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Chair: Mr. Scott Simms



Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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• (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

Good morning.

Welcome to meeting number 22 of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Pursuant to the order of reference made on Wednesday, September 23, 2020, and the motion adopted on Monday, November 16, 2020, and Friday, February 26, 2021, the committee is meeting on its study on the relations between Facebook and the federal government.

To ensure the meeting runs smoothly, I would like to remind you of a few rules.

You may speak in the official language of your choice. Interpretation services are available to all. At the bottom of the screen, you can select floor sound, without interpretation, or English or French.

When you wish to speak, please click on the microphone icon to activate it. When you are finished, please mute your microphone to minimize interference.

I remind you that all comments should be directed to the chair. If a member wishes to speak without my having previously given the floor, he or she should activate his or her microphone and indicate that he or she wishes to make a point of order.

If a member wishes to speak to a point of order raised by another member, he or she should use the “raise your hand” icon at the bottom of the screen to let me know. If you see that I have not seen you, please let me know on the screen. My assistant is here to help me give speakers the floor properly.

Pictures or screen shots may not be taken and distributed.

In case of technical difficulties, please notify me immediately. Please note that the meeting may need to be suspended for a period of time, to ensure that all members can fully participate in the proceedings.

Today we have representatives from Facebook Canada. They are Mr. Kevin Chan, global director and head of public policy; Mr. Marc Dinsdale, head of media partnerships; and Ms. Rachel Curran, policy manager.

You will have 10 minutes to make your opening remarks, which will be followed by a question and answer period.

Mr. Chan, you have the floor.

Mr. Kevin Chan (Global Director and Head of Public Policy, Facebook Canada, Facebook Inc.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you for inviting us to your meeting. We understand that the committee wishes to learn more about our decision to restrict access to news content in Australia last month. I'm happy to address this to the best of my ability. As you may know, news has since been restored on Facebook following key amendments in the Australian news bargaining code legislation.

The decision to restrict access to news was made with a heavy heart and came after years of working to find a solution in Australia that recognizes the realities of how our services work. Unfortunately, the proposed legislation did not acknowledge basic facts about the Internet, did not recognize the value that platforms provide to news publishers, stood to benefit only large media conglomerates and not independent media outlets, and sought to penalize Facebook for content it didn't take or ask for.

We are pleased that we have now reached an agreement in Australia that recognizes the value that Facebook brings to publishers. The agreement provides the flexibility for us to support small and local publishers whose work is critical to public interest journalism. The agreement also allows Facebook to retain the ability to decide if news appears on our platform, so that we won't automatically be subject to a forced negotiation.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Since we entered into this agreement, we have signed agreements with four publishers in Australia. As is the case elsewhere in the world, we will continue to invest more in the long-term sustainability of journalism, not because it is good for our business, but because it is good for democracy and society.

It is important to make clear that we recognize that these difficult times are having a very negative impact on the Canadian media industry. The last two decades, as consumers have shifted from print to the Internet, have been very tough on the media. My colleagues and I are working hard every day to do our part to help publishers adapt.

[English]

We work directly with Canadian news publishers, large and small, to help them maximize the value that free Facebook tools provide for their businesses. This includes free distribution of the news links they share on Facebook, which send people directly to their websites, a value we estimate to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year for the Canadian news industry alone.

Jeff Elgie, the CEO of Village Media, based in Sault Ste. Marie, estimates that in the month of January 2021 alone, Facebook and Google generated 24 million page views for Village Media for free, which he calculates was worth about \$480,000 to his news business that month.

Over the past four years, we have gone further by directly investing over \$10 million in partnerships and programs to encourage and support the development of sustainable business models for news organizations here in Canada. Just last week, we announced our plans to continue this work with an additional \$8 million in news programs over the next three years.

Marc Dinsdale, our head of news partnerships in Canada, will provide you with some highlights from these investments.

Mr. Marc Dinsdale (Head, Media Partnerships, Facebook Canada, Facebook Inc.): Thanks, Kevin.

One of our signature investments is the Facebook-Canadian Press news fellowship, which began in 2020 as a program of \$1 million to create eight new local journalism positions across Canada. CP publishes the fellows' stories to its wire service, making the work available for distribution to more than 1,000 Canadian news outlets in the CP network, in both official languages.

In January 2021, based on the early success of this program, we expanded it to include two new positions for emerging indigenous reporters, bringing the total net new journalism positions we've created to 10. Last week, we announced a three-year renewal of the Facebook-Canadian Press news fellowship.

For COVID, we announced in April 2020 a total of \$1 million in grants to support Canadian and U.S. local news organizations covering the coronavirus. Eighty-one Canadian publishers each received a \$5,000 U.S. grant to cover unexpected costs associated with reporting on the crisis in their communities. They included The Coast, Halifax's weekly; The Temiskaming Speaker from New Liskeard, Ontario; Peterborough Currents; La Gazette de la Mauricie, from Trois-Rivières; Autour de l'île, from Sainte-Pierre-de-l'Île d'Orléans; Clark's Crossing Gazette, in Warman, Saskatchewan; Le Franco, from Edmonton; and Medicine Hat News.

Facebook's accelerator program helps news publishers navigate the digital transition to build sustainable businesses. Since May 2019, 15 Canadian publishers have participated in the accelerator

program, including Postmedia, The Globe and Mail, La Presse, The Brunswick News, the Winnipeg Free Press, Le Soleil, Glacier Media, The Discourse, the Daily Hive, Northern News Services, The Tyee, The Narwhal, The Sprawl and Village Media.

Paul Samyn, editor-in-chief of the Winnipeg Free Press, has stated, "The key impact to date" of working with the accelerator program "is that we've been able to share a new vision for a profitable future based on online audience growth at both the executive level of the company, as well as with our board of directors and ownership group."

[Translation]

I'll now turn it over to Kevin for some closing remarks.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Thank you, Marc.

• (1110)

[English]

As you can see, Facebook is deeply committed to supporting news in Canada, and we have been doing so for years. As noted earlier, we intend to do even more. Over the next three years, we will be making an additional investment of \$8 million into the Canadian news ecosystem to increase a three-year renewal of the Facebook-Canadian Press news fellowship and provide new funding to increase the capacity of under-represented voices in journalism. This brings our total investment to date in the Canadian news ecosystem to \$18 million over a period of six years.

We also announced that we hope to partner with Canadian publishers on commercial deals that allow us to experiment with ways to connect people to more news on Facebook. It is important for me to be clear on what this type of paid partnership could be and what it is not.

Currently, when Facebook users see news content in their feeds, they typically see a short preview text generated by the publishers themselves and then a link to take the user from Facebook to the publisher's own website. We do not pay publishers for sharing this kind of content on Facebook. They choose to do so because it drives value to them. As noted earlier, Village Media assesses the value of traffic from Facebook and Google to be close to half a million dollars in one month alone. Another example is The Globe and Mail, which achieved record digital subscription growth in 2020, in part by combining its AI platform and publishing strategies with Facebook's tools. The committee has a package that's been translated and that you will receive tomorrow, from what I understand from the committee clerk. It includes this case study with The Globe and Mail.

