC. The committee did recommend that the CBC be given stable funding, but unfortunately the committee as a whole did not adopt the \$40 per capita suggestion. But the Bloc Québécois did incorporate that proposal in its supplementary report. I would invite you to read that report from last June.

You say you haven't read the CBC's five-year plan, but do you think the CBC has improved its services in recent years?

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: I am more familiar, as you know, with the anglophone services than the francophone services. From a distance, I am very impressed, as a viewer, with the francophone services. But I have, and the supporters of our organization have, a lot of concerns around certain changes in radio, and certainly with the English television network a lot of concerns around quality, a lot of concerns around chasing, in the case of television, advertising dollars at all costs, as opposed to sticking to the mandate that Parliament has given it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: In French, when we talk about Radio-Canada, we include the whole corporation. We don't distinguish between the CBC and Radio-Canada. So when we talk about Radio-Canada, to us that means the CBC and the SRC. It includes both.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I agree completely.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Excuse me?

Mr. Ian Morrison: I agree completely.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: So let's get to the French service then. You really seem to focus your political activity on advocating for and promoting the English CBC network. Am I mistaken?

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: The Friends of Canadian Broadcasting is an anglophone watchdog group. As I said, we're a watchdog for Canadian programming in radio-television and new media on the English language side.

We hold hands with, when we can find them, people with similar values on the French language side, but we do not pretend to be more than we are. We do not pretend to be speaking for the very different problems of the French language audiovisual system.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison.

[Translation]

Thank you, Ms. Lavallée.

[English]

Mr. Angus.

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

Thank you, Mr. Morrison, for coming.

I want to go back to some of the fundraising letters in the Conservative Party talking about CBC and Mr. Finley, the senator

who is now up on election charges. He said he was asking Conservative supporters whether or not they thought that spending money on the CBC was a bad use of taxpayers' dollars. He said, "I will personally share the overall results and any comments with the Prime Minister. People like you drive our policy development." Do you have any sense of what those Conservative voters told Mr. Finley, who then told the Prime Minister, in terms of whether or not to attack CBC's funding or to keep it stable?

Mr. Ian Morrison: No, but it's not because we did not ask. By the way, the questionnaire was not to Conservative voters; it was to Conservative donors. So that's a subgroup of the overall population. What I can tell you from our own research is that a strong majority of people who would vote Conservative are also supporters of public broadcasting, through a number of indicators. But because that fundraiser, to which I drew attention, concerned us somewhat—I'm now talking about something that happened more than two years ago—we did two things. We asked the Prime Minister to answer the question himself: what did he think? He didn't reply to us, but a Southam news or maybe a CanWest news journalist reached him and asked him that during the campaign, and the Prime Minister replied that he could only say he supported government budgets.

So we went to Mr. Nanos and asked him to do a poll of the Canadian population, and we found that the answer was 63% that it was good value and 25% that it was not. We shared that information with the Prime Minister.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thank you.

You've covered governments going back a number of years. I'm looking at your data in terms of the general lack of committed support for the public broadcaster. There's a perception now that there's a hostile undercurrent. We pick that up at committee when CBC comes here. We never seem to hear a positive question about what the CBC is doing from our colleagues in the Conservative Party. There seems to be a full-on attack. The key government ministers make the announcement that CBC lies all the time. Is that a perception? Or do you think there is more of a hostile approach, antagonistic approach, between the present government and the public broadcaster?

•(1640)

Mr. Ian Morrison: The problem is two messages. We have a lot of supporters. We encouraged them recently to write to their members of Parliament—I guess you would be included in that—with their concerns about Mr. Del Mastro's comment. What we found was that when those people lived in Conservative ridings, they got a response from their Conservative members of Parliament, and with a few exceptions—Chuck Strahl, for example, and Tony Clement—they wrote their own letters. Mostly there was a common theme to the letters. I had intended to bring it with me today, but I only have it on my iPhone, and I turned it off in respect of this thing. Basically, the message that came out, I assume from some kid in the Prime Minister's Office, and that was then the base for the Conservative responses, contradicts the concern you have, because the essence of it was, “We support public broadcasting very strongly.” The Liberals went after public broadcasting. The letter actually said that the NDP and the Bloc had voted against the CBC budget every year since the Conservatives came to power.

So in my judgment there was one thing that was true in there, and that is, under Mr. Chrétien's leadership, the CBC suffered greatly. But on the comment about the Bloc and the NDP, you weren't voting against the CBC any more than you were voting against the Governor General's salary, or old age pensions, or anything.

