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Chair

Mr. Steven Blaney

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• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC)): Good morning, everybody. As the members are taking their places, we will start this meeting.

Welcome to the seventh meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. Today is Thursday, April 1. Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are studying the support of the federal government for official languages minority media.

We have the pleasure to have as witnesses this morning two members of the National Campus and Community Radio Association. Mr. Kevin Matthews is the executive director and Shelley Robinson is the membership coordinator. Thank you for being with us this morning.

Joining us via video conference from Montreal is Mr. George Bakoyannis, the secretary-treasurer of the Quebec Community Newspapers Association. Mr. Bakoyannis, thank you for being with us this morning via this technology.

I guess we should begin. I would invite the people from the National Campus and Community Radio Association to begin with their opening statement.

Monsieur Matthews.

Mr. Kevin Matthews (Executive Director, National Campus and Community Radio Association): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, members. I'm Kevin Matthews, executive director of the National Campus and Community Radio Association, and this is Shelley Robinson, the membership coordinator.

The NCRA is a not-for-profit group of organizations and individuals committed to volunteer-based community-oriented radio broadcasting in Canada. The NCRA aims to increase the effectiveness of campus and community radio in Canada through public education about community media and by providing a forum for community broadcasters to share their work, develop their skills, and network. We also help represent community radio to government and other agencies.

Founded in 1981, we now have 76 members, four of which are situated in official language minority anglophone communities in Quebec. There are two other stations in Quebec based in OLMCs that are not currently NCRA members. We also have many English licensed stations in English majority communities that carry some French programming for their local minority francophone community and could use support to increase their services. But given the

time limits of this presentation, we have focused mostly on the particular needs of stations serving OLMCs in Quebec.

We continue to work with l'Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada and l'Association des radiodiffuseurs communautaires du Québec to represent the sector and our 134 members who are divided about evenly between anglophone and francophone radio.

Our stations support official language minority communities in several ways. They provide local news and community announcements in the minority language. In many places, community radio is the only place people can hear about services, local cultural events, and government programs available in their official language.

In Sherbrooke, for example, CJMQ-FM is the only station in the area that does emergency broadcasts in English, and at CFTH-FM in Harrington Harbour, they receive most of their press releases from outside the community in French and translate them for the local listening audience.

They also support other minority language media. CIDI-FM in Missisquoi and CJMQ-FM in Sherbrooke both work closely with their local English newspapers, promoting them through ads and by contributing content.

They serve local businesses, particularly those targeting the OLMC, by providing advertising at a very low cost. For example, at CIDI-FM in Missisquoi, \$10 buys you a 30-second ad in both English and French.

They provide support to official language minority artists and culture. All of the stations play a lot of local and regional music and make it a priority. They also have times when local musicians come in to play live on air and do interviews.

They allow a place for official language minority communities to tell their own stories. CIDI-FM in Missisquoi has just started a series of history programs about the area, looking back 60 to 80 years, produced in English by their volunteers.

They preserve a special place for the minority language. Even those stations that have a lot of French programming feel their English programming and their standing as an anglophone cultural organization are crucial to serving their official language minority community effectively.

Ms. Shelley Robinson (Membership Coordinator, National Campus and Community Radio Association): Thank you.

As for specific needs, our members serving official language minority communities tell us their primary challenge is under-funding. Whether to increase power to serve a larger population, to hire more staff to cover more local news and cultural events, or to create outreach programs to engage more volunteers, these stations find themselves financially unable to grow, to plan strategically for their future, to build capacity, and to fully serve their communities.

CFTH in Harrington Harbour needs training in program design, announcing, computer skills, journalism, and volunteer development. CFBS-FM in Blanc-Sablon also wants training for better staff and volunteer retention. The personnel at the station are self-taught, and they'd like outside help to train the next generation and avoid costly learning based on trial and error. They would also like training for their board of directors, who are drawn from the community, to help them understand their governance role in the station.

CJMQ-FM in Sherbrooke wants to increase their broadcasting power from 2,000 to 6,000 watts in order to better serve the township's anglophone community, and they would like to employ more staff. Currently, even the station manager is unpaid and has been for eight years. They also lack strategic resources to fully research the needs of their community and how they can serve it better.

CIDI-FM in Missisquoi estimates they need about seven full-time employees to really cover their local communities. They currently have three. They also identified the need for a regional conference of the stations in Quebec serving the official language minority communities, where they can share tips and resources and develop stronger ties for ongoing support.

All of these challenges relate to funding. With better resources, stations could offer more training to staff and volunteers, better salaries and benefits to retain skilled and experienced staff, and more resources to recruit and train volunteers from the community. More than anything, this kind of support would mean they could better serve their local official language minority communities.

Many of these challenges are shared by English stations operating in majority anglophone communities that also offer access and programming to local francophone minority communities. Chronic underfunding means there is no money to translate training materials into French or to hire staff who could speak to programmers in their official minority language.

Thus, in addition to specific support for stations based in OLMCs, support for the campus and community radio sector as a whole also helps strengthen services to official language minority communities.

On funding, the short story is that the community-based radio sector has a public service mandate, but with no guaranteed funding to accomplish it. Stations get money from local fundraising, advertising, student fees, and a tiny amount from government and other grants. In 2008, NCRA members raised an average of 3.1% of their revenue from government sources. By comparison, 14% was raised from private donations, from listeners, and from community funding drives.

Currently, the Government of Canada has no specific program for community radio. Stations that apply to federal funding programs are competing for that funding with other kinds of community

organizations, including arts groups and other social service organizations.

To resolve some of these concerns, the NCRA, ARC du Canada, and ARC du Québec founded the Community Radio Fund of Canada, now in its second year of operation. Together, we are working to address the gap in funding for community radio by pursuing contributions from Canada's private broadcasters, the federal government, and other donations.

In Quebec, the Minister of Culture, Communications, and the Status of Women has a program for community radio, though it's not available to campus stations. Without it, though, CJMQ-FM in Sherbrooke says they would have to close their doors. We congratulate the provincial government of Quebec for its success, but this is not enough to let stations serving official language minority communities do much more than survive. They deserve to flourish.

● (0910)

Mr. Kevin Matthews: In the past year, the NCRA, ARC du Canada, and ARC du Québec participated jointly in the CRTC campus and community radio policy review. Our comments to the hearing addressed several areas of the policy in which our stations need more flexible and realistic regulation, but the dominant topic of the hearing was the need for sustainable funding of the sector.

We encouraged the CRTC to direct a mandatory portion of the CCD benefits that private radio stations pay toward the Community Radio Fund of Canada, as it has been certified by the CRTC to receive these benefits, and support for community-based radio is support for Canadian culture.

At the same time, we addressed our stations' service to official language minority communities. To respect our limited time here, we must refer you to our submission to that proceeding, which we will append to a brief to this committee in the near future, and which is also available online attached to that CRTC proceeding. The proceeding number is 2009-418.

The copyright system in Canada presents barriers to campus and community radio that also affect official language minority communities. Copyright reform will affect our stations' ability to support local artists, including those based in OLMCs, and will affect not only our stations' ability to adopt new technologies but also of course their delicate financial position.

To save time, we will refer you to our participation in last year's public copyright consultation, at which we laid out our agenda on copyright reform for the good of community-based radio. We will also append this submission to our forthcoming brief.

If Canada's new copyright legislation is not reflective of our needs, it may inhibit our stations' support of emerging and independent artists and their ability to allocate resources to local culture and information programming, and it might possibly inhibit them taking their arts support activities into new media.

Earlier this year, while we prepared our testimony for the CRTC hearing, the NCRA, ARC du Canada, and ARC du Québec assessed the gap between the funding we get and the cost of performing our mandate. We are urging the federal government to play its part in addressing this gap, as CCD benefits from private broadcasters are based on their revenue and are not sustainable or consistent enough for a healthy community-based radio system. Official languages is a piece of this puzzle.

At this time, we recommend core funding, via the Community Radio Fund of Canada, at a level of \$30,000 per station to support core operations and thereby enable all stations to better serve official language minority communities. This is more than one full-time salary at most stations, which achieve remarkable results on shoestring budgets.