In some cases, we may see additional value in partnering with publishers to provide links to more stories on our platform for user experiences beyond what is already being shared by publishers themselves. If we are actively seeking to provide a certain kind of user experience that requires more from publishers, then we would proceed by striking a commercial agreement with the publisher in order to use the additional article links for that purpose. We hope to partner with Canadian publishers on commercial deals that allow us to experiment with ways to bring more value to them.

[Translation]

In conclusion, finding a sustainable and equitable way to foster a robust media ecosystem in Canada requires goodwill and co-operation from publishers of all sizes, digital platforms, government, and people who value news and are willing to pay for it. Facebook can play a role in this, but it cannot do it alone.

To date, discussions between the parties have been too infrequent, and it's time to come together to ensure that journalism is set on a long-term sustainable path.

[English]

With that, Mr. Chair, we would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Mr. Chan and Mr. Dinsdale, thank you for your statement.

Without further ado, I yield the floor to our first member.

Mr. Waugh, you have the floor for six minutes.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Thank you to our new chair. It's a pleasure to see you in that chair this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chan and Mr. Dinsdale.

You know, I'm a little cynical about the \$8 million you announced on Thursday or Friday. You knew you were coming to this committee on Monday, and then all of a sudden you bring out another \$8 million to support your news fellowship. Maybe you could just talk about that.

Marc, I guess this question would be for you. Why the timing on Friday with the announcement of an additional \$8 million from Facebook?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Chair, on a point of order, if I may.

I believe that Mr. Waugh's camera is not the one that is selected. I can't see his pleasant face.

I can see it now. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

Mr. Waugh, we were very worried that you had gone missing.

[English]

Mr. Marc Dinsdale: Mr. Waugh, the way we look at these investments is that they are a continuation of what we've been doing for several years. We can go back to 2017, at the beginning of these commitments, with the digital news innovation challenge that helps publishers like The Sprawl grow their presence and build a more sustainable future. We have been doing these types of engagements since then, through the accelerator programs, through COVID grants, etc. These programs and these commitments we're making—in the future as well—have been planned for a long time and have been under negotiations and discussions with partners for a long time.

The purpose of our commitment is to make sure we're able to help publishers build toward a sustainable future.

• (1115)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: I just thought the timing was a little ironic. You know, you're coming to committee and.... I realize you committed \$10 million before the additional \$8 million, but that's fine.

Mr. Chan, Rupert Murdoch played a big part in Australia in getting news platforms to get paid by Facebook. I know you talked here on January 29 and you talked here this morning about how Facebook in your opinion generates hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of flowthrough traffic to Canadian journalism organizations. You mentioned Village Media here today.

What evidence can you share that supports this statement, which you made again here this morning? Facebook is not going to pay for news links, as you mentioned, or content the publishers voluntarily put on Facebook, so I would like to hear the numbers that Facebook is.... I mean, give me some financial numbers that news publishers are getting.

Mr. Kevin Chan: The best answer, and probably the one that's going to be most solid, will be answers that come from the publishers themselves, so today we are sharing with the committee the impact, if you will, from two publishers, one big and one small. I hope Jeff will forgive me if I say that he's small. I'm sure he is doing well in Sault Ste. Marie and in the markets he's operating in, but obviously it's not a national outlet.

If we look at Jeff Elgie and Village Media, which is involved in various local news markets in northern Ontario, they themselves... I think that's the best way to get the numbers. Don't take it from Facebook. You should take it from the publishers themselves. He is saying that in January 2021, free distribution from two platforms alone, Google and Facebook, accounted for 24 million page views back to his site. More concretely, as a business, if you were to ask him the value of those 24 million page views, his estimate is close to half a million dollars in January 2021. That's the Village Media case.

In the Globe and Mail case, as I said, the package is with the committee. It is translated into both official languages, but I was told the committee would not receive these until tomorrow. I regret that, but I understand there is no way around it even though we submitted it earlier last week. The Globe and Mail case study shows a publisher that is pursuing a different strategy—not just ads but also subscription, which is very important, if I understand correctly—by combining by their award-winning Sophi AI technology with free Facebook tools. In part due to these Facebook tools, they had a record subscription year in 2020.

We did a joint case study with them, so they obviously signed off on it. You can read up on the case study to understand how they feel they found success on Facebook. Of course, we hope these case studies.... We put them out there to the public and they're also available online so that other publishers, including publishers in Canada, can learn from the success of The Globe and Mail.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Who controls the data around the news that is used by your organization, Facebook? Who controls that data?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, I will answer your question, but perhaps I should just clarify that when a publisher shares news links onto Facebook, people may see these news links in their own feeds. They click, sir, and then they go back to the site, and then they can build that direct relationship with publishers. One of the key things we have heard from publishers, in fact, is that they want to be able to develop that direct relationship with their readers and their potential customers. By redirecting traffic back to them, we enable them to do that.

If I may say so, sir, it's also not that different, for example, from maybe—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan. I must interrupt you. You may have another opportunity to complete your answer.

Thank you, Mr. Waugh.

I now yield the floor to my honourable colleague Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you to the witnesses. For the record I want to say I hold all these witnesses in very high esteem and I appreciate your being here. I believe elected officials and social media providers need to work together on sound public policy.

That being said, my job is to get answers for Canadians. I have a lot of questions. Again, I would appreciate succinct responses.

Mr. Chan, unless otherwise mentioned, my questions are for you.

Mr. Chan, who is the CEO of Facebook?

• (1120)

Mr. Kevin Chan: That is Mark Zuckerberg.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chan, Facebook is a closely held public company. That's because there is one individual who controls the majority of the voting shares.

Who is that person?

Mr. Kevin Chan: The majority shareholder is Mark Zuckerberg.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: As a result of holding the majority of shares, Mr. Zuckerberg also controls who's on the Facebook board of directors. You currently have nine directors. Seven of them are independent directors and two of them are Facebook employees.

Who are the two Facebook employees who are directors?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I haven't checked recently, but I believe it's Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You are correct.

Mr. Zuckerberg is also the chairman of the board. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I believe that to be true.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much.

Under the corporate governance guidelines published on Facebook's website, the board of directors acts as the management team's adviser.

Mr. Chan, did the board of directors advise Facebook's management team on Facebook's decision to block Australian users from sharing news articles on February 17, 2021?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, I'm not privy to that information.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You're not privy to that because you're not on the board of directors and you don't attend the board meetings. Would that be correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: That is one reason, yes.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You're not privy to the unredacted board minutes that would give you this information. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I have not asked and I am not privy to them.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Zuckerberg, though, is on the board and he was privy both to what happened at board meetings and to the minutes of those board meetings. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Presumably.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chan, on January 30, 2021, Australia's treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, stated that Mr. Zuckerberg had called him and other Australian lawmakers to talk about the news media bargaining code.

Were you on those phone calls?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I was not.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You therefore couldn't tell us what representations Mr. Zuckerberg made to Australian lawmakers. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I cannot tell you anything that was personally conveyed on either side.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I understand.

Mr. Frydenberg then stated, on February 18, that he had again been called by Mr. Zuckerberg on two consecutive days.

