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The Honourable Rob Moore

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• (0845)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC)): Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

We're very pleased to be joined this morning by Hubert Lacroix, president and chief executive officer of CBC. Also here is Mr. Louis Lalonde, acting vice-president for French services. Welcome. We have as well Christine Wilson, executive director of content planning, English services.

It's wonderful to have the three of you here with us. We're looking forward to speaking with you and seeing your presentation.

Before we get started, I should say that there's going to be a video presentation. It's not going to be broadcast in the room, just through your ear pieces.

Welcome, and with that, we'll turn it over to you, Mr. Lacroix, for your opening remarks.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix (President and Chief Executive Officer, CBC/Radio-Canada): Mr. Chairman, good morning.

Good morning, members of the committee.

[Translation]

I would like to thank you for inviting us here to talk about our 2015 strategic plan entitled "Everyone, Every Way". We welcome the committee's continued interest in what we are doing and I look forward to updating you on our progress. In front of you is a package of information which I will be referring to in a minute.

[English]

Before we go there, let's watch the video.

• (0850)

[Video Presentation]

CBC will continue its push to establish strong Canadian franchises. We will continue to build and sustain a vibrant star system. We will also increase hours of home-grown entertainment programs and reduce our reliance on American scripts. Radio-Canada will ensure the availability of high-calibre dramas in the French-language market. We will support the production of original dramas for the web. We will build on the success of models like TOU.TV as premier on-demand destinations.

Music—we will transition to a comprehensive multi-platform presence in music to better promote and showcase Canadian talent.

Sports—much like for drama, this is another genre for which our strategy will vary by market. CBC will reaffirm its commitment to Canadian sports and Canadian athletes in this new world of multi-platform through improved

economics, strong revenues, and partnership opportunities. Radio-Canada will focus on multi-platform potential to establish leadership in sports news.

Kids programming—we will explore new opportunities in specialty and online.

Signature events—a new commitment to signature events is the most compelling change for the future. Both CBC and Radio-Canada will commit to producing and airing at least 10 signature events per year, events that bring Canadians together in large numbers.

Our network programming strategy is about ensuring that we will, without a doubt, be the home of high-quality content that expresses and enriches the Canadian experience from coast to coast to coast.

The second thrust of our strategy, and one I've truly believed in since day one, is the regional piece. For different reasons we haven't always been everywhere we needed to be, or able to do everything we needed to do. We will reverse that trend. Let's have a look at how we're going to do it.

[Video Presentation]

We will become, by way of multimedia services, a leader in all the markets we serve. We will expand service in select underserved markets to address gaps in coverage. We will adjust across markets with new delivery models. Radio-Canada will enhance its presence in regional life, reinforcing French-speaking communities outside Quebec, ensuring a diversity of voices and opinions in Quebec, and reflecting cultures and minorities across all platforms and across the country.

CBC will continue to expand regional programming genres beyond news, and reflect local communities. And we will pursue new partnerships to enhance both our reach and our impact. While execution will vary by market and between English and French services, the strategy commits us to launching new stations, primarily radio; expanding others; and changing the way we deliver our services in some.

We will introduce new local websites and services, new formats on radio, and increase regional news on television during the day in certain English markets. We will experiment with new hyper local web and mobile services tailored to specific neighbourhoods, for example the million or so people who live on the south shore of Montreal. And we will look at how we can better serve the 95% of the 1.5 million first nations people who live below the 60th parallel.

An expanded regional footprint and a robust multimedia presence in the regions, that's our commitment so that the national public broadcaster can strengthen its presence in the regions of Canada.

This brings us to the third thrust of our strategy—platforms. New digital platforms, including social networks, are surging and have made huge inroads in recent years. When it comes to new platforms, we can't only be a source of content, we have to be more than that. We have to be leaders in getting it to Canadians where, when, and how they want it, and TOU.TV is a great beginning for what we mean by that. Let's take a closer look.

[Video Presentation]

Over the next five years we will strengthen the competitive position of our existing multi-platform offering. We will judiciously expand our specialty channel offering. For example, Radio-Canada will launch a new specialty channel devoted to health, science, nature, and the environment. And CBC will look at specialty options for kids, sports, and A and E.

We will experiment with new platforms and new ways of doing things to better engage with Canadians and allow them to personalize their experience of our content. We will increase development of original online content. We will use social media to engage with our audiences on a personal level and drive them to our content.

We will aggressively pursue new partnerships, and most significantly, we will double our current level of digital investment to at least 5% of our media budgets by 2015.

● (0855)

Clearly, if we're going to be the leader in expressing culture and enriching democratic lives, we need to be at the forefront of digital media. We need to partner with other players wherever we can to lever our brand, our platforms, and our content. That sums up where we're going, and we will get there, mark my words.

By 2015 we will be more financially flexible and agile. A fund of core elements will translate this strategy into action. As a corporation, we will have to adjust our size to the ways in which we deliver our services. Everyone, every way, commits us to balancing the overall five-year plan and enhancing the level of service we provide without abandoning our existing audiences. It also commits us to pursuing revenue growth initiatives, significant cost improvements, resource redirections, and to pouring over our existing assets to extract as much value as we can.

Let me close on how our people will be affected by all of this. People will still always be my number one priority. Without our people, this will not happen. So we need to position CBC/Radio-Canada as a rewarding, progressive, and diverse workplace that builds professional teams of innovative and highly skilled people who are dedicated to accomplishing our vision for the future, who will develop and sustain a leadership climate that encourages collaboration, decisiveness, and trust while recognizing risk-taking and inviting accountability.

To accomplish all of this, we need to push down decision-making in the organization to employees and managers. We need to distribute leadership, empower people, and delegate more. Our people will need to deal with the challenge of change, to know what to keep and what to leave behind so that we can invest, adopt, and adjust as quickly as the other media companies around us, every one, every way.

This is our promise to this country and to its people, and it's the measure by which we want to be judged. We will judge ourselves along the way by monitoring and reporting on our performance twice a year, so that every Canadian may hold us to account. If we get it right, we will deepen our relationship with Canadians. We will be the publicly owned, publicly minded space where Canadians can meet and exchange with each other, their communities, their country. They will come to know CBC/Radio-Canada as the leader in expressing culture and enriching democratic life on their behalf.

We have a tremendous opportunity before us, and now is the time to seize that opportunity and push forward. That is our commitment. That's our focus. That, ladies and gentlemen, is our road map for the future. It's how we ensure that our services remain relevant to the

changing needs of Canadians. It's how we ensure that Canadians know exactly what they can expect from their public broadcaster in return for their investment in us.

● (0900)

When we launched our plan in February, I said that we would be reporting to Canadians on our progress every six months. A progress report is already on our website, and a copy is in your folder. Let me give you the highlights.

In addition to offering great Canadian shows like *Michael: Tuesdays & Thursdays*, and coming this winter, a new comedy called *Pérusse Cité*, we've been producing great signature events, unique programs, and events with significant cultural impact.

A show called *1 Day, 1 jour*, one day in the life of 34 million Canadians, is a documentary snapshot of Canada all shot on one day: April 30, 2011. It is the product of more than 730 submissions we received from the public, which we compiled into a very special program connecting these stories in a very emotional way.

This fall we brought Canadians *John A: Birth of a Country*, a political thriller tracing the passionate struggle between John A. Macdonald and George Brown that changed our history.

[Translation]

For me, another example of what "Everyone, Every Way" means is the way we brought classical music to Canadians at peak hours in mid-week last September.

The long-awaited opening of the new home for l'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal was a huge event for Montrealers and a great success. We broadcast the opening concert, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, on all of our platforms, i.e. on television, radio and the Web, both on CBC and Radio-Canada. It was the first time in our history that we attempted an initiative of that scope.

I would now like to discuss another one of our wonderful initiatives by referring to a press release we issued yesterday.

[English]

On Sunday, *Espace Musique* and CBC Radio 2 will be celebrating a day of Canada in concert.

[Translation]

This will be a full day of concerts from eight Canadian cities featuring symphony orchestras, musical groups, singers and instrumentalists from among the most celebrated in the country. These captations will be from Halifax, Ottawa, Quebec, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Banff, Toronto and Montreal.

● (0905)

[English]

We do the same thing with hockey. We don't just broadcast games. We've turned hockey into a community celebration of the hockey passion we all share. We started Hyundai Hockey Nation, which this year brought more than 3,000 children out for skating, coaching clinics, and skill development with our *Hockey Night in Canada* hosts and celebrities at seven locations across the country. We also created our Hockey Day in Canada, now an annual showcase of amateur sport and community spirit. This year it will come to you from Prince Edward Island.