For the 140 campus and community stations that serve Canadians in nine provinces and every territory, this core support would cost the federal government just \$4.2 million, would result in better support to official language minority communities, and would directly affect hundreds of communities, thousands of volunteers, and tens of thousands of listeners across the country.

Thank you.

• (0915)

The Chair: Thank you for this well-prepared presentation.

We'll now turn to the secretary-treasurer of the Quebec Community Newspapers Association, Mr. Bakoyannis.

Mr. George Bakoyannis (Secretary-Treasurer, Quebec Community Newspapers Association): Good morning. My name is George Bakoyannis, and I thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am the secretary-treasurer of the Quebec Community Newspapers Association. I am also the publisher of five community newspapers, three of them being official language minority community newspapers.

I am here today representing the interests of 35 or so members of QCNA and that of our association. Our association has been in existence for 30 years, and it supports English language community newspapers in Quebec. QCNA is a funded beneficiary of Canadian Heritage, and as such, we recognize the importance of official language support programs.

Our association exists because of funding we receive from Canadian Heritage. Our other financing comes from an advertising clearing house. Basically we have one client, and that is the federal government. We work very closely with the public works department to provide services and clear advertising for our member papers in Quebec.

There are many items that we could talk about, but I chose two in order to be brief and not take too much time. One is the support from the federal government for official language minority media, and I think this is very pertinent to the meeting we're having today.

Last year at this time I was present at a consultation in Ottawa on media advertising on official language minority media. I met with some people from Public Works. They presented me a brochure with some information regarding advertising from the federal government and where it has been going in the last few years.

In a graph that was presented to us, we saw that federal advertising has been increasing not only for newspapers, but also for TV and radio. The biggest increase, I would like to say, was in newspapers. The graph shows that, in 2004-05, the federal government spent \$868,000 on advertising in Quebec, in minority media I'm presuming. In 2007, that number doubled—again, this is only for newspapers—to \$1,938,000. That's a very healthy increase.

But we have a huge problem at QCNA because between those two years we had a decrease in the amount of advertising that came to our member papers. In 2004-05, QCNA cleared from the federal government about \$300,000 of advertising to our 35 or so members. Compare that to 2006-07, when barely \$65,000 went to our members from the federal government.

So while the budget doubled, minority community newspapers in Quebec got 75% less advertising than they did in 2004-05. It's a huge discrepancy, and one that we would like to see changed in a way where a certain portion of the advertising spent by the federal government would be earmarked towards community newspapers.

I'm not as well prepared as my counterparts from radio, but I can tell you that our needs are just as great as theirs. We have newspapers that are just basically hanging in there.

I can talk about one of my papers that is barely hanging in there. It's called *Parc-Extension News*. It's a small newspaper that covers an area of Montreal that is called "the Port of Canada", basically because most new immigrants to Quebec end up there. We're talking about unemployment and welfare in the neighbourhood of 40%. It's a very deprived area.

We have a newspaper there. We've been publishing that paper for 17 years. I can tell you, if it weren't for the little we get from the federal government, and the very little we get from the provincial government and from the City of Montreal, that paper would not exist. It would just not be viable with only advertising from the businesses in the area.

● (0920)

The other thing I would like to talk about is the Canada Periodical Fund, which I also think is important and very crucial for community newspapers and our association. We were very happy to see the changes made to the Canada Periodical Fund, and we're hoping that special consideration will be given to minority language community newspapers.

What we would like to see also is the inclusion of free-distribution papers, with of course some rules and regulations. Because of the way the market is here in Quebec, paid newspapers that were eligible to get this Canada Periodic Fund had to change their way of distribution to stay relevant and competitive in the market. They had to compete with other newspapers that were doing door-to-door distribution, or basically blanket distribution. Having done that, they lost their funding from this program. We would like to see that funding extended to papers that have free distribution, or what we call controlled distribution.

I'll just stress the point that the federal government is doing a wonderful job supporting French papers outside Quebec. The APF, or the Association de la presse francophone, is clearing ads for its members, which are about 35 newspapers across Canada—French papers—outside Quebec. While English papers in Quebec are getting in the neighbourhood of \$100,000 in advertising, our French counterparts outside Quebec are getting 10 times that. Having said that, I think there is some room for improvement, and I hope we can get this worked out as soon as possible.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bakoyannis.

Now we will proceed with the first round.

Before I begin, I would just like to extend my best wishes, on our first day, to our clerk, Isabelle.

[*Translation*]

It was your birthday yesterday, Isabelle.

Mr. Bélanger, you have the floor.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): No. I won't take the floor at the moment.

The Chair: Excuse me. Ms. Zarac, you have the floor.

Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here with us today. I am going to address Mr. Bakoyannis first.

There have been changes in the federal programs. We know that the Canada Periodical Fund now covers the Canada Magazine Fund and the Publications Assistance Program. The government says it made these changes as a result of consultations done from January to April 2008. Mr. Bakoyannis, since you represent 700,000 readers, have you been consulted

[*English*]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: Our association has been consulted. Our executive director, Greg Duncan, has been at quite a few meetings, and we have voiced our concerns and opinions. Yes, we have been consulted.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Right.

I would like to know the form in which you were consulted. Was it by a survey or an open discussion with the department?

● (0925)

[*English*]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: It was a discussion. It was an invitation to our executive director, Mr. Greg Duncan. He attended the meeting and represented our association, and of course the interests of our newspapers. There were no other invitations for newspapers or publishers like me.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Right.

Do you feel that the recommendations you made were reflected in the new fund? Do you see evidence of your recommendations in the new program?

[*English*]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I know for a fact that our executive director presented those recommendations to the people holding the meetings, but up to now, we still don't know. I know that there have been some changes to the program, but they don't go far enough to include free-distribution papers or controlled-distribution papers like mine. I have five newspapers, and none of my papers are getting funding from this program—none.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Right.

Did you receive funding before? You mentioned five of your newspapers.

[*English*]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: Personally, I never received funding. I never received funding because all my papers are free-distribution papers. They are controlled-distribution papers. We don't sell the papers by subscription; they are distributed to a certain geographical area.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Right.

Now, in this fund, there is a new criterion requiring a minimum of 5,000 copies. How do you think that will affect funding for newspapers exactly?

[*English*]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: It gives us the possibility of actually going out and trying to sell 5,000 copies in order to qualify for the program, but I don't see why we have to go to this length in order to be able to get a program that we personally believe we're entitled to. We are providing good information to communities that otherwise would not get that information in a minority language paper such as ours.

As for finding a way to sell 2,500 or 5,000 papers, I'm not sure what the number is. I think it might be 2,500 because of our minority situation. We have the possibility of doing that, but I am not sure if that's the right way to go about it and I am not sure which part of the funding we would get. Would we be funded for the 2,500 that are sold, or would we be funded for our total circulation? In the example I gave you of *Parc-Extension News*, we have 10,000 copies distributed in a certain area.

[Translation]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: The minimum is 5,000 copies. Do you think that is fair and achievable for some regions that may not have a circulation of 5,000 people in those places?

You say it forces you to sell more. But is that achievable?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: You know, I really don't think it's fair, because I am looking at the list of all the people who are getting the funds; some of them are huge multinational corporations that I personally think don't need the help of the federal government, and here we have newspapers that are basically struggling. I am talking about official language minority papers: English in Quebec and French outside of Quebec. I'm not talking only about Quebec here; I'm talking about my French counterparts outside Quebec. They're in basically the same position that we are. I don't think it's fair.

Pushing us so that we are going to have to go out and sell 2,500 papers or 5,000 papers—I'm not sure what the number is—in order to qualify for this program is, I find.... Yes, you're going to have some people who are going to go out there and get very creative and do this in order to get the program, but I don't think that's the way it should be done.