You weren't on those calls either, were you?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I was not.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Prime Minister Scott Morrison stated, at the same time, that Facebook was making threats and that this was not a good way to deal with his government.

You would be unable to tell me if Mr. Zuckerberg made threats on phone calls with Mr. Frydenberg. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I would never characterize Facebook as making threats to anyone, sir.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: That's a very good comment from any good Facebook employee, and I agree with you. I appreciate that. I won't characterize it that way either. I was just making the point that you weren't on the calls.

We've now established that many of the questions committee members have would be ones that Mr. Zuckerberg can answer but you cannot.

Mr. Chan, are you aware that this committee invited Mr. Zuckerberg to appear, and that when he declined our invitation, we adopted a motion to send him a summons?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I am aware, based on media reports, that this was done, yes.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Are you aware that Facebook's Canadian counsel responded to our clerk by saying that he was not authorized to accept a summons for Mr. Zuckerberg?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I was notified by counsel that this was the response.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chan, I'm sure you're aware that Mr. Zuckerberg testified last week before a congressional subcommittee.

Do you know how many times in the last six months Mr. Zuckerberg has testified before congressional committees?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I do not.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: It's three, and he has testified before Congress seven times.

Mr. Chan, since Mr. Zuckerberg takes his responsibility to U.S. lawmakers so seriously, can you explain to us why he repeatedly refuses invitations, and indeed summonses, from Canadian parliamentary committees?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sure. As you point out, Mr. Housefather, Mark, as an American, was very much engaged with the U.S. congressional process last week. It so happens that your committee has requested an appearance today and, of course, it's Canadian representatives of the company who are here before you today.

Facebook, as you can appreciate, is a platform that is operating in many countries around the world. It is the case that when Parliament wishes to speak to representatives of the company, we will always be there, as we have been with the Canadian heritage committee, regardless of the topic. We are happy to engage, and the company has a similar posture around the world.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chan, as soon as Australia announced that it would propose legislation that Facebook did not like, Mr. Zuckerberg reportedly reached out to Australian lawmakers directly. It therefore seems to me, based on your testimony, that unless we're going to do something like Australia did, Mr. Zuckerberg doesn't plan to come to Canada.

How much is your ad revenue in Canada on an annual basis, Mr. Chan?

• (1125)

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'm not aware of that number.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Is Mr. Zuckerberg perhaps aware of that number?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'm not sure.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Is he aware that there are 25 million Facebook users in Canada?

Mr. Kevin Chan: There are 24 million Canadian users.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: It sounds like a substantial number. This committee has now asked to hear from Mr. Zuckerberg on a couple of occasions. The ethics committee did as well. He has refused our invitations. It sounds like you are unable to answer the questions I wanted to ask, because they were individual issues that only Mr. Zuckerberg himself could have answered.

I would like to ask you, on behalf of this committee, to please convey to Mr. Zuckerberg that we would like to hear from him.

Mr. Kevin Chan: I will pass on the message when I get the chance.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chair—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you.

I must interrupt you, Mr. Housefather. The six minutes are up. I'm trying to be rigorous with everyone.

Without further delay, I recognize my colleague Mr. Champoux.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I commend your thoroughness.

I welcome the representatives from Facebook today.

Mr. Chan, do you consider Facebook to have any responsibility for the content that is shared on your subscribers' news feeds?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Yes, we have a responsibility as to how the platform is used. We have a responsibility to follow the laws here in—

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'm talking about content. Do you feel you have a responsibility regarding the content?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Mr. Champoux, I think I just answered you by saying that we have a responsibility to follow Canadian law with respect to content. We also have a responsibility to follow our own rules, which are called community standards, which apply to content—

Mr. Martin Champoux: On this topic—we talked about this when you were last here—you have moderators all over the place, humans who follow up on the algorithms that control the content that is being delivered on your platform. Last time, I asked you if you had any French-speaking moderators based in Quebec or in Canada. You answered that you were not able to answer me and that it could even put the lives of these people in danger.

Do you still believe that, Mr. Chan?

If not, can you tell me if you have any French-speaking moderators in Quebec and Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Chan: We don't reveal the location of moderators across the world. As I indicated last time, we have to cover off over 50 languages around the world and every time zone available in the world, so we locate individuals and teams based on these considerations.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: I will interpret that response as a no. So I have to conclude that you don't have any francophone moderators in Quebec. It was a simple question that you could have answered with yes or no, but you are telling me that you do not want to disclose this information. That's all right.

Mr. Chan, you remember the sad events in Christchurch. I was asking you if you control the content that goes out on your plat-

form, because we're discussing what information Facebook allows, and you have some control over what is broadcast on your platform. For 17 minutes, the Christchurch killer broadcast his actions live on the Facebook platform.

Do you think you could have stopped that broadcast at that time?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Chan: We were able to detect it and remove it, ultimately, as you point out. Of course we regret the tragedy and we regret that we were not even faster. We have obviously learned a lot from that terrible incident, not just at Facebook. To be fair, we've worked across the sector to build systems and protocols—with governments as well—to ensure that the entire system actually works, not just on Facebook, but across companies, across platforms and with governments. We've built these protocols to move much faster should the regrettable and unfortunate thing happen again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: So you have indeed acknowledged these events and you have tried your best to correct the situation to prevent it from happening again. That's what I'm hearing.

• (1130)

Mr. Kevin Chan: Yes.

Mr. Martin Champoux: All right.

I want to talk briefly about the phenomenon of disinformation. There was news last week that Facebook has made progress in fighting disinformation. You removed 1.3 billion fake accounts, if I'm not mistaken, in the last quarter of 2020.

Is that correct?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Chan: Yes—billions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: This is no small feat, and I congratulate you.

However, real accounts are still active. Last week, an article in La Presse pointed out that 12 people are responsible for 73% of the anti-vaccination content on Facebook. Often, this is done on the basis of unreliable information. It is downright disinformation. Mr. Zuckerberg, your boss, has said he has no intention of committing to removing these 12 accounts that generate 73% of the anti-vaccination content.

Can you explain the rationale for this position to me?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: To be honest, sir, I'm not entirely familiar with the specific case you're talking about. I can tell you more generally that our posture is in fact to remove harmful misinformation about COVID vaccines. I myself have spent many hours working with our content policy team to frame up the actual content policy that would govern speech about vaccines. We have already removed significant amounts. One of our latest statistics is that in February we removed 12 million pieces of content related to COVID vaccine misinformation.

The challenge, sir, is one that you'll appreciate. We do this with public health agencies and public health experts around the world, and they'll tell you the same thing. The challenge is that we need to strike a balance between people's ability to speak their minds and share their own feelings and ideas and thinking about things, and preventing harmful misinformation about COVID vaccines from being spread.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: If I showed you the 12 accounts in question and demonstrated that they were responsible for so much disinformation, what would your decision be, Mr. Chan? Would you hesitate to...

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Mr. Champoux, your time is up.