This is what your public broadcaster is all about.

Let me tell you now what we've been doing to enhance our regional services.

In September, at CBC Kelowna, Rebecca Zandbergen began hosting our newest afternoon show, *Radio West*, two hours showcasing the people behind the news in the B.C. interior that also gives listeners a chance to share their stories. It also means that our afternoon program in Victoria can focus more on the things that matter to people living on the island. These regional services will be joined this spring by CBC Kamloops, with new radio and online services. I was there last week. The response of our communities is overwhelming.

Canadians also told us that they missed their local news on the weekend, so we're responding, and we've adjusted. With the help of the local programming improvement fund, we've re-established local weekend news on Radio-Canada in 12 of 13 communities. On the CBC side, Toronto's already up and running, and weekend news will also be available in Calgary this winter. But actually, there's much more.

Last month we announced the next phase of our 2015 local service improvement plan. It includes weekend local news for Edmonton, Ottawa, the Maritimes, and Newfoundland and Labrador by next spring and new radio and online services for the Waterloo region and London, Ontario, by next fall. We've also accelerated by six months construction of our new multimedia station in Rimouski. We'll be offering better regional services across all of eastern Quebec by next fall.

[Translation]

There are also regions like the suburbs on the North and South Shore of Montreal that have seen a tremendous growth in population. People in those areas have needs and interests that are not always the same as those who live in downtown Montreal. When traditional services, like local TV and radio stations, are not available because of a lack of available frequency, we are looking at new ways to serve the community using new technologies. We will be announcing details of our plans on November 21.

Our goal is to expand local services to an additional six million Canadians over the next five years. This is what we are offering Canadians.

The third component of our plan involves digital technology. Our increased investment in digital platforms has created new mobile

apps for CBC News and for Radio-Canada, giving Canadians better access to the information they need, no matter where they are.

Radio-Canada has also developed original programming for our web audiences. Three-minute webisodes like *Les chroniques d'une mère indigne*, based on the mommy blog chronicles by Caroline Allard and *En audition avec Simon* are creating new audiences for Canadian programs online, and new programs for our television.

Last June, we launched ESPACE.MU, a mobile music service which makes available the largest offer of francophone music on the Web; more than 81,000 musical selections tailored to fit your mood. It's a great place to discover new Canadian artists, and it is one more example of what the public broadcaster is offering to Canadians.

● (0910)

[English]

Is this an ambitious plan? Absolutely. How are we going to do all of this? It will be by managing smartly, by focusing all of our resources and efforts on these priorities, by continuing to do what we do every year in finding new efficiencies and using new technology and new methods of production, and by shifting resources and staff. We are not asking government for any additional funding.

CBCers and *Radio-canadiens* are very proud of what we continue to create with the resources we have, proud of our contribution to the Canadian broadcasting ecosystem.

And let's be clear; in this ecosystem all broadcasters receive economic support from the government. CBC/Radio-Canada receives by far the most support, and we are thankful for that. But we also do the most.

This past summer, production crews have been shooting new CBC/Radio-Canada television programs and bringing economic benefits to every region of the country. *Arctic Air*, a new drama, which will be airing in January, is being shot right now in Yellowknife and Vancouver. *Michael: Tuesdays & Thursdays* was shot in Ottawa.

[Translation]

And there is *Ici et Maintenant*, shot on the North Shore.

[English]

Heartland is still shooting outside Calgary.

[Translation]

Belle-Baie is shot in Acadia.

[English]

And there is *The Republic of Doyle* shooting in St. John's.

We tell Canadian stories. This is what we do to showcase our country.

I'd like you to take a look at the charts you will find in your folders, the red and the blue charts. These are the prime-time schedules for the major Canadian broadcasters in French and in English. The red represents Canadian programs; the blue, foreign programs.

Look at our schedules. They are Canadian schedules. As part of our 2015 strategy, those two blue programs that you see in prime time, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Jeopardy*, will be replaced by Canadian programs starting next year.

CBC/Radio-Canada invests more in programs made by Canadians than all of the private conventional broadcasters combined: \$696 million, compared with \$681 million last year. That investment supports local businesses, independent production companies, caterers, designers, electricians. In fact, a study by Deloitte & Touche last June found that every dollar invested in CBC/Radio-Canada creates almost \$4 in value to the Canadian economy.

Our plan, "2015: Everyone, Every Way", is our way of ensuring that we keep improving on the value we deliver to Canadians in return for their support. Our only objective is to meet their expectations.

You've now seen our plan. We'd like to hear what you think.

Thank you for inviting us this morning.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Lacroix. Thanks for the video and your presentation.

We are now going to have seven-minute rounds of questioning. This first round will lead off shortly. In the first round of question there are seven minutes for the member to ask the questions and for the answers; then we'll move on to the next questioner. The next round, when we get to it, will be of five minutes.

The first person with a question is Mr. Brown.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Lacroix, in an earlier tour of duty on this committee when I was on it, you came before the committee when you first became president. I know you've done a lot of work since that time.

Welcome today, and thank you for that presentation. I think it was a good insight for us as a committee and for Canadians, to see what the CBC is doing.

I will say I was impressed with the chart that showed that most of your programming in the evening is in fact Canadian content. I think there may be a perception out there that it is not, so thank you for that chart.

Recently you ran *John A: Birth of a Country*. Far be it from me or anyone in the government to tell you what to put in your programming, but I thought it was an excellent program. I try to take my son to historical events and places in eastern Ontario on a regular basis. Recently we did a little tour in Kingston, and it is good to see the Sir John A. program bringing it to life and to see that in your programming.

However, it ended in 1864. I was left wanting much more. I for one—speaking for many Canadians, I'm sure—want to see more. I'm sure that might be on your potential programming for the future.

Thank you for being here today to talk about the five-year strategic plan you have put forward. Of course, it was developed with the assumption that CBC/Radio-Canada will have stable funding within the next five-year period. While government could potentially have a reduction, it would not really change the path of your new strategy, but it could force you to make some adjustments.

Can you give some examples of some adjustments that potentially you could make? You talked a little bit in your presentation about being financially flexible. Maybe you could address that for us, please.

● (0915)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Thank you for your comments on Sir John A. I think that was also a very good story.

Having stable funding and the ability to continue, like the other broadcasters, with the same rules being applied to all broadcasters under the Canada media fund and the local programming improvement funds are important assumptions towards our being able to deliver to Canadians the program that you saw.

Should government, in its quest to balance its books, choose to take dollars away from our government appropriation, that will not deter us from the three priorities that we have, which you heard: more national, more regional, and more digital, and all of that in an environment of transparency and accountability.

It might slow down the objectives we have. We told you that we think there are about seven million Canadians or a little more than that who are either under-served or unserved by local services of CBC/Radio-Canada. We might not get to the full number of six million, which is our projection in the plan. Funding reduction might slow it down, but it will not change the priorities that CBC/Radio-Canada will put out and has put out in this plan.

Mr. Gordon Brown: This committee, over the next little while, is going to be doing a study on how we should celebrate the Canada 150 project in 2017 and how we go about celebrating that anniversary. I can remember the 1967 centennial celebrations. This is going to be an important milestone in our history. Is there any programming that you're planning that directly or indirectly is going to relate to Canada 150?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We understand the importance of those years coming. I'm going to ask Christine to tell you a bit about how we envisage our contribution to this. It's an important one.

Ms. Christine Wilson (Executive Director, Content Planning, English Services, CBC/Radio-Canada): Good morning, and thank you.

I loved *Sir John A.* too—same part of the country, right?

On our sesquicentennial, we're thinking of it as the culmination of five great years of big moments in Canadian history. Next year is the bicentennial of 1812. I know that the government has planned a tremendous number of activities around that, and we'll be covering and filming them. We're also planning a two-part documentary series just for 1812. It's a little bit of fun, if anybody wants to hear about it.

We're going to be putting people in red coats and sending them to those places along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River where pivotal battles happened—where the generals fell, or whatever—even though those places are now Timmy's parking lots. Then we'll be talking to Canadians and asking them, "Do you know that this place where you're standing drinking your double-double is where the whole country changed, where the history of our country changed?" We think that's really great.

There's another thing that I think is really fun. We all know that we won that war handily. Coming from Brockville, I think that was one of my first childhood stories. But the Americans don't know that. We'll be going into classrooms, side by side, where the war of 1812 is being taught in America and in Canada, and we'll switch teachers to see if they can teach it the other way. We think that will be fun too.