You were talking about 35 papers in Quebec and another 35 papers outside Quebec, and how some of these papers are already receiving this funding because they are smaller papers outside metropolitan areas. If you're publishing a paper in a small town and your distribution covers a 30-square-kilometre area where you cannot do door-to-door distribution, then you have to use Canada Post or some other method. You have no choice but to have a subscription-based newspaper. However, in our communities in Montreal and surrounding Montreal, the market doesn't work like that. We are competing with many other papers. As an English paper, I am competing with three or four other French papers in the area, so we can't go to subscription only; our numbers would drop down to such a number that it would be impossible to compete.

• (0930)

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Zarac.

We'll now go on with Monsieur Richard Nadeau.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, I would like to congratulate our friend Yvon Godin. His bill relating to bilingualism for Supreme Court judges was passed yesterday. It is an important step forward for Canada that the judges on its highest court will understand both official languages of the

country, Canada. It should have been done a long time ago, but it is never too late to do it. I would like to mention this.

Good morning, Mr. Matthews, Ms. Robinson and Mr. Bakoyannis. I am pleased to see you today. We met with your colleagues in the French-Canadian media not long ago. I noticed one aspect of the situation in particular, and I would like to hear your thoughts on that. It is the interdepartmental question.

Are there programs or support from the federal government, apart from Canadian Heritage, that encourage you to apply? Or are you aware of federal programs or departments that can help you in your efforts to disseminate information to the people who listen to you and read you?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Matthews: Are you referring specifically to funding programs?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I'm referring to anything that can help you.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Matthews: There's really not much. Our stations have been working very hard for years to identify government programs that they can access for support. All of our stations are not-for-profit groups, and most of them are able to access Canada Summer Jobs support, to bring in somebody in the summer to do an extra project.

There has been limited success with other programs in other departments outside of Canadian Heritage—but very little. And there isn't anything that's specifically geared toward supporting community media. For example, there are many programs that are geared toward supporting arts groups, and our stations have worked very hard to become eligible for those programs, based on the support they give to emerging and independent artists. But when it really comes down to it, usually we can't meet the eligibility requirements for those because we're not specifically arts organizations at the mandate level.

Does that answer your question?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: It's more for you than for me, but that explains things.

In section 42, Part VII, of the Official Languages Act, and I'm giving a broad outline, federal departments are concretely urged to support minority communities, whether in Quebec or outside of Quebec or throughout Canada, that is, francophones as well as anglophones, in their minority environments. Given what has been said here in committee, we can say that it isn't Parliament that hasn't done its job; rather, it is the bureaucracy that is not doing what the Act asks it to do. I would also like to put you in the picture on this subject. What we are hearing is that there is still a lot of work to do in these areas.

Being an English Quebecker or anglophone in Quebec doesn't put you under a single department, while all other anglophones in Canada or francophones where they are a majority have the right to deal with all the other departments as well. So there is an unequal situation in how we look at the work that has to be done by all departments of the Canadian federal government with minority language communities in the province or the regions where they live in Canada.

• (0935)

The Chair: You have 30 seconds left, Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: We will come back to it.

Can you tell us about areas where you absolutely need assistance so you can achieve your plans?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Matthews: I'm sorry. Could I have that repeated?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: I will come back to it. It will be easier when I come back to it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

We will continue with Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I want to welcome you all here today at the committee.

Mr. Bakoyannis—I hope I said it right—

Mr. George Bakoyannis: You did.

Mr. Yvon Godin:—I'd like to hear more about what you said, if I got it right, that compared with a newspaper in Quebec, for example, they—outside of Quebec—get 10 times more. I want you to explain “more” to us. What does that mean?

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I'll give you a very good example. The Canadian Forces have been running ads in Quebec in our daily paper for months, five or six times a week. As community papers, we received the ad once or twice in the entire year. The French papers outside Quebec probably have received it 10 times.

I'm not saying they're doing it on purpose. It's not an agreement. It's part of what the federal government wants to do with French papers. They support them a little more than they support English papers in Quebec. I understand the reasons for that.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I want to understand this. When you say they received it 10 times more outside Quebec, is it in large newspapers or is it in *communautés* newspapers?

In the *communautés* we also have small newspapers. I'll give you an example. At home in my riding of Acadie—Bathurst, there is a little newspaper in Caraquet. The same owner, which is not a large corporation, has little newspapers in Tracadie-Sheila, in Bathurst, and in different areas, but they are local. I don't see any advertising from the government in those papers.

Mr. George Bakoyannis: The APF represents about 35 newspapers, French papers outside Quebec. I don't have the numbers. I can't prove it to you, because this is something that Public Works

has, which I'm sure would be available to your department should you ask for it, but this is what it is. The federal government advertises in the French papers in order to support them. It's not a recommendation. It's a must. They must do this, while English papers in Quebec do not have the same privilege.

Mr. Yvon Godin: If it is that way, it's not fair, I agree with you.

We'll ask our researcher to bring us the information. I think it's important that we see it. Our committee could demand it, which I've already done.

We should be treated equally no matter where we're from. If you're a minority, all minorities should be treated equally.

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I understand that, sir. I understand the reasons or the argument for why these French papers are supported more than the English papers in Quebec, but I don't know if the argument makes sense. The argument is that in Quebec we have quite a few English institutions in order to provide services and get federal messages out. For instance, we have a daily paper that is published in Montreal. The federal government uses that newspaper quite a lot.

• (0940)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

We will continue with Mr. Généreux.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Good morning, everyone.

I would first like to address Mr. Bakoyannis. Ms. Zarac said you had to sell 5,000 copies. I am pleased to inform you that our government has made improvements to the program and there are now exceptions. Some groups, like ethnocultural groups or official language minority groups, will have to sell 2,500 copies instead of 5,000. I think our government listened carefully to the recommendations made.

I think I understood that your network has received an additional \$1 million. Is that correct?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: No, what I did talk about was federal spending in Quebec when it comes to advertising. I have a graph here from Public Works Canada showing the expenditures in newspapers, radio, and TV between 2004 and 2009.

In 2004-05, newspapers in Quebec received \$868,000 in advertising. I believe that was for minority papers, the anglophone papers. In 2006-07 that went to \$1,938,000. These are numbers I received from Public Works Canada. These are not my numbers.

I'd like to point out to you that in 2004-05, my association cleared about \$300,000 in advertising to our 35 members. That's when the federal government was spending \$800,000. In 2006-07, when the federal government was spending almost \$2 million, my association cleared \$70,000 to our 35 members.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: That's right.

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: So while the government is doubling the budget and spending more on advertising in minority language papers in Quebec, it's not coming to us. We had a 75% decrease, while the budget doubled.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: So where does that money go? You belong to official language minority groups. What places does the money go, do you think?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: That's a very good question. I don't know.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: We'll find out.

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I think it's going to the daily paper.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: We'll try to find that out.

Mr. George Bakoyannis: There are two English daily papers in Quebec. One is the Sherbrooke *Record*, which is a member of our association, so I know it's not going to them. The other one is *The Gazette*, and I have no way of knowing if the money is going to them or where it's going. I don't have that information.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: We are going to find out.

I still have some time. A little earlier, you referred to the potential unfairness between newspapers in Quebec and newspapers outside Quebec, in financial terms. Is that not just because of the large number of francophone newspapers or media outside Quebec compared to the anglophone newspapers and media in Quebec? Is it not a simple matter of arithmetic?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: No, sir. Our association, QCNA, has about 35 newspapers. We work very closely with the APF and we are very good friends. The APF, Association de la presse francophone, which is outside of Quebec, has the same membership as us. We're basically exactly the same.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: I would now like to turn to Mr. Matthews and Ms. Robinson.

A little earlier you referred to the CRTC. It was about getting money from national public radio networks or national networks. A portion of that money could be given to you and you could potentially benefit from it. Can you explain exactly how you see this?

• (0945)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Matthews: The CRTC has regulatory oversight over how private broadcasters in Canada allocate the Canadian content development benefits they pay. As part of their licensing, the private broadcasters in Canada pay a proportion of their revenue to Canadian content development benefits. There are a number of eligible activities they can take part in—community initiatives like supporting local music with a battle of the bands, or giving them free services.