Mr. Charlie Angus: It was the Senate salaries we were definitely voting against.

Mr. Ian Morrison: The key point was that there was this sophistry in this letter that was suggested, where “We're supporting public broadcasting more than any other government in Canadian history.” And that would be true only if there were no such thing as inflation. So the people who received the letters saw through that, and what they're left with is an impression that there's a hidden situation.

In our poll, the Pollara poll, Pollara found that—and I didn't have time to quote it—52% of Canadians believe the Harper government is underfunding the CBC so that it can turn it into a private commercial broadcaster, 24% disagree, and 23% just don't know.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Del Mastro.

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

Mr. Morrison, whenever you've quoted me, you've always taken off the first sentence of the quote. Is there a reason why you did this?

Mr. Ian Morrison: You're a very loquacious person, Mr. Del Mastro—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: It's to manipulate it, isn't it? You can say it.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Your question—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You can say it. You're manipulating what I said, aren't you?

Mr. Ian Morrison: But you want me to tell the truth, don't you?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Yes, I do. Please.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Okay. Your question of Mr. Maavara consists of 300 words, okay? The speed—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Why do you clip the first line? It's going to be hard to fundraise off it if you tell people what the first line is, isn't it?

Mr. Ian Morrison: “Thank you, Mr. Chairman”, it says.

In any case, we found the essence of it, and we sent the 50-word version of it out to people.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: This is interesting. Mr. Morrison, you'll find—

Mr. Ian Morrison: I'm entitled to—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: No, because you won't answer the question, Mr. Morrison. Now if you would answer the question—

Mr. Ian Morrison: Well, if you would just let me—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: No, it's my time. I'm sorry, it's my time.

The Chair: One person at a time. One person at a time.

Mr. Del Mastro has the floor. Let him make his intervention, Mr. Morrison, and then I'll give the floor to you. Go ahead.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Morrison, I have a copy—

A voice: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...isn't giving time to give a response.

The Chair: Let the chair clarify the rules. These are questions and comments on the part of members. So the witnesses may not be afforded time to respond to a member's intervention. The member of this committee is fully entitled, as a duly elected member of Parliament, to use his or her time in any way they wish. So if they wish to use the entire five minutes to make a statement, not affording you an opportunity to respond, that's their right as a member of this committee.

Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: A point of information, because I'm quite surprised about what you're saying. You're saying that any member—and I'm not aiming at Mr. Del Mastro—could take the five minutes, ask questions, and not listen to the answers?

•(1645)

The Chair: That's right. It's an opportunity for members of this committee to provide questions or comments regarding the study.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Comments are fine.

The Chair: So if a member wishes to use their entire five minutes to make a long commentary about the subject matter at hand—

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: That's fine. You're not listening to my question, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: —they are entitled to do that, even if they phrase it in the form of a question.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: So why the heck do we ask them to stay here if we can just—

The Chair: Well, because certain members—

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I'm not talking specifically about today, but generally speaking, I'd like to understand.

The Chair: The rules are clear in Marleau and Montpetit and in O'Brien and Bosc. Members of this committee have the right to use their time either to pose questions to witnesses or to simply make an intervention, a statement, not affording the witness a chance to respond. So if Mr. Del Mastro wants to use his time in such a manner, that's his right as a member of this committee. I just want to make sure that we're all clear on that. You are members of this committee.

Mr. Royal Galipeau: Five minutes must be up by now.

The Chair: No, it's not, because I want to be clear about the rules. The rules—

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: I just want to understand. I was chair before, and whenever a witness didn't have a chance to answer, I would give him the chance, whoever was asking the question, a Liberal—

The Chair: Yes, but Mr. Del Mastro clearly wants to use his time in a certain way, so I'm going to afford him that right. The chair will try to give Mr. Morrison a chance to respond, but if Mr. Del Mastro wishes to use his entire time—

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: It's very weird.

The Chair: —to make a statement, that's his prerogative. It is the member's prerogative to use their time in the manner they choose.

Mr. Del Mastro, you have the floor.

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

I did not cut the witness off when he had his time to make his statement. That's his time, uninterrupted, to make whatever statement he likes. I did ask him a direct question, which is why he removes the first sentence off that says, "This is not government policy".

Obviously he doesn't want to say that, because he wrote a six-page diatribe, which he went out and fundraised from. Apparently, for as little as \$3 a month, he's going to save the CBC. He's going to save the CBC with \$3 a month. So I thought, "Wow, this is interesting. I'm going to write to the CBC and find out how this \$3 a month is saving the CBC."