But that's just the beginning of five years leading up to the sesquicentennial. We have the Queen's jubilee anniversary coming up. We have the 100th anniversary of the Grey Cup, and women getting the vote. We have the 150th anniversary of the Quebec and Charlottetown conferences coming up, so we'll get *Sir John A.* back in for you there. Then, of course, Vimy and Passchendaele will be coming up during that.

So it's an unbelievably important five-year period in the history of the country leading up to the sesquicentennial.

● (0920)

Mr. Gordon Brown: Maybe you can tell us a little more about what you're going to do for the Queen's diamond jubilee.

Ms. Christine Wilson: We haven't done all our work yet on the Queen's diamond jubilee, but we'll absolutely keep you informed on what's planned.

The Chair: You have 45 seconds.

Mr. Gordon Brown: I have to say I'm impressed by what I'm hearing about historical presentation. Only three out of ten provinces in Canada require high school students to take a history course to graduate, which I find hard to believe. I took a lot of history when I was growing up, in high school and in university.

What are the steps that the CBC is taking to ensure that historical content of broadcasting remains prominent and of high quality? I will say that what you've done so far is definitely of high quality.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Our mandate that comes out of the Broadcasting Act is to inform, enlighten, and entertain Canadians, and the enlighten part is exactly what we talked about. You heard Christine tell you about how these great moments over the next five years will be portrayed. We understand the importance of them. We understand that as a public broadcaster we have to be there and put these events into a conversation with Canadians. So we have a role to play, we understand it well, and we will play that role.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Nantel, you have seven minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We applauded because we felt all the dynamism in your presentation. French-speakers who live in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada have a very strong sense of belonging. It is unanimous: Radio-Canada's contribution to our culture is exceptional.

I like to make jokes. With your permission, I would like to tell you a wonderful anecdote. My 16-year-old daughter generally listens to American programs, especially on the Web. Recently she decided to rent all of the seasons of *Tout sur moi* which is in my opinion a very innovative comedy.

I would like you to explain what motivated your programming choices to make them so bold. I think it is part of Radio-Canada's mandate not to choose more run-of-the-mill, conservative—not in the political sense—entertainment programs. Radio-Canada often goes much further in that regard.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We do like to take certain risks. They allow our relationship with our listening audience to progress.

Mr. Lalonde will talk about what happens when we create a programming grid.

Mr. Louis Lalonde (Acting Vice-President, French Services, CBC/Radio-Canada): Before replying, I would like to tell you that your daughter could also view the complete *Tout sur moi* series and other drama series, without having to rent them, by going to *Tout.tv*.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Unfortunately, the screen is smaller.

Mr. Louis Lalonde: I should first mention the privileged relationship CBC/Radio-Canada maintains with the entire community of independent producers in the country. The good relationship that has developed is a relationship of trust. The producers we deal with who now come to us with ideas feel confident when they come to Radio-Canada because they know that they will be supported, that they can suggest ideas that will generate originality, relevance, and especially, will showcase the Quebec and Canadian identity in all of the projects we develop with them. That is the first criterion. It is important because we are very different from other broadcasters, American broadcasters particularly. That is a key element in my opinion.

We of course seek diversity at all levels, we want to explore different genres and be aware of and in touch with Canadian reality wherever it is evolving.

● (0925)

Mr. Pierre Nantel: Ideally, English-speaking Canadians would have just as strong a sense of belonging toward the CBC as French-speaking Canadians have toward Radio-Canada.

What do you have in your toolkit that would enhance that sense of belonging? I must in passing pay tribute to Radio-Canada's Web initiative. This has been exceptional over the past two or three years. You corrected me and pointed out that it was not necessary to rent television programs because they can all be viewed on *Tout.tv*. The Web offering is exceptional.

Would the Web be one option to improve the connection with English-speaking Canadians elsewhere in Canada, as well as the one with French-speaking Canadians in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada?

Secondly, could the Web be a tool to better serve French-speaking communities elsewhere in Canada, in a more targeted way?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: There are several parts to your question. I am going to address the matter of the connection. The main objective of the 2015 strategic plan is to rebuild the emotional connection between English or French-speaking Canadians and the national public broadcaster.

As I have said before this committee, when I took up my position, my emotional link was the program *Bobino*. When I was young, I was raised with *Bobino*. When I think of CBC/Radio-Canada, the first image that comes to my mind is *Bobino* or rather *Bobino* and *Bobinette* because she was also very important in that program.

We think about the Web and about our relationship with anglophones and francophones. You saw what we did regarding the news, for instance, with certain apps. We have set things up so that people can find us. Through the magic of geolocation, we can know where you are. We deliver your regional news to you. The proof is in the pudding: never have we had so many listeners and viewers, both for radio and television, as we now have since our Web services were launched, in French and in English.

At this time, we are very relevant to our listeners. You will have seen in our strategic plan that the third development axis is the Web. Whether with *En audition avec Simon*, or with *Les chroniques d'une mère indigne*, or be it through music, the Web allows us to serve communities like Longueuil and Laval in the Montreal region, in a way we could not have imagined previously. We can take a Radio Q program and transform it into a television program and deliver it so that it can be downloaded.

And so we can now do all kinds of things. Digital technology is certainly at the heart of our development. It is the reason why we have committed to doubling our investment in digital platforms, and whatever our revenue is in connection with CBC/Radio-Canada programming, at least 5% of our budget will be allocated to the development of digital technology.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: I asked you that because some of my Acadian colleagues were wondering for instance about what happened in Windsor, and Commissioner Fraser's findings.

Do you think that the Web could improve that situation? Do you think the Web will be one way of reaching the 2.5 million French-speakers outside of Quebec?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: One of Louis' responsibilities at Radio-Canada is to be director of regional French services. I am going to ask him to answer that question.

Mr. Louis Lalande: The Web is an extraordinary tool but it is not the only one. Our strategy to reach all of the communities and maintain that link with them is to ensure that we capitalize on our existing infrastructure, and to that we add the Web component.

In a few weeks, we will be announcing an important initiative that will allow us to consolidate the regional Web strategy. Each of the country's large regions will have Web service seven days a week; this service will be information-based in the main and will reflect what happens in each of these communities. This is an important step to consolidate our presence on the Web.

I would like to mention a project Hubert referred to briefly. This is the famous project concerning Montreal's north and south shores. It is an experimental project and must be seen as a virtual station. As Hubert mentioned, we know that certain populations have different characteristics. Sometimes we cannot obtain a broadcasting licence, and in addition, traditional broadcasting stations mean a large investment.

This project will allow us to test the mechanics of it all. We think that there is something very interesting there because it allows us to have a participatory relationship with our viewers, Internet users and the citizens in each of these regions. We know that Canadians are asking for this. They participate and this enriches our programming as a whole.

• (0930)

[English]

The Chair: Merci, Mr. Nantel.

On to you, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): I thank *Bobino* and *Bobinette*.

A voice: Exactly.

Mr. Scott Simms: I grew up with *The Friendly Giant*, which I wanted to be when I grew up, but—

An hon. member: It didn't work out.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Scott Simms: Well, I like to think I'm friendly, but a giant, perhaps not.

I want to dive into this. I'd be derelict in my duties if I didn't get into the regional aspect of it, given the fact that I come from Newfoundland and Labrador.

By the way, congratulations on your production of *Republic of Doyle*. It has created a lot of excitement in a market that is small, but we do it quite well. It's a cool show. We like to think it's pretty cool, and it's met with a great deal of success. But that being said, it's great for the community there, the independent producers, the people involved in film-making, and beyond just the local programming or just the news value of *Here and Now*, the local news show.

One of the things I've always enjoyed about CBC was that it shared a story based in one area with the entire country. I can go to CBC and I can learn about the history of the pipe organs of Quebec, and how it's such a world-famous industry. I didn't know that until a short time ago. We can learn about how they discovered dinosaurs in Alberta. We can learn through the stories told of Newfoundland. For example, CBC covered our commemorations of 9/11—how Gander was opened—and the movie as well. That the story played out through the rest of the country is, to me, the ultimate expression of how the CBC was the cultural crossroads.

I worry about that in light of certain cuts that are coming. I understand the fact that we all have to tighten our belts, and that sort of thing, but if we're talking about a possibility of a \$100 million or more deficiency in revenues—I'm not saying that's what it is, I'm just saying that it's a possibility—then how does regional programming survive that? In other words, that third pillar, which means so much to me, has to be somewhat shakey in looking at something like that.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: As I said to Mr. Brown a second ago, I don't know what the number is going to be at the end. I don't know what kind of adjustment we're going to have to make. But I would like to reiterate the fact that we are going to preserve the three directions, the three thrusts, the three strategic directions that you will find in 2015. One of those is our presence in the regions, because we've said many times that we cannot be a public broadcaster without being deeply rooted in the regions.