However, since the witnesses are here for two hours, you will have another opportunity to ask your questions.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Without further delay, I yield the floor to Ms. McPherson.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for taking this on and doing such a good job today.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for joining us today at committee and agreeing to answer some of our questions. I'm very concerned when I hear the inability of some of the witnesses to answer those questions. I would echo what my colleague Mr. Housefather said, that it seems very important that Mr. Zuckerberg agree to come and share his thoughts with this committee, because unfortunately we are not able to get some of the answers we need.

I have to start by saying that people are increasingly concerned about the power of the web giants, the ravages of the spread of online hate speech, the impact of unfair competition of these giants on our local media, and the total lack of justice when people work hard to pay their fair share and multinational web companies do everything to circumvent the rules. People are right to have these fears, and when they learn about the cozy relationship between these web giants and the Liberal government....

I would like to remind you that we are here because we discovered that Minister Guilbeault's department, in charge of regulating the web giants, agreed to share a job offer to Facebook. This lack of ethics is even more unacceptable when we know that this government continues to protect Facebook's profit at the expense of the

survival of our local media; continues to protect the profits of the web giants by refusing to make them pay their fair share at the expense of our workers and small businesses who do pay their fair share; and continues to delay regulating the platforms at the expense of the people and communities who suffer from online hate. The NDP will continue to press the Liberal government to end this favourable treatment of the web giants and protect the interests of Canadians.

I guess I would like to start by asking some questions about some of those ethical issues I've raised.

In your last appearance at committee, Mr. Chan, when asked if you had ever asked political staff in a ministerial cabinet to circulate a job offer for Facebook, you replied that you didn't think so. Could you now answer that same question with a yes or a no? If it's a yes, which ministerial cabinet?

• (1135)

Mr. Kevin Chan: Again, no, I don't think so.

Ms. Heather McPherson: You don't think so. Okay.

You asked the department in charge of your regulations to share a job offer for Facebook with details of the salary conditions, and you.... Yes. Okay. I just wanted to make that clear.

Mr. Kevin Chan: If I may, ma'am.... It's important, because we do care about facts and the truth.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, I would like to say one thing, if I may.

[English]

I would just like to say that, in the opening, I believe, Madam McPherson, with all due respect, the use of the term "job offer" is false. It is a distortion of the truth—

Ms. Heather McPherson: How would you describe it?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, it was a job poster that was public, that was circulated to everybody far and wide on social media, on various platforms. I will remind you that it is obviously an open job poster. Nobody—

Ms. Heather McPherson: One that you also sent to the ministry staff.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, nobody was interviewed from Canadian Heritage—

Ms. Heather McPherson: That's not really the point, though, Mr. Chan, with all due respect.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, the facts are important, and it is important that we show love and courage to people when we bring them before the committee. I would want to be very respectful to you, but again I—

Ms. Heather McPherson: Okay, Mr. Chan, I'm going to carry on with some other questions. I will just point out that, as has been brought up already, my job as the opposition is to ask some questions that may be difficult for you.

Mr. Kevin Chan: We are here to answer them, ma'am, but we will answer them based on truth, with love and courage—

Ms. Heather McPherson: In the Canadian market, Mr. Chan, what was the net profit made by Facebook during the year 2020?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'm not aware of that number, ma'am.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Excluding payroll taxes, how much tax did Facebook [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'm not aware of that, but I also believe it's commercially confidential, ma'am.

Ms. Heather McPherson: For the year 2020, what was your advertising revenue with Canadian media content in Canada?

Mr. Kevin Chan: With media content, it would be zero, ma'am.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Professor Jean-Hugues Roy estimated that Facebook's advertising revenue in Canada related to journalistic content was approximately \$210 million. Concerning this estimate, Mr. Chan, you responded via a written statement to the media that these estimates are wrong. If this is the case, what is the real number?

I would just point out, I guess, that it would be irresponsible of you to question the work of a researcher if you don't actually have that number.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Well, ma'am, I believe you're referring to Professor Jean-Hugues Roy at UQAM.

[*Translation*]

This is a professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

[*English*]

I had a conversation with Professor Hugues afterwards, which he then subsequently wrote into an article. He agreed with me.

[*Translation*]

He said his analysis was flawed.

[*English*]

Again, as I explained to Professor Roy, we do not make money. Ads are not placed next to news articles to make money. That's not how our ad products work.

Ma'am, I took a look at your Facebook page through our ad library just this morning, and I know you were running ads as late as yesterday, so you'll appreciate that you don't have an option to put ads next to news articles.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I'm wondering, though, how you can say it was incorrect without actually having some of those numbers that you can share with us.

Mr. Kevin Chan: It's because, ma'am, again, that's not how the platform works. I just explained to you—as you will know, having run ads as late as yesterday—that you do not have an option to put ads next to news articles.

Ms. Heather McPherson: You don't have any of the commitments that you can say that the number that was provided was incorrect.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan.

Ms. McPherson, since the witnesses are here for two hours, you're going to have an opportunity to ask them more questions and get clarification.

We will now begin the second round of questions. The segments will be five minutes each.

Without further delay, I recognize my colleague Mr. Shields.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome back to our committee.

I think it was Mr. Dinsdale who referred to the \$5,000 specifically that went to local media to cover COVID. Does he have a list that he can supply us, with all of those? I have nine weeklies in my riding, so I would be very interested to see that list.

Mr. Marc Dinsdale: I believe the list was probably disclosed in one of our blog posts, but we can certainly follow up with you directly and supply the committee with the full list.

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you.

As you would realize, in nine weeklies—some are digital; some are just paper and some are both—they cover a lot more than just local COVID. They cover the local municipal council, the schools, and all those things that dailies don't cover. Their ask of me is, “We need the advertising.” It's the advertising that they survive on. They don't survive on news articles.

What's your opinion on how the media will survive in my riding of nine weeklies, if they have no advertising dollars and the Canadian government gives it to you?

• (1140)

Mr. Marc Dinsdale: We certainly appreciate that, and we have seen the challenges created in a world where the advertising market is shifting to different types of solutions. The interesting part to me is, when we look at examples of local news publishers like Village Media, which is, as Kevin pointed out, in 14 different northern Ontario markets, we see that they have been able to build a model that is—

Mr. Martin Shields: Sir, I'm interrupting you because I'm talking about weekly newspapers that are independent in only one community. I'm not talking chains. I'm talking about the nine in my riding. They're not chains. They're independent.

What you're referring to, to me, is not local media. That's a chain.

Mr. Marc Dinsdale: Well, they represent news in 14 communities that range in size from 50 to 150,000 people.

The point I was trying to make, sir, is that the model they have built at Village Media is an interesting one that is probably replicable in more places, in that they have local classifieds, a local automotive section and a local events section, etc., which complement and add base strategy to provide.... What we have to look at—in terms of the previous state of local news and through all of those things—is that the model of a publisher like Village Media shows they've successfully been able to maintain this.

Mr. Martin Shields: I have very limited time, sir. When that has happened here, the local news disappears. When you have nine involved in one chain, it disappears.

I want to go you, Mr. Chan. You talk about a policy that has to do with what I would call censorship. Would you share that policy with us?

Mr. Kevin Chan: We publish all of our policies, sir, online. You can read them at facebook.com/communitystandards. Our content policies are called our “community standards” in public.