So I received this letter back from Shaun Poulter, the senior director of government relations, and he wrote:

...there is no relationship. Ian Morrison and "*Friends of Canadian Broadcasting*" are in no way related to CBC/Radio Canada, nor does the public broadcaster cooperate in any way with the group. In fact, much of the "*Friends*" activities consist of letters and statements criticizing CBC/Radio-Canada and its activities.

"*Friends of Canadian Broadcasting*" uses mass mailings and other activities to generate contributions from Canadians. None of that money benefits CBC/Radio-Canada nor contributes to the Canadian programming services we provide. I do not know what Ian Morrison might mean by his claim that the funds he solicits "are directed to 'assisting' the CBC".

I'll repeat:

I do not know what Ian Morrison might mean by his claim that the funds he solicits "are directed to 'assisting' the CBC". As you know, CBC/Radio-Canada receives vital support from Canadians through its Parliamentary Appropriation; it does not accept direct payment from citizens to fund its activities.

Over the years, a number of Canadians have contacted us, confused about the possible linkage between the two organizations. CBC/Radio-Canada has written to Ian Morrison several times; we have asked him to clearly state on his website and fundraising literature that there is no linkage between his organization, its fundraising activities, and CBC/Radio-Canada.

But you haven't done that. This doesn't say that you're in no way affiliated with them. In fact, sir, what you say is, for as little as \$3 a month, you're going to save the CBC. You're a fraud, sir. How would you respond to that?

Mr. Ian Morrison: Could I borrow the letter for a minute?

Mr. Charlie Angus: On a point of order, calling someone a fraud is unacceptable behaviour. I understand Mr. Del Mastro is feeling a little under pressure because they were his comments, but that's not acceptable talk. We treat each other with respect on this committee. I've always treated Mr. Del Mastro with respect. I think he should withdraw that comment and apologize.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus.

I would ask members and witnesses who appear in front of this committee to use some restraint. Members are free to express themselves here. We are protected by the same privilege that we're afforded in the House, but I would ask that you use that right with some restraint.

Go ahead, Mr. Morrison.

I believe Mr. Del Mastro has given you the floor, through me, to answer the question.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I asked him to give me a copy of my letter, but he gave me the CBC letter.

The Chair: Yes, but I think he has asked you a question, though.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I need the letter to answer the question.

• (1650)

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You need a copy of your own letter?

Mr. Ian Morrison: Yes, I do.

The Chair: Mr. Morrison, would you care to answer the question? If not, I'll give the floor back to Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I'm just going to read something from my letter. It takes about 40 seconds, Mr. Chair.

FRIENDS of Canadian Broadcasting is an independent, Canada-wide, non-partisan watchdog group...[and it] is not affiliated with any broadcaster or political party.

I think that's the answer to what Mr. Del Mastro said, and I thank him for letting me borrow my letter.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Actually, it's not what I was asking, sir. I specifically said you misrepresent yourself and mislead yourself to Canadians. You're telling them that for \$3 a month you're going to save the CBC. The CBC isn't under attack.

You made another statement in which, to begin with, you said that since 2006, we haven't kept up with the rate of inflation with respect to increases in funding to the CBC. When we became government, the funding was \$996 million. Last year it was \$1.135 billion. I'm a finance major. I just plug that in using an annual inflation rate of 2%, which we've been less than—

The Chair: Just one moment, Mr. Del Mastro—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: —and it demonstrates that we're a little bit more than \$40 million above inflationary increases.

The Chair: Mr. Del Mastro, we have a point of order.

Go ahead, Madame Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've been here for 14 years. I have sat on a number of committees, some of which I've chaired, and I'm not aware that it is the privilege of any member of Parliament to actually interrogate a witness. I would strongly suggest to you, Mr. Chair, that the member stick to the actual subject that is under review here, and that the issue of either the witness' character or anything else pertinent to that should not be a question that is being discussed here.

I think Mr. Del Mastro is being absolutely insulting to the witness. I don't know the witness. I've never met him before, but I really don't think this kind of interrogation should be taking place.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Folco, for that. I've already asked members to exercise restraint, but I do believe Mr. Del Mastro has a question here that is not related to the topic, the issue, the point of order you've just raised. So I'll let him finish that question, and then I'll give the floor to Mr. Morrison, and then we'll move on to our next member.

Go ahead, Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: It's just very basically, as I said, that in 2005, funding to the CBC was \$996 million, and last year it was just a little bit more than \$1.135 billion. That's an increase of \$139 million. If we use an annual inflation rate of 2% compounded over five years, it comes out to a total of \$1.099665 billion, which means that we are a little more than \$40 million above the inflationary increase since we became government.