They also contribute to FACTOR, the fund for Canadian talent on recordings. That's another CCD initiative. They contribute to FACTOR, which in turn helps Canadian artists record CDs. There's a whole list of other things that are eligible for that support. The Community Radio Fund of Canada, now that it exists, has been added to that list. It's been a couple of years now, and the private broadcasters have been encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the fund. But we are telling the CRTC this year that it hasn't really been working. It has been terribly insufficient. It's within the CRTC's purview to make some kind of a mandatory contribution so some portion of the CCD revenue flows into the community radio sector.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

We will start our second round with Mr. D'Amours.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Gentlemen, thank you for being with us this morning.

Mr. Bakoyannis, your group has 35 members. How many of them are able to achieve a circulation of at least 2,500 copies?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I don't believe that more than 25 of them have more than 2,500 subscribers. We have some very small papers in small communities in rural areas of Quebec. These papers are still being supported by this program and they are very grateful for that. I would say that out of our whole membership, almost half of the papers are receiving this periodical fund, while the other half isn't.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Of that 50% that receive the fund, can you tell us how many are able to sell more than 2,500 newspapers?

Mr. George Bakoyannis: Do you mean of those that are receiving the fund?

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Yes.

Mr. George Bakoyannis: All of the ones receiving the fund are selling more than 2,500 papers a year. There isn't a problem there. I think our smallest newspaper produces maybe 600 or 700 copies a week. Even if you multiply that by 52, it surpasses 2,500 papers a year.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Of those that do not receive the funding right now, how many produce less than 2,500?

Mr. George Bakoyannis: The rest of the papers that don't receive the fund have circulations anywhere between 10,000 copies and 30,000 copies, but because their distribution is controlled, we are not selling the papers.

It's difficult to sell a paper when you're giving it out for free somewhere else. You're doing door-to-door distribution. People are picking up your product and reading it. So how can you turn around and sell 2,500 copies?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Absolutely.

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: In order to do that you'd have to do something very foolish.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: I understand your point of view very well, sir.

Let's move on a bit, Mr. Bakoyannis, because time is passing rather quickly.

There is talk about the program guidelines for the Canada Periodical Fund. Do you think it is acceptable for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to have the discretion to reject applications even if they are eligible? Do you think it is extreme for the Minister to be able to reject applications and for that decision to be final? That means that even if the groups are eligible, the Minister can decide not to give any assistance, and his decision is final. Do you think that is acceptable?

• (0950)

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I find that acceptable under certain circumstances. There are newspapers out there that look like they meet the criteria, but if you look closely you'll find many discrepancies in their numbers, their circulation, and so on. That might make the minister decide not to grant the.... Yes, I think that's perfectly acceptable.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

We will continue with Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bakoyannis, I am going to ask you a question, and then I would like Ms. Robinson and Mr. Matthews to answer.

What areas should we, as legislators, work on, to help you achieve your objectives of distributing newspapers, and especially to make sure that your newspapers and radio stations survive?

A little earlier, we heard that radio stations are closing up shop. The same is true for newspapers that may be having hard times. Where should we focus, to give you a hand in this respect?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: I think two of the most important I talked about today are as follows. One, I think the federal government should support minority newspapers in Quebec the

way it supports minority newspapers outside Quebec. That's one way. That's a very concrete way.

Two, I think in Quebec, because of the market and the way the market is, the Canada Periodical Fund would have to be opened up to control the distribution of newspapers for those papers to have access to that fund. We're not talking about millions of dollars. As I said, there are 35 newspapers right now in our association. Half of them are already getting the fund; the other half are not. Under the current conditions, either we have to become very creative to find a way to get those two and a half thousand copies sold every year or the federal government will make a decision and say it will help these papers. They'll put them in and let them have access to this fund.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Mr. Matthews, Ms. Robinson, do you have anything to add?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Matthews: The number one thing you could be doing as legislators would be urging the Department of Canadian Heritage to create a program for support of community radio.

[Translation]

The ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine

[English]

has a program that it's quite proud of, and it's had a great impact on community radio in Quebec. I think at the same level it would be appropriate for Canadian Heritage to develop a new program that's specifically targeted to support community-based radio throughout Canada.

Second, I think it would be fair for MPs to support our recommendation to the CRTC that it award some mandatory portion of CCD contributions to the Community Radio Fund of Canada.

I think both these things would include support to official language minority communities by supporting the health of the sector as a whole.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

We will now move on to Ms. Boucher.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good morning, and welcome, gentlemen.

We recently heard from the people at ARC. They told us about the challenges that electronic media present for community radio. We know the situation for community radio is difficult. How are you dealing with the advent of the new media? Do you feel that you are getting support from the federal and provincial governments? Are you getting assistance? Apart from government funding sources, whether for community radio stations or newspapers, do you have other ways of funding your activities?

Mr. Matthews.

• (0955)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Matthews: I would say no. In particular, I'll highlight the fact that the Canadian Television Fund has become the Canadian Media Fund, so it may support television and also new media development, but not radio, for no conceivable reason I can think of. So we're not getting help there.

We see our stations as natural places to help ensure Canadians will have public access to new media. It's a working model. The community radio model does ensure public access to the airwaves, and it works. And if the government wants Canadians to enjoy public access to new media broadcasting, it only makes sense to support the institutions that are already successful, that are serving people this way. But that support isn't coming.

I would also mention that there are obstacles. I should have mentioned, in response to Mr. Nadeau's question, another thing where legislators can help us is when it comes to copyright reform. The current copyright system is presenting significant barriers that prevent us from adopting new media in community radio, from properly embracing new distribution technologies and new kinds of media production, which we could do. We have volunteers coming into the station who want to. We have skilled people. What we need is the money to have a systematic approach to extending our services into the new media environment. So far the support isn't there, and the copyright system, I'm afraid, is holding us back in some ways.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Bakoyannis, do you receive assistance? I know the federal government offers it. I don't know whether the government of Quebec also does. Apart from advertising, which brings in a lot, do you have another funding source for newspapers?

[English]

Mr. George Bakoyannis: We have five papers. Out of the five papers, only one receives funding. We have a paper called *North Shore News*, which is published in the Rosemere-Deux Montagnes area. In that area, we are accessing a fund of about \$4,000 a year in order to increase our distribution by 5,000 copies. Basically, they are giving us one-tenth of our cost in order to increase our distribution and better serve the anglophones in that area.

Other than that, we don't have anything. We get nothing from the provincial government whatsoever. Even our association receives in the neighbourhood of \$10,000 in total in grants from the provincial government per year.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Boucher.

We will now conclude this second round with Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: *Merci, monsieur le président.*

I want to go to community radio and students.

Do you get money from the government?

Mr. Kevin Matthews: We, the association...? No.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You don't get any money from the government?

Mr. Kevin Matthews: We've had Canada Summer Jobs positions funded.

Ms. Shelley Robinson: We've tried.

Mr. Kevin Matthews: We don't get any annual funding from the government.

Mr. Yvon Godin: But there's a difference. Community radio does get it, though. Is that right?

Ms. Shelley Robinson: Some stations get a small bit. Many stations get the HRSDC summer grants. Some get provincial arts funding. We have a station in Saskatchewan that just got some provincial arts funding.

Mr. Kevin Matthews: And there's the Vancouver Co-op.

Ms. Shelley Robinson: The Vancouver Co-op gets money from the Canada Council for the Arts, but they're the only one, and that's because they have a charitable foundation. Other than that, some people get money from the Ontario government through the Trillium program.

• (1000)

Mr. Kevin Matthews: There's also lottery money, which is, in a manner of speaking, a government source, but it's not public moneys.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In part VII of the Official Languages Act, they are supposed to promote regional minorities. Did you ever think about putting in a complaint to the Commissioner of Official Languages to see if you don't have a case?

Mr. Kevin Matthews: We haven't thought of that before, but now that the two of you have both mentioned this.... When the analyst called us, she mentioned this requirement in the Official Languages Act where all of the ministries, departments, and agencies are supposed to be supporting official language minority communities, and our stations are obviously a very good vessel for doing so. We now see there are many government agencies who are not fulfilling that obligation in regard to us.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I would suggest you put your complaint through.