Will that change the way we deliver the services in the regions? Perhaps. I don't know what that means yet. We'll have to see for ourselves what consequences we have. But the important thing is that everything is going to be connected to those three strategic priorities, which are the heart of 2015—our plan—and we're going to try as hard as we can to preserve them.

Mr. Scott Simms: I hope you do.

I wanted to stress the importance of the fact that a show like *Republic of Doyle* to us is local, but it is a national show, really—

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely.

Mr. Scott Simms: —and it has such a huge consequence for us.

The other part of it, of course, is radio. I can listen to my central morning show where I am, and get what you consider to be hyper-local. I hope that is preserved through all of this as well.

I'm sorry, I think you wanted to add something.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Yes, Christine wanted to add something.

Ms. Christine Wilson: Someone asked me about *Republic of Doyle*. Do you know that more than a million people a week watch that show? It's a hit.

Mr. Scott Simms: So it's not just us then.

Ms. Christine Wilson: No way, and in fact one of the things that *Doyle* helped us recognize.... We've got *Doyle* coming out of Newfoundland. We've got *22 Minutes* in Halifax, *Michael: Tuesdays & Thursdays* in Ottawa. We've got all across the country.... We've got *InSecurity* coming out of Regina and this new show that's going to be coming out of the Arctic. We used to talk about what a Canadian show looks like, what's a real and authentic Canadian show, and people would make jokes about beavers and Mounties. What we've come to realize is that what Canadians seem to love is seeing the country, because our most popular shows are those shows like *Doyle* and like *Heartland*, which showcase how big and beautiful the country is.

• (0935)

Mr. Scott Simms: I hope during the Geminis that the city of St. John's wins best supporting actor, quite frankly, because it is a great backdrop.

Sorry, I don't mean to jump topic, but I don't have a lot of time.

My colleague wanted to know about the services in French outside of the major French market, across this country. The second part of my question is about the fact that some time ago there was a decision made by the CBC head office, which I did not agree with at the time and I think it wasn't a good decision, to reduce the hour-long supper newscast down to 30 minutes across the country. Now in Newfoundland, for the show *Here and Now....* and I'm using it as an example, but I think other shows across the country suffered the same when they went to 30 minutes. It was a decision taken at the main office, I guess, in Toronto. Earlier you said decision-making locally. I think that's something very interesting as well.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: You know, Mr. Simms, that we're talking about 90-minute local news now across the country. That's the window of local news. So that trend has been reversed.

When I said on the video that sometimes we were not always there in the regions, yes, we recognize this, and that's why we've turned it around. We understand also the importance and our role as the public broadcaster in the regions. When I say that Louis was the person responsible for French across the country in the regions, we understand the importance of that. A gentleman a few seconds ago, Monsieur Nantel, referred to the situation in Windsor. Windsor is the fourth...well, we have four stations in Ontario. When we saw the reductions that we had to go through in 2009-10, we had to deal with the fact that we had a \$206 million shortfall. We had to let 800 people go. And we tried to keep the Windsor programming and use other models that we had in the country by inserting local Windsor information in the Toronto morning show, in French, and then we listened to the population and the two windows of 10 minutes have now become 55 minutes between seven and eight in the morning.

So we're adjusting based on what we can do and the imagination of our people.

Mr. Scott Simms: So there's a greater degree of autonomy now?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: No, I think what we're doing is committing all the resources and efforts towards these priorities, and that's what rises to the top when we have to make decisions.

Mr. Scott Simms: And what about the question about the French services for the rest of Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Lalande: Could you repeat the question?

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms: My colleague wants to know essentially, in the face of budget cutbacks, how you would ensure that francophones outside Quebec do not lose their essential services.

Mr. Louis Lalande: Obviously we're working very hard to keep and expand our services in transforming our operation.

[Translation]

I will give you an example. In Acadia we have reorganized all of our resources so as to increase service in Nova Scotia, while maintaining discussions with the community.

We did that in Ontario and we have done so in all of the regions. Hubert referred to an increase in local news. In French, we went from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. This change took place two years ago. We now have 30-minute news broadcasts in all of our regional stations during the weekends. I believe this demonstrates that Radio-Canada is respecting its mandate and attempting to serve Canadians wherever they may be.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Gill.

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my thanks to the witnesses for being here today and providing us valuable information.

Two years ago, CBC News totally revamped its format. The way news was gathered, presented, and accessed by the public has been updated to meet the needs of a modern audience. How has this been received by Canadians? Could you also tell us about CBC's experience in handling this change?

Ms. Christine Wilson: The transformation in the news business over the last five years has been unbelievable. For example, on May 2, a date you may recall, there was an election in the country. There were, as usual, results shows in the evening on all of the major channels. In the past, that would have been what we would have offered Canadians on election day, that results show, and we would have said that we had won. We'd have had a huge success because two million Canadians watched our results show. Well, now we have radio and television and podcasts and Twitter and blogs and we have Vote Compass. In fact, the real story is that more than ten million Canadians used CBC on that day. That's the success that we've been able to have—we've been able to give Canadians the information that they need, where they need it. We had 17 million page views of local riding results on that night. You can imagine somebody sitting and watching Peter on the big screen, and then on her laptop she's checking out to see how folks are doing in their markets.

So it has totally transformed what news means, and I'm proud and happy that we were at the beginning of the wave in making those changes.

• (0940)

Mr. Parm Gill: Is that the result on a day-to-day basis, or was that just a one-off?

Ms. Christine Wilson: No, no, that's just an example of one day. Obviously, between our new news apps and—

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Evan's show.

Ms. Christine Wilson: Oh, for sure, Evan, all of it. News is not about a newscast at 10 o'clock any more. Every night two million people watch *The National*, but that's not what news is any more. News is about a 24/7 commitment to giving people the information on Twitter, on blogs, on the website, on apps, everywhere that they are.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Let's take the *Power & Politics* show of Evan Solomon, two hours every day during the year, whether Parliament is sitting or not. It's about stories. It's about podcasting. It's about radio podcasting. It's about making sure that we see what's

going on throughout the country and on the Hill. A two-hour show every day, that's a strong commitment from the public broadcaster, transforming what was a great show by an iconic figure before. When we replaced Don Newman, we had to come up with something special, and that's where Evan Solomon stepped up with his team and that's how we deliver the content.

Mr. Parm Gill: Thank you.

The Canadian government recognizes the significance of CBC/Radio-Canada. Because of this, the 2011 budget announced that CBC/Radio-Canada would again be provided with \$60 million to be used in the production of high-quality programming. Could you talk about how exactly this money will be used to help enrich the cultural and economic lives of Canadians?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Let me give you a bit of perspective on the \$60-million envelope, and then I'll ask Christine and Louis to give you details of what we're doing in the markets.

The \$60-million programming envelope has been given to us since 2000, so it's been something that we used for Canadian programs, trying to make sure that we can reach the regions or provide more Canadian content to the television schedules.

Louis, why don't you start with Radio-Canada and how the \$60 million has been used?

Mr. Louis Lalonde: First of all, there is some money set aside for enhancing the radio programming all across the country.

[Translation]

This amount is very important. Even if the sums are small when we distribute them to all of the stations, they really ensure that certain topics will be discussed. As Mr. Simms was saying, these are issues that interest all of the population, as they are local issues.

As for television, there are two components. The first supports Canadian programming, drama programs especially, and the development of entertainment and cultural programs. There is also an information component. It is through that fund that we finance the presence of reporters in various parts of the country.

I'll give you an example. The team that worked on the Taser file was from the Service français in Vancouver, which is funded through the \$60-million fund. This also makes it possible for them to work with their CBC colleagues.

This means that a certain number of issues can be broached, and it allows them to work over a longer term to ensure that all of the issues that touch Canadians are raised.

There are also other elements. This fund undeniably allows us to create and to launch programs that are more difficult to put together.

I'm thinking of a series like *Génies en herbe* which we broadcast last year. That program is shot in all the regions of the country and involves 12 youngsters who travelled throughout the country.

It is really thanks to this \$60-million fund that we can implement projects like that that are completely unique.

● (0945)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: The local news programs obviously also benefited a great deal from that fund.

[English]

Christine, what can you tell us about initiatives?

Ms. Christine Wilson: One of the things for which we count on the \$60 million is that local news is pivotal, obviously, but reaching out to communities on non-news kinds of issues is really important too. Looking at the cultural lives or the larger lives of people in communities, one of the things it's allowed us to do is establish a series of programs that are cultural programs. They might be documentary programs; they might be about events that are going on.