We promised to maintain our increased funding to CBC every year. We've done that, but you've misrepresented us, sir. Why?

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Morrison, go ahead.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Mr. Del Mastro's information is wrong, but if I have a few more seconds, I'd like to read something to you. I

thought I had been misquoted from this letter, and I've now had the chance to find it.

There's a tick mark on the response device. Mr. Chair, have you ever received a fundraising letter in the mail with a response device, etc.? It says, "Yes, I want to preserve the CBC and strengthen Canada! Sign me up...." It says, "I authorize Friends of Canadian Broadcasting to deduct the following amount...\$3."

We are saying that we are there as an entity that is trying to defend and protect public broadcasting, and we are inviting people to get involved for as little as \$3 a month.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Del Mastro.

Madam Crombie.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's nice to meet you, Mr. Morrison. Thank you for presenting to us.

I will give you an opportunity to finish some of the comments you started, but first I'd like to know, concerning the \$2.3 million you raise from the 150,000 Canadians who support you, what percentage of your time and the funding you raise goes towards CBC issues.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I'd say about a third.

I have to back up and say something else, and that is that what we do, Ms. Crombie, is watch the entire Canadian audiovisual system. As I said at the outset of my remarks, we're a watchdog for Canadian programming. We watch public broadcasting. That includes such organizations as the Knowledge Network of British Columbia, or TVOntario, for example. We watch the entire private broadcasting system as well, television and radio. We keep an eye on the CRTC. We keep an eye on the very big and powerful cable and satellite distributors—the Rogers, the Shaws, etc. And we keep an eye on the federal government.

I did a recent analysis for our steering committee about how we spend our time. We found, if this is an indication, that we made 15 public presentations or filings of a brief or a submission in 2010. Two of them were to the Department of Industry, one was to the industry committee, of which Mr. Chong was the chair, and 12 were to the CRTC. In 2010, most of those were dealing with the agenda the CRTC had. The good majority of them had nothing to do with the CBC.

So I would say that on average, about a third of our resources go into watching and tracking, and as Mr.—I've forgotten his name, but the CBC guy whom Mr. Del Mastro just quoted—said, we are often critical of the management of the CBC.

•(1655)

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie: I want to get a few more questions in, so I'll give you an opportunity to respond.

We know that this Harper government has an anti-CBC bias. We've heard statements like that which the parliamentary secretary has made. Here's a member from the Lanark area, who said, "I don't think government should be giving funding to the arts." And we have our own Minister of Immigration, who said CBC "lies"—a direct quote—a number of weeks ago.

I wanted to ask you, concerning the Pollara poll you did in which 52% of the respondents said that the Harper government specifically underfunded the CBC because they thought there would be a mandate to privatize it, whether you concur with that view. Where are you with respect to the polling results that you...?

Mr. Ian Morrison: Well, that's just professional data. Pollara found that. It doesn't matter whether I agree; that's what Canadians—

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie: It's what Canadians believe.

As we know, the CRTC is going to be renewing the CBC's licence, is that not correct? That's coming up fairly—

Mr. Ian Morrison: That's predicting the result, but yes.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie: It's fairly certain.

They're claiming that they're going to allow key questions to be discussed, such as local and regional programming, and a guarantee that the CBC continue to respect its mandate as stated in the Broadcasting Act.

What are your expectations with the renewal process for CBC's licensing?

Mr. Ian Morrison: First, we often praise the CRTC when they do good things, but I would say that CRTC has dropped the ball on CBC issues. The CRTC last licensed the CBC's various networks in January 2000, and in their cycle they're supposed to do a review of licences every seven years. We're now into the eleventh year since there has been any substantive review of the CBC. I think that betrays, on the part of successive leaders at the CRTC, a bias towards responding to the private sector. It's not appropriate that the CBC is acting today under licences that were granted on January 6 of the year 2000 and just administratively renewed.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie: You made a comment with respect to the lack of experience of the board members of the CBC. Would you go so far as to comment on the experience level of the recent appointment to the CRTC?

Mr. Ian Morrison: Are you studying the appointment of Mr. Pentefountas? Yes?

I assume that Mr. Pentefountas is a highly intelligent criminal lawyer. Based on any understanding I have of his background and experience, I think he is not qualified to be a commissioner of the CRTC and far from qualified to be a vice-chair of broadcasting at the CRTC.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison and Madam Crombie.