Mr. Kevin Matthews: I agree, and we will.

Mr. Yvon Godin: That's why we not only have the law in our country, but we have a commissioner who is there to make sure the law is followed, and to make recommendations.

I think that is the avenue to use, because it is a kind of discrimination. It's unfair. If we're there to promote the two communities where they are in a minority position, it's only fair that we all get treated the same, whether it's francophones outside of Quebec or anglophones in Quebec—not more, not less. I think we should be treated fairly. That's what it means to be equal, right? That's the avenue to go.

How many student radio stations did you say you have across the country?

Ms. Shelley Robinson: Just student radio...?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes. In Quebec....

Ms. Shelley Robinson: In Quebec, we represent four, and there are six community radio stations that serve official language minority communities.

Mr. Kevin Matthews: Are you speaking specifically of student radio, of campus radio?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes.

Mr. Kevin Matthews: There's one anglophone campus radio in our association, CKUT at McGill, and they're not in a minority language situation. But there are community radio stations in Quebec that are.

I just wanted to clarify.

Mr. Yvon Godin: How many do you have in Quebec? Was it six?

Mr. Kevin Matthews: There are six.

Mr. Yvon Godin: And those are on campus?

Mr. Kevin Matthews: No, those are regional.

Mr. Yvon Godin: In Sherbrooke, as you said, and in different places.

The Chair: *Merci beaucoup.*

It's now time to resume our meeting with our other witness.

On behalf of the members of the committee, I would like to thank you for appearing and giving us an update.

I saw in the preparation note that there's a strong interest in local newspapers by anglophones and that bilingual readership is high. I have a local radio community in my riding, although they cannot get the rates.

The public appreciates what you're doing. We can see it with the newspapers and I'm sure with the radio as well. Thank you again.

We'll suspend for a couple of minutes to get to our next witness.

Merci beaucoup.

- _____ (Pause) _____
-
- (1005)

The Chair: We'll get started so we can make it on time.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(1), we are now going to hold a briefing session on the Canada Periodical Fund. We are pleased to have with us Jean-François Bernier, Director General, Cultural Industries, and Scott Shortliffe, Director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs. We are happy to see that you made it over the bumps in the road, if I can put it that way.

With no further ado, I will invite Mr. Bernier to make his opening presentation.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier (Director General, Cultural Industries, Department of Canadian Heritage): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, members of the committee.

My name is Jean-François Bernier. I work at the Department of Canadian Heritage and I am the Director General of policy and programs for cultural industries. As was mentioned today, I am here

with Scott Shortliffe, who is the Director of publishing and programs for one of the four cultural industries, the periodical industry.

We are here today to present a technical briefing on the support that the Government of Canada provides for Canadian periodicals. The information relates generally and specifically to periodicals in official language minority communities.

I want to leave a lot of time for questions. I see we have already used 11 minutes of the time we are allowed. I have a brief presentation to put on the table about these issues and I will assume that you have that presentation in front of you to prepare for the discussion we will have in the next few minutes.

Today is not only April 1—the tale of the tires was a joke for my colleague—it is also the first day of the new Canada Periodical Fund. Today is the day it comes into effect. The fund is the result of a merger of two programs: the Publications Assistance Program and the Canada Magazine Fund. The Publications Assistance Program had been in existence for many years and the Canada Magazine Fund had been in existence for 15 or 20 years.

When we talk about periodicals, we are talking about traditional magazines on glazed paper. It also includes more traditional newspapers and community newspapers. For the purposes of the discussion, our program relates only to community newspapers that are not daily papers. So forget about *The Globe and Mail*, *La Presse*, and *Le Journal de Montréal*. We aren't in that business, in terms of government support.

What are the key features of the new Canada Periodical Fund? Essentially, these two funds were merged to simplify the application process, which had become exceedingly complex. It was also to simplify the reporting that recipients had to do periodically to the government on the support they receive. The new Canada Periodical Fund will also provide increased flexibility for publishers of community newspapers or periodicals, i.e. magazines, in their use of resources. In the past, for example, the Publications Assistance Program supported the costs of distributing magazines and community newspapers only. With this new program, we are expanding that to cover a range of eligible expenses, including creating content, transfer to websites, editing, distribution, production, etc. So it is a much broader gamut of eligible expenses.

The Canada Periodical Fund also has the objective of supporting their transition to the digital era. We can talk about that a little later on, if you like. The fund still ties support to the purchasing choices of Canadians. So we are dealing with an industry where we are going to work with the periodicals that Canadians buy.

The annual budget is \$75.5 million.

- (1010)

[*English*]

On page 4 of the deck, we have three main components to the program. The first component is the aid to publishers component. This is where most of the money is going. It's a formula-based process. Essentially, we're looking at the number of readers who those magazines or community newspapers are reaching.

I've mentioned that the funds can be used for a wide variety of publishing activities, including creation, production, and online activities. We anticipate that over 900 titles will benefit. There's a new feature under this program. There's a cap per title of \$1.5 million. This is a major change from what the two other programs had as program guidelines. The periodicals must sell 5,000 copies per year, with exceptions for aboriginal, ethnocultural, and official language minority publications. We'll talk about that later in the presentation.

There are two other small but important components of the program. The collective initiatives are for project funding for industry-wide initiatives and generic marketing campaigns for magazines. When you travel in an airport, you may see maple leaves on the racks where magazines are. This is the type of project that this component is designed to support. The third component is business innovation. Essentially, it's to help publishers work on their business plans, professional development, market research, etc. We are also going to be working only with online publications. We could take a few questions on that if you're interested.

On page 5, for official language minority publications, we have customized criteria. Essentially, the eligibility requirement of at least 50% of the paid circulation is waived for periodicals from official language minority publishers. The 5,000 copies sold per year has been split in half for those publications, to 2,500. Organizations such as l'Association de la presse francophone and the Quebec Community Newspapers Association can apply to one of the components of the program, which is the collective initiatives program.

• (1015)

[Translation]

Essentially, at page 6, you will see our two programs in 2008-2009: the Publications Assistance Program and the Canada Magazine Fund, which supported 27 official language minority publications. The total amount was a little over \$700,000 for those publications. Most of the publications were community newspapers. We anticipate more applicants this year because there will be more publications of this type. The competition is closed and we have already received 35 applications. This is a significant increase. Analysis of those applications is currently underway. We project that funding will be equal to funding in the past, if not higher, for this type of publication. That figure could go as high as about \$1 million. By our calculations, official language minority publications might receive as much as \$1 million of the total resources.

[English]

Scott, do you want to walk us through the last page?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe (Director, Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs, Department of Canadian Heritage): Good morning. I'll discuss some of our special measures for 2010-11.

We had an ongoing process of consultation when we designed the program—we had round tables, we had submissions from groups like QCNA and l'APF—and ongoing discussions since the program launch was announced. It became clear that the number one concern was the gap between the end of the PAP, which was yesterday, and the provision of new funding.

To try to make that gap as short as possible, we decided to launch eight publishers early. Bear in mind that our existing programs were running until yesterday. We created the new program. We launched it on January 19 and gave only a month for people to apply, but we had been advising the various associations for months before that there would be a short application deadline. We received 1,000 applications by February 19 of this year. Normally with a government program, 1,000 applications might take you nine months to process. It's an enormous volume of work. To make that manageable, we decided to use the benefit of the fact that many of our criteria were similar to our existing programs. We had already pre-examined most of these titles under our existing program, so that anyone who was already receiving funding essentially had to fill out an extremely simplified application form, a two-page attestation form.

That meant the number of applications we had to do detailed work on fell from 1,000 to roughly 200. We're working on those right now. Our intention is to run the funding formula in April. That doesn't mean the cheques go out then. That means we'll know how much everyone will receive. There have to be approvals. We have to generate the grants letters. They have to go out. But we've managed to reduce the time immensely.