I'll give you a couple of examples. We were able to cover the Newfoundland Screech Comedy Festival.

The Chair: Just one second. We're having a little trouble with our translation. We'll try to sort that out.

Is it good?

A voice: There it is.

Ms. Christine Wilson: The red light is on. Is that a good thing?

A voice: Yes.

Ms. Christine Wilson: We were able to cover the Newfoundland Screech festival. That was great. We also covered the Nova Scotia blues festival.

Its documentaries too. For example, in Manitoba we had this great documentary called "40 Years of One Night Stands", which I thought was at least a title that would get people tuned in, and it was about the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, so that was kind of neat.

This is one of the ways we spend the \$60 million.

It's not just in the regions, we also—as Louis mentioned—use it to augment network programming and some of the signature events we've done. I might mention something like "Champions of Change", which is a celebration of volunteerism across the country. These are the kinds of works that the \$60 million allows us to do.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

Now we're into five-minute rounds for the question and answer.

Go ahead, Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): First, I'd like to thank you all for coming and for an excellent presentation, both orally and on video.

My favourite pieces out of this whole thing are these schedules. It basically goes to show the importance of the CBC, because if CBC isn't doing the work it's doing, nobody else will be. So congratulations on that.

There are two questions I want to put forward to you. The TOU. TV initiative you have on for Radio-Canada, will there be any intention of rolling out something like that for CBC?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: The answer is not right now.

This concept of TOU.TV is one that showcases not only our own programming but the programming of other public broadcasters in the world. Maybe we can talk about TOU.TV in a second.

It's a little different on the English side, frankly. The need might not be there in the same way. The relationships we have around the world with respect to content, like a Hulu-type, because that's what it is, might not be as relevant in English.

I might ask Christine to speak to that in a second.

Why don't you tell us more about TOU.TV?

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Lalonde: One of the advantages is that our relation with the producers and other large broadcasters allows us to offer French-language content that is far broader. This is interesting. Whenever I travel in the country people always tell me to what extent the francophones who live in another province are happy to have so much choice and that the choice they now have is much broader than it used to be. They are very happy about that.

I think that Christine could answer your question more precisely.

● (0950)

[English]

Ms. Christine Wilson: I was going to say that when you look on this chart, you can see why in English Canada it would be a different situation. We're the only broadcaster that owns any content that we could offer up, and it becomes a bit of a rights issue.

We have made absolutely sure that our content is available to Canadians online, and we'll continue to do so wherever they are. That's our commitment.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

The second question is pertaining to scripted programming, dramas. There's a lot of documentary style, comedy style, and I'm wondering if there is any intent on bringing back more scripted drama into the programming.

Ms. Christine Wilson: We've got a brand-new scripted drama starting in January, the one from the Arctic called *Arctic Air*. Is that what you mean by scripted drama?

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Well, I don't know. Is that a scripted drama?

Ms. Christine Wilson: Oh, absolutely. I mean, *Republic of Doyle* is a scripted drama, *Being Erica* is a scripted drama, and *Heartland*. I think we have six scripted dramas on the air right now.

In January, *Arctic Air* will be starting. It's the story of two families who own a commercial plane business. From week to week, you'll see the weekly missions they go on. Some of them are commercial in nature and some of them are search and rescue, but mostly what you'll see is how beautiful that part of the country is.

But for sure, we are totally committed to scripted drama. We have lots of it, and we'll have more.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Okay, great.

Like my colleague, I came to Canada in 1968; I missed Expo 67, unfortunately. But in terms of children's programming and growing up with *The Friendly Giant*, I pronounce my name "Terone", as opposed to "Tierone", and everybody thought my name was Jerome. Those of you who grew up with *The Friendly Giant* would get that.

CBC has been a leader in children's programming, and I noticed you had something in your presentation about children's programming. I wonder if you could elaborate a bit more on that.

Ms. Christine Wilson: Children's programming is the largest genre of any programming we have on CBC. We have 32 hours of children's programming a week. What's probably special, and it's why parents count on CBC, is that we don't provide programming that just the kids like; we provide programming that the parents want the kids to like.

We have a child psychologist, a developmental psychologist, who works with us to make sure we provide programming for the whole child—the cognitive growth of the child but also the emotional growth, and the physical well-being of the child as well. That's all very important to us.

A little bit of what you saw in the 2015 strategy was marking the fact that we have to be very careful that we are where children are. We can't just continue to be on CBC television; we have to make sure that as children start using other platforms and addressing media in different ways, we can get that content to them.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: The two networks are also making great use of the web for that. Last night, my three-and-a-half-year-old and I spent 30 minutes on CBC Kids. We were navigating—she did that by herself—and playing around with the content that supports what she sees in the morning, whether it's the *Razzberry Jazzberry Jam* or *Doodlebops*, or something like this.

Then she'll switch over to Radio-Canada and she'll watch *Toc Toc Toc*. The quality of the website in French for *Zone des petits...* when you click on it, you'll see incredible games, interaction between a kid and the different actors or creations that are on Radio-Canada in the morning.

It's much more than simply kids watching on Sunday or Saturday mornings. It's about how we can make them have fun and play with the website, as they are being exposed to all of these great characters.

Do I have time for one—

The Chair: No, you're two minutes over, Mr. Benskin.

Mr. Armstrong.

• (0955)

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Thank you.

And thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Lacroix, you attended the national gala, the premiere of *Breakaway*, a great Canadian movie, hosted by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, James Moore.

Can you tell us what the CBC is doing to promote the movie industry in Canada?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Do you want to talk about our investment in film?

Ms. Christine Wilson: Absolutely. We were partners in *Breakaway*, so we're very happy about that. It will be on CBC.

One of the most exciting things we're doing that speaks directly to your point is that we will be offering, starting next summer, a two-hour block of Canadian film every week. You might be interested that one of the issues we have with two-hour blocks of film is that because *The National* news is on at 10 o'clock, it's very difficult for us to find movies that you can play between 8 and 10 o'clock that are family-friendly. And some Canadian movies that are great Canadian movies—I'm thinking of *Incendies*, for example—are not something you could play between 8 and 10 o'clock.

So we're creating a big slot all summer long of what's going to be the Canadian movie night in Canada. It will run between 9 and 11 o'clock, or 9 and whenever the movie ends, because some Canadian films run long as well. That's going to start next summer.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Lalande: Last year, with regard to French-language services, Quebec cinema produced 14 new films and Radio-Canada was a partner in that it invested in 11 of those 14 films, so that was a major investment.

I would also like to point out that for the first time in the country, a French-language film was produced in Ontario. Its title is *La Sacrée* and Radio-Canada was a partner right from the outset, with producer Mark Chatel. The premiere was held a few weeks ago and naturally Radio-Canada is going to broadcast it as well.

That is an important investment and it is appropriate to emphasize it, because we have a tendency to forget it. It's an important investment that contributes to the richness of Canadian cinema overall.

[English]

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Thank you.

CBC was granted a one-year extension on the digital transition. Can you elaborate why that had to happen and how the progress is going?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: In June 2010 we came out and said that we were going to put out 27 transmitters where we have originating programming, meaning that every place in this country where you have a program that we create will have a digital transmitter. That investment was a \$60-million investment. We said that for that to happen in the context of our resources—and also in an environment where more than 93% or 94% of Canadians get their TV signal by either a cable or a satellite provider—that was the most we could invest at that particular time.

We kept the 627 other analog transmitters going by special permission of the CRTC.

We'll see what happens in the next months. We haven't decided exactly what we are going to do. We'll see what kinds of resources we have, and come the end of our extension whether and how it will play out. But the idea was that we wanted to make sure that we delivered our services across the country in the most economical way, by making use of our resources, and we thought that was a very viable plan.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: Technology is changing, and it seems like a big part of your plan is trying to adjust to the changes that are happening now and how people will view their content, and anticipating changes that may happen over the next few years.

How is the impact of over-the-top media like Netflix, Hulu, and these other mediums affecting CBC, and are you maybe adjusting your plan to deal with that?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: It doesn't affect us that much, except that we actually sold inventory to Netflix. We have an agreement with them. We've provided them some content that the other Canadian players didn't want. So actually for us it was additional revenue. We sold them inventory that nobody wanted to see any more, and they used it—only on the CBC side. We looked at certain things with respect to Radio-Canada. We're not there yet. So frankly, at the end of the day, it's very incidental in terms of how that affects us.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: I know that in my household I'm about the only one left who watches any television, because they watch on iPads and on other platforms and use their phones. And 30-second clips are what a lot of young people are watching, and they move on to something else. So it's good that you're trying to anticipate that and being flexible.