Monsieur Pomerleau.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Morrison. I am absolutely amazed by your frankness and the precision of your answers. It is very well articulated, very precise.

This is the first time I have met you and heard about your group. I would like you to tell me where you come from, what prompted you to join this group and what your duties are within the group. Were you the founder, the organizer, or are you one of the members?

•(1700)

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: Mr. Chair, Mr. Pomerleau said to me, informally before the meeting, where do you come from? And I said,

[Translation]

I'm a little guy from Toronto.

[English]

My role is that of spokesperson.

Your question is really a question about the governance of the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. There is a board of directors that is known as the steering committee, and that steering committee contains people you probably wouldn't know because of the language divide.

The chair of my steering committee is the dean of graduate studies at Memorial University, for example. The famous actor, R. H. Thompson, is a member of my steering committee. If you were from Alberta, you would know the name Aritha van Herk, who is the historian of Alberta, and on and on.

Those people are the governance body. I am the spokesperson.

And Friends is a virtual organization in the sense that it has no office, it has no employees.

Someone once sent me a note, Mr. Pomerleau. It said, "We're not going to send you \$3 a month"—or something like that—"unless you promise us that you're not wasting money on an expensive address on Bloor Street in Toronto." I'd have to borrow, again, the letter to give you the address because I never go there—it's a post box. I wrote back and I said, "I can't promise you that. It's 6 inches tall, it's 12 inches wide, and it's 18 inches deep." So we are a virtual organization. We have a series of people with expertise in a variety of subjects: broadcasting, research, communications, fundraising, etc.

My role is the coordination and the expression of the Friends positions.

[Translation]

Mr. Roger Pomerleau: Myself, I think you play your role very well. I would like to ask you a question.

I am a sovereigntist, which in reality means I want to bring about the independence of Quebec. It may seem odd, but I am absolutely convinced that if Canada doesn't invest money, resources and an lot of work in protecting its culture, exactly the same thing is going to happen to it as what is going to happen to us, it is going to be assimilated by the Americans. It's written in the sky. So the need to invest more in culture, in the CBC, and so on, seems obvious to me.

Based on your experience, I would like you to tell me why it is, in your opinion, that the government, which is in fact made of up intelligent people, doesn't understand that and is not investing a little more money in this area, as the people at the OECD are.

[English]

Mr. Ian Morrison: Going back to your original comment, you used the word “sovereignty”. It's a wonderful word. And we think in our organization that Canadian cultural sovereignty is a very important value. I quoted for you at the very beginning of my remarks that 88% of Canadians believe that as Canada's economic ties with the U.S. increase, it's becoming more important to strengthen Canadian culture and identity.

The chair will recall that when I appeared before him in his previous role, I was quoting from the Telecommunications Act, which talks about Canadian sovereignty, so being masters in our own house, so to speak. These are the values behind public broadcasting.

On the English language side—not dividing the country by territory, but by *langue maternelle*—two-thirds of what English Canadians watch on their television sets is material from a foreign country—the United States of America, most of it. So maintaining a share of that space—radio, particularly television, for Canada and Canadian programming—is the huge challenge, and that is the reason that our organization exists—

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Ian Morrison: —fraudulent or not.

The Chair: *Merci, monsieur Pomerleau.*

The last member for today is Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you very much.

You correctly pointed out that Peterborough is a subsidiary, that it operates under an agreement with the CBC. In fact, there are only two stations like that left in the country.

• (1705)

Mr. Ian Morrison: An affiliate.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: An affiliate, thank you.

Do you know who operates those two affiliate stations in Ontario?

Mr. Ian Morrison: It was the man who had trouble understanding your question.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: It's Corus.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Yes, Mr. Maavara from Corus, who was here on November 23, but I imagine you're aware of that as well.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Yes. In fact, I encourage you to write the gentleman who wrote me the letter. His name is Shaun Poulter. I encourage you to ask Mr. Poulter about my work behind the scenes to ensure that affiliate agreement was extended in Peterborough so

that CBC programming would continue to air on CHEX-TV, because unlike a lot of communities—and I think we could go around the table and find some communities where CBC has lost local programming—their reach into those local communities is limited. In fact, in a lot of major markets, CBC news regularly ranks third or fourth where it used to be number one in the ratings. In my community that's not the case; it's number one and it has been for a long time.

A lot of people watch CHEX. It's a healthy station. When we did the study on local television stations, to which Madame Lavallée referred, we found that most of the stations were losing money, except for two, and there were three in the west as well, which are owned by the Pattison Group.