I thank you, sir, for raising this concern about censorship. Obviously, we are very much mindful of that. Again, the delicate balance that we're trying to strike, sir, is to give people as much ability to express themselves as possible without expressing things that would be physically harmful if practised.

Mr. Martin Shields: I got that, but who is writing the policy?

Mr. Kevin Chan: These policies are developed by the global policy team at Facebook and—

Mr. Martin Shields: Is there a Canadian component to that?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Yes, sir. I'm part of that, as is Rachel Curran.

Mr. Martin Shields: So that policy has changed and is an ongoing, living document?

Mr. Kevin Chan: These things do change, sir, based on the realities of people's speech and the way people interact. I would love to let Rachel speak a bit about our consultation process around the world with experts, some of which she has led herself, if that's helpful.

Mr. Martin Shields: I'm referring to the Canadian [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] interested in, if she can refer specifically to how you're developing policy, but you have published it. Could you share it specifically with the committee?

Ms. Rachel Curran (Policy Manager, Facebook Canada, Facebook Inc.): As Kevin says, our community standards are really the formal expression of our content policy development. That work is constantly under way, and we consult with experts, academics, civil society and citizens in Canada frequently as we develop those content policies, Mr. Shields. Yes, we always try to make sure that we have a Canadian perspective on our content policies and that they work for Canadian users.

Mr. Martin Shields: You are part of that committee, and Mr. Chan is part of that committee.

Ms. Rachel Curran: Yes, we both are.

Mr. Martin Shields: How big is the committee?

Ms. Rachel Curran: Kevin, I don't know how large our global policy team is.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, I would not necessarily call it a “committee”. I would say that it's a process, to be fair, that—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you.

I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Chan.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields: Okay. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I now recognize Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you to all our witnesses.

This motion to have this hearing today really came on the heels of the decision by Facebook to cut access to news in Australia. I believe, Mr. Chan, that when you've been speaking you've been talking about the importance of public health information and the like. My question for you, though, is, do you think it's an appropriate negotiation strategy with a government to cut access to the news, including public health news, during what is a pandemic?

• (1145)

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, thank you for the opportunity to answer that squarely.

I really don't see this as a negotiation, and I don't think we should be seeing it as one. I mean, it was really a response to a framework that wasn't going to be workable. If Facebook had continued to offer news on Facebook in Australia, the framework would have required us to enter into a binding arbitration process with publishers by virtue of having things on our platform that we didn't control.

That was not sustainable, and it would not be sustainable, I would submit to you, to any organization. It certainly is inconsistent with the idea of a free and open Internet. Our unfortunate response to an unworkable piece of legislation that was not based on the facts was that we had to exit the market, and that's what happened.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Some people would argue that Facebook is too large and needs to be broken up, and that its ability to cut off access to news and public health information is too vast.

Don't you believe that cutting off the news in Australia as a response to government legislation supports the argument that Facebook has become too large?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I don't think so, ma'am. Again, I'm looking at the Canadian situation. Some of our experts at the Ryerson Leadership Lab have come out with statistics looking at where Canadians actually get news, and you can look at what they've produced. The survey I've seen says that about 25% of Canadians get some aspect of their news from Facebook. It's the fourth or fifth source, and the top source is TV. Also above Facebook is people navigating directly to newspaper websites.

Facebook is one place, obviously, for people to get some part of their news diet, but it's not the case that Facebook is somehow synonymous with the Internet or synonymous with access to news, as data from the Ryerson Leadership Lab itself points out.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I'm going to jump in. I'm glad you brought in the Canadian context. As you know, right now the Canadian government is looking at different models for local news, and I'm curious to get your opinion on this.

Is it Facebook's strategy to cut off access to news and public health information in Canada should the government choose to take on legislation about local news in Canada?

Mr. Kevin Chan: We haven't seen any specific proposal, ma'am, from the government. It is not something we would ever want to do unless we really had no choice. As I mentioned to you, in the case of Australia, the framework provided an exit, which was to say that if the regulatory burden was too high, Facebook could exit the market.

I am confident that in Canada, when we talk about a made-in-Canada approach, what we really mean is the ambition to do better: to build frameworks that are based on facts and that are based on the reality of how the Internet works.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I only have one more minute, so I want to jump in here. When you were complaining about the Australian model, you talked about mandatory versus voluntary agreements and the binding nature of those.

Why wouldn't a mandatory system be appropriate when dealing with these types of power imbalances with local news?

Mr. Kevin Chan: The reality is, if you speak to some of the local news publishers, that they are in fact benefiting from being able to share freely. They'll tell you that. We gave you the numbers. Don't take my word for it is what I'm saying, ma'am. Speak with Jeff Elgie, CEO of Village Media, who has said that free distribution offered half a million dollars in January 2021 alone to his business.

I guess what I am humbly suggesting to this committee is that we should be reframing a bit how we look at this. It's the fact that free platforms drive distribution back to publications directly on their sites, and they monetize when traffic is redirected there.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I thank Mr. Chan and Ms. Dabrusin.

We will now continue with Mr. Champoux for two and a half minutes. These are normally five-minute segments, but Mr. Champoux and Ms. McPherson are sharing the same segment.

You have the floor, Mr. Champoux.

• (1150)

Mr. Martin Champoux: I was hoping you would forget that detail, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chan, I am very interested in the topic you and Ms. Dabrusin just touched on, but I would like to return to the question I asked earlier.

Disinformation is recognized as a direct threat to public health in the context of COVID-19. According to an article published in *La Presse* last week, 12 people are believed to be responsible for 73% of the content against vaccination. Obviously, this disinformation is based on unreliable sources. Yet these accounts are still active today.

You say you want to fight disinformation. You deleted several fake accounts and, I think, several fake news stories. Why do you persist in not deleting these accounts?

If I were to show you the 12 accounts that the Public Health Agency of Canada says are a public health hazard in the context of COVID-19, what would you do with this information that I...

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: We would very much welcome you to share these with us. We will take a look at them. Obviously I cannot promise you that it will result in one outcome or another, but we would be very much interested in taking a look at these 12. We will do our—

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: They were presented last week, in Congress, before your CEO, Mr. Zuckerberg, who nevertheless refused to commit to removing them.

If you really intend to fight disinformation, be a good citizen, and take responsibility for what you do, I have a hard time explaining this decision, Mr. Chan.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'm not aware of that. You'll excuse me, sir, for not being up to date on all the things that were discussed at the hearing last week. I would just say that we stand with public health experts. We rely on them to flag things for us that they believe are harmful misinformation.

As you may know, we partner with the Public Health Agency of Canada to ensure that we have a good posture in Canada and that we drive good information to Canadians. We've directed over two billion people directly to public health information around the world, and millions in Canada to the Public Health Agency of Canada. Dr. Tam will be engaging in a Facebook Live with us on Wednesday to speak directly with Canadians about getting good information about the vaccine. We want to do our part.

I am also mindful, sir, of the other pieces Mr. Shields mentioned. There is a delicate striking of a balance between allowing people to say what they think and feel, and ensuring that we keep our community safe. In this case, I would humbly submit to you that we're trying to strike that balance between—

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan.

Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

Ms. McPherson, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just have some quick questions for the witnesses on some of the online hate regulations.

Mr. Chan, in your last appearance before the committee, you stated that Facebook supports legislation that sets standards to prohibit hateful content online and that the current self-regulation of platforms is not sustainable.

Do you agree that the government's delay in introducing legislation is exacerbating the spread of hateful content online?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I really don't know, ma'am.

First of all, we haven't seen a proposal, so I don't want to speculate on what it may or may not include. I can tell you that at Facebook, we have rules in our community standards about harmful content. We are working hard every day to enforce our community standards.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Do you think the government should provide for sufficiently strong monetary and criminal penalties to encourage platforms to act quickly to remove hateful content?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, again, I haven't seen any specific proposals. As I've said elsewhere, it is probably unwise to comment on something that hasn't been presented to anybody.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Maybe just from your own perspective, even though you have [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] make sense for there to be strong monetary and criminal penalties, if social media platforms don't take off hateful comment in a timely manner?

Mr. Kevin Chan: As you may know, there are already criminal provisions under the law in Canada. Obviously, the platform and Facebook and other Internet companies live with that framework.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I'm assuming that's a yes, and that you also agree that there would be a reason for us to be able to use judicial and financial penalties to hold Facebook to account if it were not taking down hateful content in a timely manner.

• (1155)

Mr. Kevin Chan: We've indicated that yes, if we aren't seen to be in good faith building the right systems to enforce against our standards, then absolutely we should be subject to some kind of penalty and held to account.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chan.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan and Ms. McPherson.

Mr. Shields, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Chair, that would be Mr. Aitchison.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Yes, you're right, I'm sorry.

My apologies, Mr. Aitchison. You have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): No worries. Nobody could accuse you of showing favouritism towards the Conservatives. It's a good thing.

What I'm struggling with is that Facebook is a new technology and, much like we've been discussing with the Broadcasting Act, new technologies are overtaking old technologies. That said, I love my local newspaper. I'm actually working on a project right now where I'm doing a lot of research on old editions of *The Huntsville Forester*, which are all online. They are just a treasure trove of information.

We've talked a lot about Facebook trying to [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] online. It is like a community square where people get to stand up and say what they want to say. I guess the big difference between Facebook and a community newspaper is that Facebook doesn't actually produce much content.

Can you speak to that? Does Facebook actually produce any content itself, or is it simply a platform for others?

Mr. Kevin Chan: There may be some experiments that I personally am not aware of, but I think the way you described it is correct, sir. We're a platform. Content is user generated from the vast majority.... Then there is some percentage, perhaps less than 4%, that is page content, meaning content that comes from pages such as, for example, your Facebook page, sir. It could also come from a newspaper. It could come from a university, the House of Commons or the Parliament of Canada, but yes, you're absolutely right that it is a platform that is really based on user-generated content.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: One of the problems we see too is that people.... We understand that people are just not interested in paying for information on the Internet. It's one of the big problems that news outlets have.

How much of a dramatic shift would it be in the Facebook model if there were a monthly fee or an annual fee to be a member of Facebook?

Mr. Kevin Chan: We have thought about it from time to time, and certainly that's been suggested to us by stakeholders.

The challenge is that when you think about it from our perspective, with over two billion users around the world, it would likely be the case that we would end up creating different classes of users: ones who could afford it and ones who couldn't, or ones who could afford it easily and ones who would have a very difficult time affording it. That doesn't seem like the best way to build community, which is what we're trying to do in terms of our mission.

When you talk about people in the global south, they actually use Facebook for many different reasons, some of them economic—

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Sorry, I'm going to cut you off.

You could have different rates in different parts of the world. Pharmaceutical companies charge different prices for their drugs in different parts of the world, based on the market.

Part of the problem we have here in Canada is that because it's free—and I think, in part, because everyone is trapped at home and bored and frustrated by COVID-19—it's a general dumbing down of society. People post stupid things and then they spread like wild-fire. If it were actually a service whereby you had to pay even a nominal fee, maybe it would cut down on that kind of stupidity.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, that is a very good point, and we've heard it from others. I'm happy to make that point internally after this meeting.

• (1200)

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Thanks.

That's all I have, Monsieur Chair, unless I have lots more time. I can ramble on some more, but you probably don't want that.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Aitchison.

We will begin another five-minute round of questions. Mr. Housefather, you have the floor.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

I believe I made my point in the last round. I could continue to ask questions that only Mr. Zuckerberg or people at other levels can answer, but I won't keep doing that.

I want to end with the point that Mr. Zuckerberg is the CEO, the majority shareholder and the chairman of the board of a U.S. company that operates in Canada, and the fact that he doesn't happen to be a Canadian citizen, or isn't resident in Canada, doesn't shield him from the obligation, in my view, to testify before this committee when we request it.

I strongly request that you convey that back, because it entirely changed the way I was going to question Facebook today.

I'm going to go back to a question.

[*Translation*]

My colleague Mr. Champoux raised the issue of moderators. You said, Mr. Chan, that you could not tell us whether there were French-speaking moderators in Quebec or in Canada. However, during Mr. Zuckerberg's testimony before the U.S. Congress, we learned that you were going to increase the number of Spanish moderators in the United States. We are not just talking about moderators who speak Spanish, but Spanish moderators who are in the United States.

So, why don't you tell us if there are any French-speaking moderators in Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Chan: Again, our approach is not to reveal where our content moderators are.

As you will know, Mr. Housefather, they are part of a 35,000-member strong safety and security team around the world. We work hard to ensure the safety and security of our community.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I understand and appreciate that, Mr. Chan, but your CEO, before Congress, committed not to establishing Spanish-speaking moderators but increasing the number of Spanish-speaking moderators in the United States, so he disclosed that there were Spanish-speaking moderators in the United States.

I don't understand how we cannot know if there are French-speaking moderators in Canada. We're not asking who they are or where they are. I would request that you get back to the committee in writing if you are able to disclose whether there are or are not French-speaking moderators in Canada.

Let me move to another question.

You said that all Facebook policies are published, and I appreciate that. However, you have guidelines that you give to the content moderators that are not published. The Guardian, on March 23, [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] moderators, and noted that it spelled out differentiations between protections for private and public individuals.

[*Translation*]

In Quebec, several mayors have said they will not run in the next election because they have received threats on social media.

[*English*]

[*Technical difficulty—Editor*] that, given that people in Quebec now are not running for re-election because of social media, I'm a bit concerned that the guidelines seem to specify that private individuals cannot be targeted with calls for death on Facebook, but public figures simply cannot be purposely exposed to such calls.

Therefore, it would be interpreted that it is legitimate under Facebook's harassment policies to call for the death of a public figure as long as the user does not tag them in the post. Are these reports about these policies accurate in terms of the guidelines being given to moderators?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I don't know about those specific guidelines because, again, you'll appreciate, sir, that I haven't seen those specific guidelines.