On the other side, are you prepared for the onslaught of negative attacks upon the CBC from the millions of *Coronation Street* watchers across the country? Are they prepared for this being taken off or moved from their time slot?

• (1000)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: You're going to be very happy to hear that, on the contrary, we've recommitted to *Coronation Street*.

Mr. Scott Armstrong: That's good news.

Ms. Christine Wilson: I know, it just keeps getting better.

We've had *Coronation Street* on for 50 years, and somehow over time we got to be nine months behind, right? For a long time this was a bit of a joke among Corrie lovers—and they are legion and vocal—but then it got to be a bit of a business problem. Because geofencing is not very strong, and as people really started to love Corrie, they found other ways to watch, and our investment in this product—which we would never dare take off—was being jeopardized.

What we're doing this year is we're doubling up on Corrie. The reason you see Corrie on this sheet between 7 and 7:30 is because we're doubling up. We have Corrie on every night between 6:30 and 7:30, and obviously it will take us nine months to catch up. Once we've caught up we'll be in sync with Britain and we won't have any more complaints and people won't be going over the geofence. Corrie will not be between 7 and 11; Corrie has rarely been between 7 and 11 o'clock on our schedule. It's normally in fringe or in the afternoon.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: So it's going to go back to 6:30.

Ms. Christine Wilson: Correct, it will be at 6:30.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: That's why it doesn't show on your sheet, going forward.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Armstrong.

We will go to Madame Boutin-Sweet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): I want to thank our witnesses for being here with us today. Mr. Lacroix, I have a question for you.

You mentioned that your employees would have to adapt to the new realities. Can you tell us more about what that means, and whether it will mean staff cuts?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We used the word "reinvention" several times at Radio-Canada. In English, we say "innovative disruption" to talk about the changes we are dealing with. Approximately 500 jobs in the radio and television environment are going to be transformed into digital jobs. So this is a transformation we are undergoing. Certain employees will indeed leave as they will not have the knowledge or necessary skills to allow them to retrain. Others will be supported in various ways through this period of change. To deliver services in the 450 region, that is north of Montreal, in Longueuil and Laval, if we have to make certain adjustments to have the necessary expertise, we are going to have to find people who are more skilled at this type of work.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: You talked about training some people in order to transfer them to other types of jobs.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely. Training and development in an environment where everything is changing every few minutes, every few seconds—you know how fast this type of change happens—is highly important for us. In fact our investment in training employees is one of the items we are trying to preserve in the context of this strategic plan. We have to do more, we are aware of that, especially if we want them to be able to adapt to the environment of our 2015 strategic plan.

Louis, did you want to add something on this?

Mr. Louis Lalonde: Just like any other large business, Radio-Canada is experiencing the effect of demographic change. That factor should not be forgotten. As we move into the digital era, we see an opportunity. Because of the very nature of things, several employees are going to leave because they will have completed their mission at Radio-Canada. As they reach a certain age, they retire. This is why the next three or four years are going to be a key period for us. We will be able to ensure that we make the most of those factors so as to not miss certain things and invest in new opportunities.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: To put this comment in perspective, I will quote an approximate figure of 40%, which corresponds to the proportion of the workforce that will be reaching retirement age in the next four years. This does not mean that these employees are going to retire but that they will have reached retirement age and will have met the necessary criteria to retire if ever they choose to do so.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: My second question concerns the francophonie. My colleagues talked about French-speakers outside of Quebec. There are some very good programs like *Tout le monde en parle*, for instance, but the content is more focused on Montreal and Quebec. Do you have any strategies that would allow French-speakers outside of Quebec to see themselves in these programs? Is there a danger that budget cuts will adversely affect those strategies?

• (1005)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Madam, we are very well aware of the important role the public broadcaster plays in delivering services to French-speakers outside of Quebec or the Ottawa region, even though that is where 90% or 91% of francophones live in Canada. However our commitment to the francophonie goes much further than the simple delivery of services.

In a moment we will talk to you about our daily connection to the regions, which is maintained through what is known as the Regional Panel. This allows us to hear comments and to know how we can better deliver our services. I was in Regina last week where I met with six or seven people who are responsible for the francophonie in the greater Regina area, either in schools or in the arts and culture environments. I heard their comments and afterwards I went to Vancouver where I met with some other people and the same exercise was repeated. I even went to Kelowna and there the three persons who represented francophones were in the room when I talked about CBC/Radio-Canada.

We are always concerned with understanding the needs of francophones in Canada well, and we attempt with the resources we have to give them as much information as possible, and as many services as possible. This is in fact Louis' constant preoccupation as he is responsible for Radio-Canada in the regions.

Louis, did you want to talk about this a little?

Mr. Louis Lalonde: I will complete the picture.

Of course we have a relationship with the stakeholders and all of the regional directorates are in constant communication with all of the organizations and communities of the francophonie. We also entertain an important relationship with all of the large Canadian associations. In fact next week I have a half-day meeting with the FCCF. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that we are really in touch and are having a dialogue. We do that twice a year to ensure that we really know what is going on in the country.

Now as to your question I would go even further. *Tout le monde en parle* is a program during which we talk about what happened in the news in current events during the week. When something happens in Canadian current events that everyone is talking about you can be sure that it will turn up on that program. When the Radio Radio group was nominated for the first time at ADISQ they were on *Tout le monde en parle*. When Xavier Caf  ine, an Ontario musician and composer, had a great deal of success, he was invited on *Tout le monde en parle*. Of course, the current events that are discussed tend to be more about Quebec, but when something happens, generally speaking *Tout le monde en parle* hones in on it.

I'd like to complete my answer by mentioning other initiatives we have taken, in particular in Acadia. We banked on a group of comedians, La Revue Acadienne, who were the most popular and

the most watched in Acadia. They only performed on stage. Now they have a weekly program that is extremely popular in the Acadian region. For the first time they will be featured on a *Bye Bye* program [New Year's Eve program], an Acadian one that will be broadcast in Acadia. We are just about certain that we will be able to use a large part of that for a network program a bit later.

These are initiatives that show that we are aware of talent and follow it, that we are aware of what is going on. When we feel that we can give people a hand up to reflect our knowledge of talent and so on, we do that.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: The second part of my question was whether cuts could affect that.

[English]

The Chair: Merci. Time's up.

We'll move on to Mr. Hillyer.

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you.

I'm actually one of the few people from my riding who really love the CBC and its content. However, I do have a concern, not necessarily about the wrong intent, but the video and this conversation talk about the CBC's role in promoting Canadian values. I'm concerned about who it is that gets to decide what Canadian values are. How do we make sure we're reflecting Canadian values instead of inventing Canadian values that we want Canadians to value?

These are a couple of quick examples. I did a tour of the capital region with the capital region people, and one of the things they said was that we want to instill fitness as a Canadian value. Another example is Vote Compass, which seemed to have some problems with guiding people rather than just revealing to people. Even just in our conversation today you mentioned that you can't show some of these shows between 8 and 10. So while families and individuals can choose what not to watch, because CBC is funded by Canadian tax dollars, even if they decide not to watch it, they are paying for programming they may not value. How do we guard against that?

• (1010)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Thank you for being the only one who's fighting for CBC/Radio-Canada in your riding. I greatly appreciate that. It's very important.

Values, and making sure that we express a diversity of voices, is one of the very important priorities. As the president and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada, I actually expressed in my key performance indicators, which are on the web and very public, how I get to be evaluated in the delivery of our services.

We're going to talk about fitness and Vote Compass in a second, because we exactly address this. We're going to talk to you about how we think Canadians are telling us, because we constantly survey what they would like to hear and have delivered. We went to Calgary with the news. We did a panel recently. *The Current* went and spent two days in Calgary. We are very aware that we need to present different pieces of Canada to the listeners and to the people who watch CBC/Radio-Canada.

Let's talk about Vote Compass for a second, before I turn it over to Christine on fitness. What we did out of B.C., which was a program that turned into a great initiative, was a spectacular way for us to engage Canadians in fitness.

I want to talk about Vote Compass. Vote Compass was not about the instrument. Vote Compass was about only 50-some percent of Canadians going to the polls. For us as a public broadcaster, that's a concern. That number is not high enough. We want people to get engaged in issues. We want people to go out and form opinions. Our job is to ensure that with the diversity of services, diversity of voices we give you, Canadians can actually make up their minds on issues and show up at the polls and tick the box, understanding issues and having conversations, whether it's at home or whether it's in school.