Mr. Ian Morrison: That's right.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Two stations in Ontario were not losing money and they were the Kingston and the Peterborough affiliates of the CBC. I was fighting to make sure that they extended those affiliate agreements. Shortly after Gary Maavara appeared here with Corus, are you aware that they extended those affiliate agreements in Peterborough and Kingston?

Mr. Ian Morrison: You have criticized me, but I praise you because I think what you're doing is very valuable in pushing the CBC to extend those affiliate agreements. However, I would also say to you that Peterborough and the surrounding Kawarthas area, which is larger than your constituency—

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Yes.

Mr. Ian Morrison: The footprint of that channel is quite substantial. It goes up to Haliburton and down almost to Lake Ontario. It is the only local television available to people in your area. We could say the same thing about CKVR in Barrie, for the whole Barrie-Huron area, one-quarter of a million people. That is very important in the Canadian audiovisual system.

I can't tell if you're writing, Mr. Chair, or just waving at me.

The Chair: Neither.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Okay.

In fact, we commissioned research on this topic from Canadian Media Research Inc. What I would say to you is that when Canadians are asked if they could only receive one channel, what would that channel be and what would they be watching, they say local news is their very top priority. Their second priority is national news. There may be a difference in what they mean by national. Their third priority is international news. After that, it's sports, Hollywood, and things like that. Canadians care about that local programming.

CBC at one point abandoned that role in its television work and it's gradually coming back to it. But I point out to you, and I'll say this briefly, that to do that well is expensive. There are 30 or 40 places in Canada that are like Peterborough and the Kawarthas. It costs more. You have to have cameras, staff, people, and amortize the cost over a small audience, rather than national programming, where you amortize it, in the English Canadian sense, over 26 million people. That is a very high priority.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Morrison.

Mr. Del Mastro, do you have another question or comment?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: No. I would merely close by telling Mr. Morrison that—I'll be clear with you—I didn't appreciate being the punch toy of your fundraising letter, especially when you quoted me out of context. Madame Folco may not be aware of that, but my likeness was used on mailings that were sent across Canada and I was misquoted.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: What I was seeking to do, as I just indicated to you now, was place pressure upon a network to extend an affiliate agreement.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Del Mastro.

Thank you, Mr. Morrison, for your testimony.

Mr. Ian Morrison: Could I say one thing, sir, for 10 seconds?

The Chair: Very briefly.

Mr. Ian Morrison: I just want to tell you that I do not agree with Mr. Del Mastro—

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ian Morrison: —and we did not misquote him.

The Chair: I appreciate you clarifying your position on this.

We're going to now move to a consideration of a motion that Madame Lavallée is going to move.

Madame Lavallée, would you move your motion?

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Yes, I think everyone has it in hand.

As you know, the CBC has presented us with its five-year plan. Several witnesses have testified about it. Because time is short, and we don't know what is going to happen this week, I think it is urgent to move the motion that you have in hand.

It reads as follows: It is proposed that it be recommended that the federal government provide CSC with stable funding until 2015-2016 to carry out its five-year plan, as presented to the Standing Committee on Heritage, and definitively include additional annual funding of \$60 million and it will be reported to the Chamber at the first opportunity.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lavallée.

We have a motion on the floor in front of us. We'll have a discussion for 10 minutes. If we can't resolve this discussion in 10 minutes and have a vote on it, we'll proceed to Mr. Angus' motion,

and I'll set time aside at our next meeting to continue debate on Madame Lavallée's motion.

Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: That's a very straightforward motion. It's not complicated. It doesn't require any new amount. The \$60 million is there. It's renewed every year. The money they need for their five-year program is the same amount they said when they were asking.... I think logically we should support it. That's it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

As the minister made clear and I made clear here at committee, we support the CBC's five-year plan. We've also made it clear to Canadians that we will provide stable or increased funding to the CBC each and every year. That's what we've done. The statement is government policy. I see no reason either to support it or to vote against it. It's government policy.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Del Mastro.

Is there any further discussion or debate on this motion? Seeing none, I'll call the question.

All those in favour of Madame Lavallée's motion?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lavallée.

We'll now go to the consideration of the notice of motion by Mr. Angus.

Mr. Angus, could you move and read your motion?

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

I'd like to move my motion that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage examine the role of Sports Canada and amateur sports associations in addressing the rising incidence rates of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries in amateur and youth athletics.

By way of bringing forward this motion, we do, within this committee, have the twin roles of culture and sports programs. We have not tended to look at them because it hasn't come up. I think many Canadians are concerned about the rising level of injuries. There is certainly a perception, whether it's true or not, that Mr. Bettman and the NHL have not shown leadership on this.