At least six months ago we had warned all the associations to let their members know that there would be a gap in funding, but that when the funding arrived it would be upfront funding for the year. Under the PAP you got a little bit of funding every time you used a mailing, so you would perhaps get \$1,000 or \$2,000 a month. With this, you will receive your entire year's funding up front and be able to apply it strategically.

We also let people know for this year only—because we knew people had to adjust to a new program, and they had to have the ability to do financial planning—that the amounts they would receive would be between 90% and 150% of what they had received from our two programs combined in previous years. If you were an existing recipient, you could look at what you'd received previously, and you had at least that surety.

In fact, for smaller titles, it will be more than the 100%. It will be between 100% and 150%. The only exception to this 90% to 150% rule is, as Monsieur Bernier mentioned, that we put a cap of \$1.5 million on it. That means some of the large titles are losing close to 50% of their funding for this year, which was a strategic decision the government made, and that funding is being reapportioned among smaller titles, including official language minority titles.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: That concludes our presentation. We are prepared to answer questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Perfect. Thank you very much.

I would like to remind you that there is no reason for concern. We have the power to call witnesses by subpoena. We were confident that everything would work out even though it is April 1.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Thank you.

The Chair: We will move on to Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Glover. Is she able to tell us when the government intends to respond to the committee's second report? It was due today, but we have not received the response.

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): I can check.

The Chair: Your question is about the second report?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The committee's report.

The Chair: The committee's.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: The one about funding for organizations. It was due today, but it has not been tabled in the House.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I'm going to ask.

The Chair: Thank you.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: My second question also relates to information about either of them.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I would like to make a clarification.

The Chair: Yes. If it is okay with you, Mr. Bélanger.

[English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I just got the answer. It's going to be tabled this morning.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It wasn't. It was to have been done at 10 o'clock, but it was not tabled.

The Chair: We will come back to it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: If the intention is...

[English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: I'm told it was tabled with the clerk through the back door.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: It was through the back door. Okay.

[Translation]

The Chair: It's crazy how things happen on April 1.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Are you able to give us a complete list of PAP recipients for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010? The fiscal year ended yesterday. I'm asking the same thing for the CMF so we can compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. Are you able to give us that information?

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: We can actually provide the information on the PAP and CMF for 2008-09. For 2009-10, we're still collecting and verifying the information. Usually we don't have that list ready until about May or June, but we can put the information together as quickly as possible.

For 2008-09 the information is available, and we'd be happy to provide it to this committee.

[Translation]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: We will start with 2008-2009. When you have the 2009-2010 figures, then we will have them too.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: We'll pursue it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Could you give me the total figure for each program for last year?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: The technology is a bit mysterious to me. It's almost the same thing as the CMF now: \$75 million.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So there was \$75 million for each program.

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: No, I'm sorry, that's the total. It's \$60 million for the PAP and \$15 million for the CMF.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Are those exact figures?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: I can find the exact figures.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I would appreciate that.

I have a question for you, Mr. Bernier. You said you are responsible for four industries. What are the other three?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I am responsible for the music industry, the book industry and the film and video industry.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: For each of those programs, are certain amounts also set aside for official language communities?

• (1025)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Each of those programs has specific provisions for the allocation of resources.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Could you also provide us with that information?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I can certainly send them to the committee clerk. I'll be pleased to do that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That's great.

That's fine for now, Mr. Chair, I wanted information. My colleague can use the rest of my time.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: It won't be long, Mr. Chair.

I have just a small question. In your presentation, at page 6, it says that 27 official language publications received \$702,139 in funding in 2008-2009. I understand that you don't have the 2009-2010 figures. In theory, the ones who should have it should have it today.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: Can you tell us, if we consider 2008-2009, how many publications were applications made for? Did everyone who apply receive money or did some have their application rejected?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: In 2008-2009, the 27 applications were approved.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: There were 27 applications and 27 applications were approved.

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Yes.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. D'Amours.

We will continue with Mr. Nadeau.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am wondering about a magazine or periodical produced in Quebec. Take *Géo Plein Air*, for example, which is distributed everywhere in Canada in French in national parks and outfitters. Some subjects relate to the outdoors, whether it be hunting, fishing, recreational activities, and so on. Would that publication be eligible because this French-language product is distributed in, for example, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick, where French is the minority language? Can it be a recipient under the program?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: It's a matter of sales and not the language of publication. The question is whether there are more than 1,500 copies distributed per year at the newsstand or by subscription.

[English]

Once they're sold, we treat everyone the same. The formula applies to every copy in the same way. There isn't more money in the formula for official language minority titles per copy, but there is easier access to official language minority titles.

In the example you raised, if they sell copies, they would absolutely be eligible for our program, and anyone who subscribes to them in French around Canada would receive funding and recognition of that.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: And so, given that it comes from Quebec, it can't be considered to be minority francophone if it is sold elsewhere. It's something else, if I understand correctly. So it can be eligible for the program...

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: *Oui*.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Nadeau: ...notwithstanding where it is actually sold.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It is the publisher's address that counts.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: It's the number of issues sold.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: That is what determines eligibility for the program.

I gave the example of *Géo Plein Air* because it reaches a wide variety of people. In terms of concept, do some magazines fit the program while others don't? I'm talking about outdoor activities, but I could also talk about music or literature.

Can all magazines be eligible for the program?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The only magazines that aren't are the pornographic kind, for example *Playboy Canada*.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It can be a religious magazine, an outdoor magazine or a general information magazine, it's all the same to us.

Mr. Richard Nadeau: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nadeau.

We will now move on to Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You talked about publications that receive a contribution from the government. That doesn't include daily papers. Is that correct?

• (1030)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Does it include weekly papers?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Absolutely.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Regardless of whether the owner is a multinational? You said earlier, Mr. Bernier, that it didn't cover *The Globe and Mail* or the National Post. But some weeklies are owned by an empire. In New Brunswick, it's rare to talk about newspapers. I think it's the only province in Canada where 17 newspapers are owned by an empire, the Irving empire in that case. Irving has decided to publish a weekly called *L'Étoile*. Is it one of the 27 publications?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: I don't think so. I can check in a minute.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I have always been told not to ask a question if I didn't already know the answer.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: When did publication of this new weekly begin?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Last year.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: So we should have that information. If we don't have it at our fingertips, we will be able to answer through the clerk.

Mr. Yvon Godin: All weeklies have access to the program, right?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: We don't discriminate, except that it has to be under Canadian ownership and control.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The Irvings are Canadian. That isn't the problem.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I understand.

Mr. Yvon Godin: It's just that they invest their money in the Bahamas.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: It has to be under Canadian ownership and control. We don't fund Time Warner newspapers. But there are the Irvings, Quebecor, Rogers...

Mr. Yvon Godin: The great poverty-stricken ones in our society who receive government money.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I would like to draw your attention to a very important change made this year, though. There is a limit of \$1.5 million per publication.

Mr. Yvon Godin: But still, it's going to be the small newspapers that are having trouble.

Ms. Monique Guay: They won't get any funding.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Is there something to protect the small ones?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Applying a limit of \$1.5 million is going to mean that four or five publications will lose out. They were receiving \$3 or \$4 million, but they will now receive \$1.5 million. The \$3 million freed up will go to *L'Étoile*, *Le Montagnard* or others. That will help to increase public assistance for small papers.

Mr. Yvon Godin: The fact that a paper is published only once a week doesn't make it a small paper. I can guarantee you that more than 5,000 copies are distributed free of charge to New Brunswick-ers. It's distributed to every family.

Mr. Shortliffe, you said earlier that you cover costs for what you called in English "mailing". Does that cover situations where they use Publi-Sac?

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Well, to start with, you have to have paid distribution to qualify for the program overall. So if you have free circulation only through Publi-sac, you won't make it.

If you are selling copies on the newsstand or through subscribers, you will get funding, but only based on the copies you sell. Once you receive that, as a company, if you want to invest it in putting more free copies in Publi-sac you could, but the result of that would be that you would probably end up losing your paid subscribers and you'd end up getting no more money in future years.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Are you saying that the money only goes for papers that are sold and not given?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Yes, this program only supports—

Mr. Yvon Godin: [*Inaudible—Editor*]...it's free.