You do not know the number of high school teachers who actually rang us and gave us testimony about this: "For the first time ever, I now have an instrument that I can use to have conversations with kids who are now 17 or 18 years old, first-time voters, who have no clue." When they have these conversations, they go home and say "Hey, mom, how about this issue". All of a sudden, the parents are saying "Whoops, where did you do this, and how come you had this conversation?" All of a sudden, this conversation starts another conversation. That was the purpose of Vote Compass—not the tool in itself, but the issue about bringing more information to Canadians so they could be better voters. That was the purpose behind it.

Let's talk about fitness, because that was a great initiative.

Ms. Christine Wilson: "Live Right Now" was a national spectacle of participation between CBC and non-governmental organizations that actually started because of the release of the StatsCan survey that showed that our kids were not going to live as long as we did because they were overweight and they were sitting on the couch too much. As public broadcasters, we said "What are we going to do about that? Why don't we get together with some other interested organizations and try to get folks off the couch?" We challenged Canadians to lose a million pounds. We've lost 1.6 million pounds so far, and counting. We go out and do challenges together. People online found friends that they could go out and exercise with, so they weren't doing it alone. We got kids to do runs together. What we were trying to do was facilitate a healthier environment for our kids, largely.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: This started with a television program also, because there was a television program every Sunday evening, *Village on a Diet*. That was the program. The challenge was there, transformed into a web, a very far-reaching initiative, and a conversation that then went to all the platforms.

The Chair: Mr. Hillyer, your time is up. It's more than up, actually. I guess I'm being very generous today.

On to Mr. Cash.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Thank you.

I'd like to thank you all for coming. That was an excellent presentation.

I want to resonate with my colleagues. This is the thing that excites me the most, to see all this Canadian content by a public broadcaster in prime time. Although I have been searching desperately for *Intelligence* and *The Border* in prime time, I cannot

see them anywhere. They were my favourite shows, and it speaks to something I want you to touch on.

In urban areas like Toronto.... Some 50% of those who live in Toronto and the GTA were not born in Canada. I want to know how in the five-year plan you regard this demographic issue and how you speak to all Canadians.

•(1015)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: It's diversity, again, which is one of the values being promoted by this plan. We understand that Toronto and Vancouver are cities that have transformed themselves over the years because of the influx of immigrants who have made this country what it is now. That's why we need to adapt.

Christine will tell you what we did in Toronto, for example, in the local programs on the network and in the local news. There is diversity in the anchors and in the kinds of stories we do in the morning on Matt Galloway's show. We're very conscious of this. It's not only about the faces of the people who are actually on the camera. It's much more about the issues being raised, because we have to resonate.

Ms. Christine Wilson: You know, it's interesting, because sometimes people think about diversity as a social good kind of issue. For a public broadcaster, for sure it's that. But it's also a really important business issue, because we know that Canadians want to see themselves on TV and hear their stories on TV. If there are entire segments of the population we're ignoring, that would definitely be to our peril.

We are rigorous about making sure that on the screen and behind the screen we have stories being told that will resonate with the widest group of Canadians. We're proud of having *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, of debuting that six years ago. At the time we were told that no one else in the world would be able to broadcast it. It is now in 152 different countries.

We're proud of the distance we've traveled, and we'll keep going. As Canada changes, we need to change too.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We monitor this. We have stats. When we talk about adding to our resources, this is something we follow extremely carefully.

Mr. Andrew Cash: You touched on the fact that a one-dollar input nets a four-dollar output. I think it's very important for Canadians to understand that the public broadcaster is, among other things, an economic driver.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Yes, we believe that, sir. The reason we brought this to the forefront is that we can have a good conversation about Canadian content. We can have a conversation about diversity. We can have a conversation about the broadcaster being the link between Canadians from coast to coast to coast, English and French. But now we can also have a conversation about economic value.

We asked the same people who did a similar study for the BBC in the U.K. to come in with the same robust methodology and to put public inputs—inputs not only from us but from all sorts of sources—into the model they built. That's how they came to the conclusion that for every dollar we get we generate \$3.70 of economic value for Canadians. This is a conversation we also need to have. When you affect the broadcaster, you affect, indirectly and directly, a whole bunch of people we work with.

Mr. Andrew Cash: That's my final question. We are anticipating cuts. We hear the story often that cuts won't really affect anything, but we know that cuts do. We need to understand more clearly what is on the horizon in terms of job losses at the CBC.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: All of that will depend, sir, on the conclusions with respect to the government appropriation. Right now, what we are telling the ministers we meet with and this committee.... And we thank you again for allowing us to show you what CBC does and the value we bring to Canadians. That's what we're doing now. We are clearly showcasing the programs. We're talking to you about the value. We're talking about how important we are in this country and about Canadian stories. We will leave the decisions with respect to the appropriation to the government.

• (1020)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Cash.

We'll go to Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I appreciate your being here today. Thank you for attending.

This is nice, because I've thought in the past that if I had a chance to ask some of the folks at the CBC a few questions about diversity, I'd like to do that. This follows on some of the questions we just heard.

You mentioned diversity, but you restricted it in terms of faces or issues. I'm going to focus on the news, where I think the CBC is failing Canadians in terms of diversity of opinion.

Ms. Wilson, you just mentioned offhand two million viewers a night for *The National*, when I think the numbers are more like half a million. *CTV News* is doubling your audience. Your numbers have been crashing over the last number of years, in part, I would argue, because your approach to news tends to be one-sided, and viewers are tuning out because they're looking for a good debate and they're not getting it from CBC's *The National*.

So in terms of the issue of diversity of opinion, which I think makes a strong news room.... I won't talk about your competitors in Canada, but if you look in the United States, you have people like Charles Krauthammer, with both NPR and *National Review*; George Will on ABC, a conservative; Bill Bennett on CNN, another conservative; and Ron Williams on Fox News, a liberal. I think CBC news in particular is failing its audience, and that is reflected not in your allocation from the Government of Canada but in terms of the number of viewers. I would submit to you that CBC is becoming a caricature of itself. There was a time I think it was better able to hold governments to account by providing both sides of the debate, but in the last number of years I think it has begun to fail to do that, and

you're seeing that result in a rapidly declining television audience share.

If you expand your platform and no one's tuning in, I'm not sure taxpayers are getting value for money just by paying for more content when eyeballs are going elsewhere.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I'm disappointed that is your opinion about CBC's *The National*, but I respect your opinion. It's not the first time I've heard that opinion about diversity of voices. That's why it's been, again, at the forefront of my priorities and the priorities of the person responsible for our French network and the person responsible for the English network. It's also in the mandates given to the people who have to deliver news every day.

We constantly follow this. In 2009 or 2010, realizing there was a strong perception of that kind, we did the most important study of ourselves through outsiders. We used five independent people to look at 16,000 pieces of news on CBC television, radio, and the web. They came back and we asked if they saw issues with the way we deliver news. They said we sometimes delivered too much opinion, not enough facts. We came back. We adjusted this. We put the results of this balanced study on our website so everybody would realize that we didn't hide those conclusions. We did the same thing on Radio-Canada.

We are acutely aware of the importance of our delivering news in a balanced way with a diversity of voices so you can be the best possible person. We are going to continue doing this until such time as this perception goes away, because the facts, sir, with all due respect, seemingly don't lead us to believe that we are not delivering it in that way. Anecdotes and, yes, a bunch of them sometimes were not very good, sometimes we miss, but on the whole the idea and the objective of diversity of voices is very important.

Christine is going to add something.

Ms. Christine Wilson: I just hate being accused of getting a number wrong. The audience for *The National* of two million is that two million people a night watch CBC *The National* on some platform, not necessarily that newscast. Over time that's been pretty steady. It's just that people are starting to watch the program in different ways and different places.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: And look at what we've done with—

Mr. John Williamson: That's not really an industry-accepted number. When you go out now you see CTV and Global in particular with a million-plus viewers, eyeballs on the television, and CBC *The National* is down to about half a million, and sometimes not even that.

• (1025)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: You're right with those numbers if you only look at those particular numbers on that night, if you don't take into account what we do on the web and the podcast and the rest. Frankly, that's the key. CBC News Network, sir, if you look at those numbers and you compare them to CTV news networks or anybody else, we're so much more relevant, sometimes it's three, four, and five to one.

Mr. John Williamson: In your favour or against you?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: No, no, in our favour, with respect to CBC News Network.