When I'm in my riding, what I'm hearing from people is the concern on how it's affecting amateur sports. What do we need to know about this? What steps are being taken? I think we could look at this in a thorough but also a positive role and say, let's hear from the experts. Let's see what we're doing to make sure that for hockey, and for other sports as well, if they're involved, when young people go out to play, they're going out to play and have fun and not to get hurt. If there need to be steps taken to ensure that, then that is I think within the purview of this committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Angus, for moving your motion and speaking to it.

Mr. Rodriguez.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Even though it's a bit removed from what the committee normally does, it is still an extremely important and current subject. This phenomenon is hidden from view, but it resurfaces when a vicious blow is struck by a National Hockey League player, for example the one that Chara inflicted on Pacioretty. That reminds us of the situation in the NHL, but that situation also exists in amateur sports. Unfortunately, we have seen a lot of children injured and even paralyzed, in some cases, as a result of blows to the head.

Personally, I am in favour of these kinds of studies. I would also like to hear my colleague Ken Dryden, who has a lot to say on this subject, and also Mr. Molson.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: I want to support this as well.

I think Canadians from coast to coast to coast have been outraged by some of what we've seen on television. We saw a terrible hit to the head again last night in a hockey game. It doesn't seem that the message is getting through. I went to a senior AAA hockey game in Peterborough on Friday night and saw a boarding that easily could have been called hitting to the head, but it was a horrible five-minute boarding penalty. We're seeing people copy what they're seeing on television.

It was reprehensible, not just the hit that we saw in Montreal, which Zdeno Chara was on one end of giving.... I want to put on the record what bothered me most about it. It's extraordinary when you see sponsors indicating that they're considering pulling back sponsorship for something, but I thought the commissioner of the NHL in his response to that was insulting to the feelings of Canadians. This is our national sport. I thought he demonstrated an arrogance in his answer that wasn't fitting.

Canadians are concerned about some of these things they see happening in their game. Those things are not part of the game. The game has always been tough. It has always been competitive. It has always demonstrated a lot of what we hold dear and how we define ourselves as Canadians, but it's never been cheap, and some of this stuff is nothing but cheap shots.

• (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Del Mastro.

Madame Lavallée.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Thank you.

I would first like to say that the Bloc Québécois will support the motion. My colleague Pablo Rodriguez referred to professional hockey. I don't think that should be part of our committee's study, although I think that all our constituents are extremely concerned about violence in professional and minor hockey and in other sports.

Yes, let's do a study. And let's also be mindful of the fact that some parts are under provincial jurisdiction. In Quebec, minor hockey is under the provincial government's jurisdiction. Let's be mindful of that.

I should say in passing that I am concerned about violence in hockey because of the fact that it can also be an extremely aggressive and even dangerous sport if you aren't careful. I played in a women's hockey league for three years. So I know hockey very well.

I would simply like to make a suggestion. Mr. Angus might perhaps agree that we add, at the end, "and report to the House at the earliest opportunity". It seems to me that this would complete the study well.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay. We have an amendment that's been moved to the main motion. Is there any debate on the amendment before we go back to the main motion?

If there's no further debate, I'll call the question on the amendment.

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I want to respond. Just so we're clear here, I wouldn't say I'm the worst hockey player that was ever born in the city of Timmins, but if you look at the top 10 worst hockey players, I'm probably right in the middle. I want to be clear that we are looking at amateur sport, because that is within the purview of what we can do as a committee. However, if our committee wants to hear from the NHL, I think that is also within our right, because they set the standard for what every kid in this country dreams, and if kids are dreaming that going out on the ice and injuring or getting injured permanently for a game is what's coming down at the amateur level, then I think we have to talk, if that's within the decision of our committee.

We're not telling the NHL how to do their business, but we want to know what the effect is at the amateur level.

As far as this amendment is concerned, I'm not sure we're ready to report this to the House immediately. I don't know, but I don't have a problem with it. We can do it. If we are still in the House in 24 or 38 hours, I hope we can start getting some witnesses. I have no problem with it.

The Chair: Okay.

Madame Lavallée, could you repeat your amendment for the benefit of the members of the committee?

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: I would say it is a traditional amendment, that reads as follows: "and report to the House at the earliest opportunity". Obviously that is referring to the committee report after the study and not to our motion.

[English]

The Chair: Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now back to the main motion as amended.

Is there any further debate on the main motion?

I see Mr. Richards.

•(1720)

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I support the intent of the motion. I don't want to start a trend, but I have an amendment to propose as well. It's a very minor amendment, I believe, but one that addresses a couple of small concerns I have.