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Okay. Yes, then we are not funding it. I can guarantee you that.

The only distinction we made is that to be eligible at all you have to sell a minimum of 50% of your copies, for most papers. For official language, aboriginal, and ethnocultural papers, we said that you can sell fewer than 50%, but the funding you get is only based on the copies you sell. It is not based on your free circulation.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: What disadvantage is there in the 50% figure? You said it was going to come back later. There has to be a disadvantage.

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: The reason we looked at that is there are some papers that are either in the middle of trying to change their business model.... It is difficult to get past a 50% paid circulation. What you tend to see are papers that are either 10% paid circulation or 90% paid circulation. We set the bar at 50% because you do see a transition where a paper tries to move in the space of a year from free circulation to paid circulation. They'll keep up a certain amount of free distribution just to keep their name out there for advertising, and that's why we said it's normally 50%. For these communities—because they have frankly more trouble getting paid circulation—we'll take a look at under 50%. But what we typically see is that there is a quick evolution where you go from an unpaid model to a paid model within, say, two years.

So we were trying to recognize that the reality is that you're either usually completely unpaid or completely paid. If a magazine is in transition, we'll let you come in at 52% paid circulation. If you're an official language minority title lower than that, we'll let you in because you may have gone from 10% paid circulation to 40% to 80%, and we want to make sure we can help you during that transition period.

•(1035)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you for the explanation.

As a supplementary, what is the reason why this program is for magazines that are sold and not for those that are distributed free of charge?

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: That was actually one of the major questions during our policy review. Our old programs were set up that way. They were only for paid circulation magazines and community newspapers.

During our consultations several groups asked, what if we expanded it to free circulation papers? The problem with free circulation papers is you're not sure who is reading them. Are you distributing 30,000 copies because 30,000 people want to read it, because you can print 30,000 copies and leave it on 30,000 doorsteps where it goes into the cat litter box the next morning?

We decided that for our program we would take the attitude that we are supporting the reading choices of Canadians. The funding we apportion is based on the money that Canadians have decided to invest themselves in buying a magazine, either on a newsstand or through a subscription. So we're offsetting the creative choices of citizens in that way. And because of that, if a magazine spends our funds unwisely or a community newspaper spends it unwisely and loses readers, they'll get less funding from us. They have an incentive to connect in the best possible way with their readers.

The other practical reality is that currently we're looking at funding roughly 900 to 1,000 titles. According to Statistics Canada, there are 2,700 magazines in Canada and 1,300 newspapers. If we expanded to fund all the free circulation titles as well, I would need a 300% budget increase. I don't think this is the best time to ask for that, since I think I know what the answer would be.

So given the reality of—

Mr. Yvon Godin: Through the back door.

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Well, that's true. I could look at a back door option.

But given the reality of limited budgets, we decided that the best way to spend our funds is to invest in the choices Canadians make for their reading material as shown by the money they spend.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you for that answer.

We will now turn to the Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages, Ms. Glover.

[English]

Mrs. Shelly Glover: *Merci, monsieur le président.*

Mr. Shortliffe, I want to continue in the vein you have followed. With regard to the 50% exemption, is there a minimum?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: In terms of the sales?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: In terms of the sales, is there a minimum? What is that minimum?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: The minimum for most titles is that you must sell 5,000 copies a year.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: No, that's not what I mean. For OLM publications, they're exempt from the normal eligibility requirements of at least 50% paid circulation. But you said you will look at some, even if they're at less than 50%. Is there a minimum?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Thank you. I understand the question. My apologies for misunderstanding.

There's not a minimum set currently for it. As a practical reality, most titles coming in will be at 10% to 20% circulation, but even then, and this is where it does tie in to what was said earlier, they must sell at least 2,500 copies a year. Whatever funding they will get will only be based on that.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: That's pretty flexible.

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: It's a recognition that with these communities, official language minority communities, aboriginal and ethnocultural, you have much more restricted advertising, you have more restricted populations. It's a side example, but when I look at aboriginal communities, there are some newspapers that serve communities with 90% unemployment. They're not going to get 50% paid circulation. It's absolutely impossible for them. So we've said that for these communities, because of their special importance to Canada, we will allow them to come in with practically no...it could be 90%, 95% free circulation, as long as they're selling more than 2,500 copies a year.

• (1040)

Mme Shelly Glover: I think that's very wise.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernier, are you also responsible for newspaper advertising? No?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: That would be up to Public Works and Government Services Canada, to handle that. I must have a colleague there who handles it.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: A lot has been said about that this morning and I'm a little concerned. I just wanted to know whether you had anything to do with that.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: No.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: There has also been talk about newspapers in minority communities outside Quebec and anglophone newspapers in Quebec. It was suggested that francophone newspapers outside Quebec receive 10 times more funding than anglophone newspapers in Quebec.

Do you have anything to share with us on that point? Frankly, I don't think it is very high, but I need the officials to tell us what the actual figures are.

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: I was very interested in Mr. Bakoyannis' presentation on that. I could say that's certainly not true for our programs. I have no knowledge of whether it's true for the advertising program run by Public Works and Government Services Canada. For our programs, they receive exactly equivalent support. As a matter of our eligibility criteria, there are more francophone titles outside of Quebec that are eligible for our programs right now, so they do receive a higher dollar amount than the English language papers in Quebec, but on average, per title, they receive roughly the same amount. We give them absolutely equivalent treatment.

As to whether there is unequal treatment, in terms of governed advertising, that's something I have no knowledge of, but I would certainly be very interested in Mr. Bakoyannis' comments in that regard.

Mrs. Shelly Glover: As am I, and I would suggest perhaps the committee may want to look at that, the Public Works side of this.

The Chair: We're taking notes, Ms. Glover. Thank you.

We'll start our second and last round with Madame Zarac.

[Translation]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for being here today.

In your presentation, on page 7, you say that the publications have already been informed that if they were eligible for the old program, they could expect to receive between 90% and 150% of the combined amount they received. That seems very interesting, but it would also be interesting to know whether a majority of the publications will be receiving 90% of the combined amount or in fact 150% of that amount. What criteria will determine that some will get less funding?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Less than they received in the past?

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Yes.

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: We think the vast majority will receive more than 100% of their previous funding because of the funding we have freed up by putting the cap on large publications. The only reason why they might fall below that is the way a formula works, you check the eligibility for everybody. Once they're in, you mathematically divide the funds. We do have 130 titles we haven't funded in the past who have applied to us this year. If all of them were eligible, and all of them were large titles, then the same amount of money might be divided in a way that individual titles would receive less than they had in previous years.

I have to say, we're not finished with our analysis yet. I don't expect that is going to be the result. I expect that most titles that are under the \$1.5 million cap—

[Translation]

Mrs. Lise Zarac: You mentioned that you'll have the results in April. Would it be possible to provide the committee with the results, that is, how many publications will receive funding and what percentage get more or less funding?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: That's certainly possible.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Thank you.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: We can provide the committee with it once the information is available and public.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: You also said that you fund publications that cost money rather than publications that are free, to be sure that the readership is reading them. However, the Quebec Community Newspapers Association tells us that three anglophone residents out of five read their local community newspaper. That's a lot. It seems to me that this is assurance that the papers are being read.

As well, the QCNA writes, and I quote:

Our member publications cover communities that are often hard to reach. Whether ethnic, religious, senior, agricultural, educational, aboriginal or official language minority, our publications effectively provide non-duplicating coverage in both rural and urban markets throughout Quebec.

Is that not a good reason to fund these publications?

• (1045)

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Are these publications? I haven't read that...

Mrs. Lise Zarac: These publications are offered free of charge. I mention this because you say that you based your decision on the fact that people who pay for their newspapers or magazines read them more. Myself, I buy a lot of them, but unfortunately I don't have an opportunity to read them all. So that isn't necessarily true. As well, we are told that three people out of five read these magazines and publications.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: The program has limited resources. Scott mentioned that we would need a 300% increase if we agreed to that. Decisions have to be made. The traditional model didn't include free publications. You say that you have an opportunity to read and you buy community newspapers or magazines. Free publications rely heavily on advertising. That is their business model. I will note your comment. We may have those figures, but I haven't checked them. We had to make a decision based on the resources we had available.