Mr. John Williamson: You're suggesting that I'm throwing out anecdotes, but I would say your audience share has been sliding the last number of years on the news front. I'm a news hound. I want CBC to provide good news, and I don't think it's doing that. Your audience share television-wise has been declining. I don't know what it's called in television, NADbank for news, the audience numbers, industry standards, show your numbers are declining. I don't know how you can toss that aside and say—

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: No, we're not.

Mr. John Williamson: —it's not, by taking a different matrix or a different measurement.

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

Mr. Nantel, you and Mr. Simms are going to share five minutes. Good luck with that.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel: My question will be very brief.

I think that we have to try to demonstrate the relevancy of Radio-Canada/CBC in English, as in French, rather than questioning the investment we make in it. We have to ensure that we have a wonderful platform that reaches out everywhere.

I have a very brief question and I would ask you to respond briefly as well. Recently Minister Moore presented *Breakaway*. Radio-Canada made a large investment in that. Will you have the opportunity of following up on this on television because of your investment?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Yes, that's it. Normally we are the first to broadcast such things on television either on Radio-Canada or CBC. That matter is raised during negotiations when we make the initial investment.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: That is really a part of what we refer to as the Canadian identity. If *Breakaway* were to become a television series that would be something comparable to the program *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We will first of all broadcast the feature film during peak hours and then we will see what happens.

Mr. Scott Simms: Thank you very much sir, you are very kind.

[English]

I find there's a diversity of opinion on the CBC. Trust me, in my seven years there were a lot of things in the CBC that I didn't like, but the diversity does exist. Incidentally, I don't agree with Don Cherry most of the time, but I like the guy. So I'm one of those left-wing pinkos that actually like him. Go figure. I will put that in as my opinion. I don't think that is correct, and I think you should get the other side of the story. We should be presenting as in newscasts.

Because it's been asked of me and talked about, I want to ask you about our treaty co-productions. The investment for CBC in treaty co-production would be something like *The Tudors*. There is money that goes into that from the CBC, Canadian Media Fund, and so on. What is the future of the CBC with treaty co-productions in fostering Canadian content and Canadian ideals?

Ms. Christine Wilson: Treaty co-productions are regulated by Telefilm. We currently have one treaty co-production. Out of 27

Canadian series that we have, we have one treaty co-production. That's the most we've ever had on the air at any given time. Because you bring the audience great content like *The Tudors* or *Camelot*, they're good for the audiences. They also allow Canadians to work on an international stage, right? They allow Canadians to go and work with the best in the world, working on something like *The Tudors*. So as a small part of a balanced diet, they're a great thing. Co-productions work for us. But are they ever going to be more than a tiny part of an offer across our network? No, for exactly the reason that you say.

Mr. Scott Simms: In the future, are you considering doing more co-productions? I'm not totally against it, because I find that in our neck of the woods co-productions worked over the years. They allow people to sharpen their skills and work in the industry. I would prefer something like *Sir John A.* over something like *The Tudors* or *Camelot* or that sort of thing.

• (1030)

Ms. Christine Wilson: Right, and we would too, but the price point is different and the impact's different. We would be interested in doing it as one show out of a lot of shows, but not as the main part of our diet, ever.

Mr. Scott Simms: Do I have more time?

The Chair: You have 40 seconds.

Mr. Scott Simms: I want to go back to the issue on the regional programming once more. We're talking about the digital transition as well. I think Mr. Armstrong brought it up earlier too. What kinds of numbers are we looking at to make that transition from OTA over to digital, from analog to digital, in terms of your expenditures?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: So \$60 million was the investment that we made in order to deliver and to put up 27 digital transmitters and the infrastructure that went with that. We still have 627 or 628 analog transmitters. They're still running. That's our commitment to deliver those services. That's the impact and the way we use it.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Simms.

Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you again for coming. I appreciate that. It was very enlightening.

I have just a couple of really brief questions. It's more again back to the regional aspect of it.

My riding is larger than Prince Edward Island in terms of population. The region I come from has over one million people in it. It's just north of Toronto. I'm wondering if there's a way or if you've given thought to how our communities might be able to use your platform, the web. We have some pretty vibrant community radio stations that reach a small group of people. Have you thought of encouraging or allowing some of the smaller community radio stations, communities outside of Toronto to the northern part of Toronto that don't necessarily make the regular Toronto news cycle, so that they can actually cooperate with you in delivering that news?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Christine just wrote down "Stay tuned".

Yes, it's about partnerships. It's about expanding the scope of the resources we have in partnering with people on the ground. It's about communities, and we're very aware that in some areas that's what we're going to do. That's why we're experimenting. We're experimenting around Montreal. We're experimenting in New Brunswick, where we actually put a camera in a radio morning show to see how it sounds, how it looks. Other people are doing it. We don't like what it looks like. We need to make sure that the quality of the program remains. The answer is that we're very aware of this, and as we expand our services and try to get to more communities and more Canadians, partnerships of this kind are not excluded.

Mr. Paul Calandra: The final question, for now anyway, is about CBC archives as we move towards Canada 150. There is an enormous amount of material there. Not long ago I was on the website and I was looking at some of the seaway coverage, and it was just remarkable stuff. I'm wondering if there's going to be more of an effort in how we can get easier access to that. I can imagine there's just tons of it, obviously, but in the context of Canada's 150th birthday, perhaps we can make it more easily or more readily available to students, to educators, to municipalities who are impacted by this. You've done a lot of work on it, but it would be nice to actually have it easier to find.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: A lot of it, sir, starts and ends with rights sometimes. It's not all our material, and when we make it accessible to other players, then it's a question of cost. It's not our cost. It's the cost of the people who contributed to the content. We're aware of how important those archives are. Radio-Canada is looking at certain projects about trying to see what we could do with them. Again, you're putting your finger on something we are aware of and would like to use even better.

Louis.

• (1035)

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Lalonde: Three years ago French services launched a program entitled *Tout le monde en parlait*. If everyone talked about an event at least 20 years ago, of course Radio-Canada would have been talking about it as well.

It's a wonderful idea to revisit an event. We add testimony from those who witnessed the event and who can talk about it with a certain distance. It adds up to an extraordinary series. In fact it is the program schools and universities request the most, so that their students can find out about recent history; it's really exceptional.

I'll give you an example. When it was confirmed that the Jets would be returning to Winnipeg, we prepared a program on the return of the Jets. The program was not focused so much on the return of the Jets as on everything the arrival of the Winnipeg Jets had caused in terms of changes in the hockey world.

You will recall the first million-dollar salary, that was given to Bobby Hull, and the arrival of players from Eastern Europe. These were events that changed the nature of professional hockey and they happened in Winnipeg, with the Jets. We heard from former players and the former owner. There were a whole series of elements that put that page in our history in perspective.

That is one example of what is happening currently at Radio-Canada.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Calandra.

We have time for two more questions.

Mr. Benskin has a question.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: I just want to go back to the subject of eyeballs. Every network is struggling to come to terms with the changing watching habits of audiences. Television as we know it is pretty well on its way out, with the number of choices that people have. Even the physical televisions themselves are coming out with built-in point of access, video on demand, or that type of thing per channel.

It has been said that you're losing eyeballs to your news programming. But the numbers, as I understand them, are pretty well staying true because of the cross-platform diffusion of those programs or the news.

Can you elaborate a bit on how you track that? What mechanisms do you have in place to track those numbers?

Ms. Christine Wilson: Goodness, it's D-Day every day at about 1:30, when the numbers come in to tell us how we did the night before. That's just in terms of the program audiences. In addition to that, on a weekly basis we look at ourselves and the competition. We're constantly looking at the environment and how it's changing, not just on television but across platforms. Radio now has portable measurement, so they have daily measurement as well. We're watching that.

First of all, people are watching as much conventional television as they ever did. I don't mean they're watching TV, but they're watching it in other places. There hasn't yet been a reduction in the amount of television that people watch.

Second, they're watching TV in other places as well, and that's the kind of behaviour we're seeing. It's still a niche behaviour. Among people like us or our kids it might be a prime behaviour. My children certainly don't watch a lot of conventional television any more, but in the homes of John and Jane Q. Public, television viewing is still what's done. That's still the main way that people are getting these kinds of programs. But that is changing, and that's the wave we're all on. That's the direction we're going.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: It's starting to be recognized by the advertisers. They will follow more numbers than simply the numbers we have on a particular evening program on the number of eyeballs that watched. It allows us to try to maximize, as we follow the people in their viewing habits, some of the revenues for CBC/Radio-Canada.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you to our witnesses for appearing before us today. We appreciate that. Thank you for your video presentation. We look forward to great things to come.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We'll be happy to come back.

The Chair: That's wonderful. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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