I simply want to state, first off, that I support the intent of the motion. We have witnessed, as Mr. Del Mastro and others have mentioned, a number of hits recently that really show a lack of respect for fellow hockey players on the ice. It's in particular in hockey; I know it's not the only sport in which we see some of these issues.

Going back to my days as a young guy playing hockey, I can recall seeing teammates suffer from what clearly now we would know to be a concussion, but back in those days, it was, "He had his bell rung." The trainer would ask, "How many fingers am I holding up?" He'd say, "Uhh, two?" "Okay, then get back out on the ice."

Now you would clearly not see that kind of thing happening. That's obviously a good thing. It's a good idea that we're looking at studying this.

But I wonder about a couple of words in this motion, and only because I think we're prejudging the facts before we study something. That is, we talk, in the middle of this, about "addressing the rising incidence rates of traumatic" etc. I would like to see the words "rising" and "rates" removed so that it just reads, "in addressing the incidence of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries". It's only because I wonder whether we're prejudging what we would find in a study. I really struggle with making a prejudgment on what we would find. I support the intent, but this is my concern.

I would propose the amendment that we remove the words "rising" and "rates" that are book-ending the word "incidence".

The Chair: We have an amendment in front of us.

Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: I'm not going to have a problem with that, because I think we need to move on.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: The wording came, however, from the fact, if you're following what the medical professionals are coming out with, that whether it is that there is a "rising incidence" or that there's a "rising awareness", there has certainly been a lot in the paper about what seems to be a dramatic jump at the amateur and the professional levels.

But I think the study will take us in that direction, so I'm not going to quibble.

The Chair: Mr. Richards has proposed striking the word "rising" and the word "rates" from the amended motion.

Is there any further debate?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

(Amendment agreed to)

The Chair: We're now back to the main motion as twice amended.

We're going to go to Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): First of all, I want to congratulate Mr. Angus. I think this is a very worthy study for us to take on right now. I want to comment, though.

Most of the comments we've made around the table have referred to hockey, because that is what's in the press right now. But I have played and coached many sports for about 34 years now, some at the national level, and concussions and injuries are things that take place in many sports. I'm very pleased to see that we're going to study all sports. Everybody watches *Hockey Night in Canada*; Canada is a hockey country. But we have youth being put at risk on a daily basis in many, many sports.

In the sport that I still coach this year, basketball, I can tell you that we're having more and more concussions happen simply because of the size, strength, and speed of the athletes today, and the human brain is no thicker than it ever was—in some cases. But the size of the athletes and their physical development is increasing.

I think we'll hear from many experts, if we bring the right experts in. We'll hear some good recommendations on how we as a government can support our sports associations in dealing with these changes in human physiology. I think that's the direction we should go in.

Hockey is not my sport, but I want to say that this is a factor in all sports, or most contact or collision sports. It's not just a hockey problem; it's a problem in all youth sports.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to go to Madam Crombie, then to Mr. Angus, and then I'll call the vote.

Madam Crombie.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie: I sat on the board of the Ontario Brain Injury Association and also on the national Brain Injury Association of Canada for many years and have seen the devastation that can occur in people's lives.

My comment was going to be that I didn't and I do not recommend that we limit our analysis solely to amateur sport. I think there's a very direct, positive correlation between head trauma and such long-term neurological disorders as Parkinson's, dementia, and Alzheimer's. They're proving that more and more each and every day. We certainly don't want to limit the type of sport, whether it be boxing, football, hockey, etc., because all professional athletes suffer from concussion and head trauma. What we're seeing is professional athletes who are now coming to the age, having retired 10, 15, or 20 years ago, of 50 and 60 years old and suffering more and more from neurological diseases. That's why I didn't want to limit ourselves in our study to simply amateur sport.

• (1725)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Crombie.

And finally, Mr. Angus.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Crombie offers some excellent suggestions. My concern, though, is that we're not the health committee, and we cannot overstep our bounds.

The reason we can study amateur sport is that we have a specific role through the federal government of supporting sports. If we're looking at how we are promoting sports, safety is part of it. The larger issue of neurological damage and long-term...whether it's boxing and everything else, brings us into the realm of the health committee's work. I'd prefer that we stay on what we're dealing with here.

The Chair: Okay.

Thank you very much for your interventions.

We have the motion on the floor. It has been amended twice. Seeing no further debate, I'll call the question.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your time today.

This meeting is adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and
Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les
Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
<http://publications.gc.ca>

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>