I can tell you, though, that our posture with respect to public figures and private citizens is consistent with the way the law has evolved in terms of the different thresholds that would pertain to a private citizen versus a public figure. That's just the reality of how the law has evolved and how the courts have interpreted these thresholds for a public figure versus a private citizen.

I would definitely say that in all cases where there is a credible threat to an individual, whether public or private, we obviously work with law enforcement to make sure we get to the bottom of it, and we take it very seriously.

• (1205)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I understand that, but if somebody posts, “I plan to hang Anthony Housefather,” versus “Anthony Housefather should be hanged,” I’m not really sure that I see the great distinction there in terms of the potential to persuade somebody who might have very bad intentions to go do something.

I really don’t understand why a call for death against a public figure would not be something that would be in violation of Facebook policies and that content moderators would be instructed to take down.

I would request, again, Mr. Chan, if you can, that you consider whether you can deposit with the committee the guidelines that are provided to moderators that are referred to in the Guardian article.

I’d like to now get to a BuzzFeed report from February 21.

BuzzFeed reported—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Housefather, but I have to stop you.

Everybody is working so well that, if we keep up this pace, we’ll be able to complete all four rounds of questions. So I’m going to continue to watch the time.

Without further delay, I will turn the floor over to Mr. Waugh for five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chan, should government regulate the Internet? I asked Ian Scott that question.

What’s happening today on Facebook is that we have many former broadcasters doing shows right now and charging advertising dollars. They don’t actually have a broadcasting licence, yet they have shows, coast to coast in this country, using your platform, and they’re not regulated at all.

Mr. Scott, who is chair of the CRTC, said that this is one thing they’re going to look [*Technical difficulty—Editor*], but the CRTC would need more money from the Treasury Board if this is going to happen.

Can I hear your thoughts on your platform’s actually being a broadcaster right now in almost every city in this country?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I’m not aware of that, sir.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: How could you not be? Come on.

Mr. Kevin Chan: I have to tell you that’s not what I follow on Facebook. Please don’t misunderstand my reaction as trying to discount what you’re saying. Personally, that’s just not my jam, if you will.

I’m not aware, but obviously it is definitely the case that Facebook allows for all sorts of people, big and small, to be able to livestream and to be able to communicate with whoever else they want to on Facebook. That’s the value of Facebook. That’s why people come back to Facebook.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Who’s going to regulate this? They’re taking money from newspapers. They’re taking money from traditional broadcasters, and I would say hundreds of thousands of dollars are being taken by platforms like yours. They’re using you as an avenue. Sit here and look. Every day there’s a one-hour show from here, and there’s a two-hour show from here, with advertisers, and yet they’re not regulated. Should they be regulated?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Mr. Waugh, I have to say, going back to what Mr. Shields was saying—and I don’t want to misunderstand what you’re saying—if what you are describing is an individual going on Facebook to livestream something, technically speaking that is speech, so we want to be careful on our end to make sure we are not imposing certain conditions on people’s speech that isn’t in the area of harm, danger and security, which is what our committee standards are for.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: It’s happening every day. There are sports shows; there are entertainment shows, and they’re charging for advertising. I don’t think they’re paying your company for it.

We had the CRTC in on Friday, and all of a sudden Mr. Scott said they might be looking at controlling the Internet because of what is going on, and his second point was about needing to go to the Treasury Board to look at this.

As an opposition member, I’m thinking, all of a sudden, how much do you need in order to control the Internet?

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Chan: I understand the sentiment, Mr. Waugh. I would just say, from personal experience, Marc referred to the digital news innovation challenge, which was really the first program we did back in 2017 to support news. There is a team there—one of the five companies we helped incubate—called The Gist. At the time it was a team of three young professionals who decided to create a news outlet for sports focused on women. It’s a feminist publisher focused on interpreting sports for women. They were from Toronto. They used platforms like Facebook—and, I suspect, other platforms as well—to grow. They are doing remarkably well, three or four years on, across North America. That was the power, I think, of the open Internet.

I agree with you that if they’re doing a lot of this on Facebook and other streaming platforms that are open to user-generated content, presumably that means they’re in competition with others. However, in some ways, I think it is a wonderful example to see in terms of innovation—in terms of, effectively, a small business finding success and being able to challenge incumbents online.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: I have one question, as my time is ending here. Did Facebook learn anything by shutting down for three days in Australia?

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Waugh.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Okay. Thank you.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I also thank Mr. Chan for his responses.

Ms. Ien, you have the floor.

[English]

Ms. Marci Ien (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. You're doing an excellent job today.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

Mr. Chan, I want to start with you and focus on hate speech, if I might, for a bit. We have seen what has happened with anti-Asian hate. A lot of it was born on social media and ramped up because of that. It has been reported that per capita there is more anti-Asian hate and there are more incidents thereof in Canada, in fact, than in the United States.

I'm just wondering, with regard to Facebook and how you run things, whether anything has changed. Have you ramped up efforts to curb that kind of hate?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Our approach is uniform across the system, which is that derogatory language or discriminatory language targeted at specific groups, whether they be Asian or otherwise, is a violation of our community standards. We would enforce the same way across the system.

From my own personal experience working at Facebook, I can't say we have seen an uptick on enforcement. Certainly nothing has been escalated to my desk or to my screen, but I obviously read with concern the same things you're reading in the news about the challenge that Asian-Canadians are facing.

Ms. Marci Ien: For example, if something were to be found, Mr. Chan, a post on Facebook that contained hate, what happens? Can you walk us through that?

Mr. Kevin Chan: There are two ways of enforcing our systems, to be honest. One is the automated system, as I think one of your colleagues mentioned, which uses artificial intelligence. Some of the technology was developed in Canada: machine learning to go and find all these things.

In fact, I have some statistics here. In terms of hate speech, in the last quarter of 2020, our automated systems found over 97% of hate speech directed at groups automatically, before any human had seen them or reported them. That's where we are. Now, 97% is not 100%, so we still have a ways to go, but we're getting better every day. That's our posture. That's the way we do it right now.

The other piece, though, is that because speech is important from a contextual standpoint, we have to be careful on some of the grey zones for speech that, in fact, it is an attack on the community and not something else, for example, spreading awareness about Asian racism. We need humans as well, so part of that 35,000-person team that I referred to consists of people who are going to be look-

ing at the context and saying that this image was shared, this video was shared, or this text was shared, but is the context of this to attack Asians, or is this to raise awareness about discrimination and racism? That context matters in terms of whether or not we would enforce and take it down.

It is really a parallel process that meets when we need to get more context. We have automated systems that go and find things automatically. We're constantly improving, but we're at about 97% of proactive identification and we need humans to verify some of the more challenging ones, where the speech is grey and we have to be sure of the context. Then, in the most complicated cases, they get escalated to people like me and Rachel, where we will look at specific pieces of content emanating from Canada, consult with experts and think through whether or not we're going to be drawing the line in the right place.

• (1215)

Ms. Marci Ien: Mr. Chan, thank you.

I'm going to share my time with my colleague Ms. Dabrusin.