The Chair: Surely there are other ways besides subscriptions to determine how popular a weekly newspaper is with its customer base.

Thank you, Ms. Zarac.

We will move on to Ms. Guay.

Ms. Monique Guay: Thank you, gentlemen.

I think a \$75.5 million budget is a substantial one. There is a dilemma, the way I see it. In my riding, there are a lot of local newspapers, and also anglophone papers. The newspapers are monthly or bi-monthly, and they are struggling. They are staffed by volunteers. These free papers don't get any funding. They have to scrape the bottom of the barrel for money, and here I'm seeing that you are actually funding newspapers that are surely very capable of

surviving without your funding. I have some hesitation in that respect.

At page 4 of your document, this is under "Aid to Publishers". They have to sell a total of 5,000 copies a year, the exceptions being aboriginal, ethnocultural and official language minority newspapers. What does that mean, exactly? Explain it for me.

[English]

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Scott, do you want to address that?

[Translation]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: This is the distinction between 500,000 and 250,000 once again...

Ms. Monique Guay: No, the figures are 5,000 and 500.

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: Yes, 5,000 copies.

[Translation]

Thank you, I think I need a coffee.

Ms. Monique Guay: We can offer you an April fool coffee, if you like.

[English]

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: We fund such an incredibly wide range of titles and such a large ecosystem. We fund very large magazines, which also provide the best pay rates to writers and artists, and we fund a large number of very small titles.

When we set the 5,000 copies per year, one of the reasons was that we had a summative evaluation of the PAP, our *programme d'aide aux publications*, a few years ago, and it said that administratively we were spending far more time and money administering small amounts of money than it was worth. My smallest recipient in PAP last year was getting, I think, \$7.11 for the year.

Coming out of that evaluation and taking that into account, we set the general maximum of \$5,000 a year, because lower than that, probably if it sold 5,000 copies a year, a title will probably be getting a grant of \$1,000 or less. Under \$2,500 a year, it will probably be getting between \$500 to \$600 a year. And we had roughly 300 files of this size. Taking into account the administrative burden of having another 300 files to manage and the recommendation from our independent evaluation, we decided to set a level of 5,000 copies sold per year.

We made the exception for the official language minority titles and the aboriginal and ethnocultural titles, because even if it's less than \$1,000 a year, we recognize that any assistance is worthwhile. That's why we set those levels, and we also provide support through our collective initiatives through associations to try to help the smallest of the small.

• (1050)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay: Thank you.

Since I don't have a lot of time, I am going to try to go quickly. We needed some clarification on that point.

If the people at Quebecor, and it is in fact Quebecor where I come from, if they make an application for national or local newspapers and say those papers will in fact be funded by your funding, what do you do to check, to make sure, that it is in fact those papers that are being funded, and not Quebecor, the upper level, that is collecting the money? There are a lot of papers published by Quebecor, all over Quebec. Do you do that kind of checking? It's actually very important. If the money stays in one place, the papers lower down are not benefiting from it.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Ms. Guay, I can assure you that checking is done, because in our view, the applicant is the publisher. It isn't Pierre Karl Péladeau writing, it's the publisher of one of the periodicals.

Ms. Monique Guay: L'Écho du Nord...

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: So I can assure you that we do our checking, with due diligence.

Ms. Monique Guay: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Guay.

We will continue with Mr. Weston.

[English]

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): [Member speaks in Mandarin]

[Translation]

It's important to remember on April 1 that Chinese is not an official language of Canada, eh?

[English]

Thank you for your information. *C'était très bref*. It's very clear and easy for even MPs to understand. I appreciate it very much.

I have several quick questions.

We heard earlier, either from George Bakoyannis or Shelley Robinson, that there was no specific program—I just want to make clear that we're talking about this specific program—that funds the kinds of resources they provide. You heard their testimony. Were you surprised when you heard...?

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: I believe that was Ms. Robinson's comment, and she was referring to community radio. Now, that's a separate branch than ours. That's broadcasting. I can't speak to whether there is a program there.

I can say that with us, we do have a specific program—collective initiatives—that funds industry associations like the QCNA, like l'APF, like Magazines Canada, specifically to provide them with support for their members and support for the development of the industry. I can't speak to whether there's such a program for community radio.

[Translation]

Mr. John Weston: I think it was George who said that there was nearly \$100,000 for francophone newspapers in the rest of Canada.

[English]

He said \$100,000 to English papers in Quebec and 10 times that for francophone papers outside Quebec. I'm wondering whether you

could verify that statement. He admitted that he didn't have the exact numbers, but it was a surprising fact that he stated.

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: It certainly is. That's not reflected in our support. It may refer to government advertising through the public works department, which I can't address.

Through our support, it is probably one-third and two-thirds, and that's simply because there are more paid circulation French language newspapers outside Quebec than there are English language community newspapers inside Quebec. There's a two-thirds, one-third split with our programs, but certainly nothing like a 10:1 ratio.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: You have to look at the number of titles too.

Mr. John Weston: Yes, that makes sense. Monsieur Godin said what I was thinking too: these things should be equal. Well, I suppose the equality could be reflected in the fact that the rest of Canada has a population three times the size of Quebec's, and therefore one would expect to be supporting more publications. The equality may still result in numbers like 2:1 or 3:1 inside and outside Quebec. Is that a fair statement?

• (1055)

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: It may be so. I think it is a fair statement. The other thing, though, is that in our formula, since we base it on the number of copies sold, the value of a copy sold inside Quebec or outside Quebec is exactly the same. If you have 5,000 readers for a French newspaper outside Quebec and 5,000 readers for an English language newspaper inside Quebec, and they have both sold 5,000 copies, they should receive exactly the same level of support from our program. Mathematically, when we divide up our funding in our formula, it's exactly the same for both situations.

Mr. John Weston: Thank you for very clear answers to those not-so-clear questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Weston, for this linguistic demonstration.

We'll resume with Mr. Godin.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Regarding your notes, earlier I asked a question about *L'Étoile*. What about *Le Madawaska*, now? Is that in your notes?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Yes, *Le Madawaska* is in my notes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: How much did it receive?

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: I'm going to follow my line, because it's in very small print. *Le Madawaska* received...

Mr. Scott Shortliffe: It received \$31,366.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I know my Irving friends think I'm always hammering at their case, but that's an excellent example. What are the criteria? We're talking about an empire getting \$31,366 when other newspaper representatives come here and tell us they would very much like to get assistance. We're talking about an empire. Irving has more money than the government of Canada. The government is about \$400 billion in the red; Irving is about \$7 billion in the black. On top of that, it is receiving taxpayers' money for a newspaper. I don't want to hammer at *Le Madawaska*. I don't want my friend Jean-Claude D'Amours getting angry with me. I am using it as an example, because that's the paper that came to mind, but there are other weeklies in New Brunswick. I don't have the whole list, but I know there are 17.

Mr. Jean-François Bernier: Mr. Godin, we don't make a distinction as to who the ultimate owner of a community newspaper is. There is a per-title ceiling and that is the only limit we impose. For example, there are magazines put out by empires that are really not very profitable. The empire is profitable, but the paper isn't necessarily.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I heard echos and I don't think it was an April fool. That is killing small newspapers, for example. It isn't fair competition, because the empire has money and the small paper doesn't. The empire still takes it. That is money it is receiving from taxpayers to subsidize it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

We are coming to the end of the meeting. It is no April fool, but I would like to inform you that when we return, after the Easter vacation, we will have representatives from Air Canada here to testify.

Thanks to the excellent work by our clerk, we have obtained confirmation that the Air Canada representatives will be present at our next meeting.

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours: And the minister?

The Chair: With that, I would like to thank the witnesses and wish you a happy Easter. Thank you.

(The committee adjourned)

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