Ms. Dabrusin, please go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, how much time do I have left?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): You have 30 seconds left, Ms. Dabrusin.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I will probably get back to this, then, in the next round, but I want to speak a bit about free resources. You talk a lot about free access to your network, say, for the press. I'm curious and will ask more questions about who pays for that.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Ms. Dabrusin, unfortunately, your time is up. You may continue during the next round of questions.

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chan, I would like to know if, as Facebook's global vice-president, you can answer this question that was asked of you earlier by one of my colleagues.

In 2020, what was Facebook's revenue in Canada, approximately?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: Again, sir, I don't have that information.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Chan, I admit I'm a little surprised you don't have that number, as the global vice-president of a company like Facebook.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Unfortunately, I am not—

Mr. Martin Champoux: Facebook has an estimated \$2.5 billion in revenue in Canada. Do you think that's plausible?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I honestly don't know. Unfortunately for me, I am not vice-president.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'm sorry. You are the global director.

Facebook's annual revenues are estimated at \$2.5 billion. You obviously generate a lot of traffic to your web pages through journalistic content, and you're well aware of that. It's also an invaluable addition to your business model, because you can get a lot of information and data from it.

You just announced an \$8-million investment over three years in journalism in Canada. On average, that's \$2.7 million a year on an estimated revenue of about \$2.5 billion.

Do you find this investment generous?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'll ask my colleague, Marc, to explain a bit more afterwards.

I would just point out that the \$8 million is for the entire ecosystem, to build capacity for local news and to build capacity for under-represented voices. That is not at all—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: We are already hearing about just such communities. These media already exist. They would simply like to have some form of equity in terms of ad revenue sharing, specifically.

People find their news on social media, especially Facebook. Advertisers know very well that it's easier to advertise on Facebook, because your rates are very competitive and you reach a large portion of the customer base.

Don't you think that the demand from print media to revisit the model a bit and share advertising revenue is legitimate?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Chan: I would just say again that it is a common misunderstanding, but when....

[*Translation*]

What I'm saying is true, sir. If my mother-in-law, who lives in Quebec City, sees a link posted by a publisher in her Facebook news feed and she clicks on it, the browser goes to the publisher's website. So, it's the publisher who makes money, not us.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'm going to run out of time to say more about this. However, you know very well that this is not true. The news media has lost 80% of its advertising revenue, while social media, including Facebook and Google—

• (1220)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I am sorry, Mr. Champoux, but your time is up.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'll continue in the next round of questions.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Ms. McPherson, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: I would like to follow up on some of the comments that my colleague, Mr. Champoux, brought up.

We are hearing announcements of an \$8-million contribution to Canadian broadcasting, and, of course, it was made public on the weekend, the day before you were to come before this committee. It's great to see this contribution to local media, but obviously it's a very small amount of money compared—as Mr. Champoux pointed out—to the amount of money that Facebook makes in Canada.

It also seems to me that it is not the right way to do this. Clearly this is not the right way to solve this media crisis. Instead of you or the big web giants choosing how to interact, it seems to me that the role of government is to introduce legislation, like Australia did, that would in fact force you to pay your fair share instead of you creating the rules that favour you.

Wouldn't you agree that rather than looking for handouts from Facebook on one-offs, doesn't it make more sense to have legislation in place that holds you to account on that?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, again, as I indicated earlier, and others have said, too, from Facebook, the challenge with the Australian model is that it didn't reflect the realities of how the Internet works.

Once again, requiring Facebook to pay for links shared onto Facebook, where we don't have a say in that and we aren't able to control the volume, means we don't control the price. It fundamentally breaks the premise of how a free and open Internet works. That's the challenge.

Now, that doesn't mean we don't care about the future of news. That doesn't mean we don't want to invest in news. We have made a commitment of \$8 million. I have also indicated, certainly to the media earlier, that we are going to look, in 2021, to commercial deals with publishers in a way that makes sense.

Perhaps I'll turn it over to my colleague, Marc, who can elaborate a bit—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan.

Mr. Shields, you now have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that.

Following up a little, being the old guy I am, I remember being in London, at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, where you can find all sorts of interesting characters saying whatever they want. That's the old form of today's social media.

Mr. Chan, as governments react and as you hear the concerns here, governments are following along, in a sense, where there is a concern. I brought up censorship before, and how it's been referred to other people and mechanisms. We have a judicial system that interprets our hate speech. It's a very public and open forum.

What you're doing is behind closed doors, and you're providing a policy and implementation of rules that you develop, and it's not in a public forum. That leaves government in a position where it will begin to draft legislation to control and make public what you do.

You have a choice. You can become more public and open about the policies you develop for censorship, or you're going to face government regulation. You don't like government regulation. The Australian model doesn't work for anybody, because the actual authors don't get any money out of it, so it's not a solution. You just pay and publishers get money.

What are you going to do?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, that's a very astute point, and I thank you for raising it. We agree with you, and we've heard the same criticism elsewhere, which is that Facebook is creating these rules and Facebook is deciding what stays up and what stays down.

To your point, sir, as you know, the only entity in a liberal democracy that has the legitimacy to make these rules is Parliament, which is in fact why—and here I would disagree with you, sir, respectfully, just a little—we welcome regulation.

When it comes to speech, you're right. We've been doing this for as long as Facebook has existed. The reason we're in the middle of it all is that for any decision we take about content, there will be people who say we took down too much and then there will be people who say we didn't take down enough. To do this in a way that is satisfying to a democracy is very much to have Parliament rule and draw those lines.

Obviously we've heard from representatives of the government that they will be pursuing this. Presumably this committee will be studying it and providing input, and we look forward to working collaboratively with you to share whatever experience and knowledge we have on this question that might be useful to the committee's deliberations.

• (1225)

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you. That may get to be very interesting and not a model that ends up being what you would prefer as we bring this into the open. Maybe you do prefer that, but you have a lot of people employed, you have a lot of algorithms working at specific words. This is going to be a challenge for you as you work with us.

Mr. Kevin Chan: I understand that, sir, but thank you for that, and we agree.

Obviously we are trying to be transparent. That's why we publish all our community standards. We also engage with experts around the world, including in Canada, to.... As we refine our policies, we

engage with the foremost experts in Canada on things like hate speech, human rights and constitutionality, freedom of expression, and discrimination.

Mr. Martin Shields: Right, but you have no mechanism like in a judicial system, where you can appeal it. You can challenge it in the public sector. Yours is all behind the screen.

Mr. Kevin Chan: We do have an appeals mechanism. I'll refer to Rachel, who might be able to talk a bit about our new final board of appeal.

Ms. Rachel Curran: That's a really good point, Mr. Shields. Where some of the issues come in is in our interpretation of the community standards. The community standards are the rules, but not everyone agrees with how those rules are enforced, and we totally understand that. You're right. Those decisions and those interpretations are made behind closed doors.

We set up the Facebook oversight board very recently. That board is entirely independent of the company. It is a body to which users can appeal to say they don't agree with a decision Facebook has made around taking down their content, and they'd like the board to look into it and review it.

They are now starting those cases, and they do not agree with Facebook's decisions in all of them, for sure. There is now this judicial body, if you will, overseeing those decisions around removal.

Mr. Martin Shields: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Ms. Curran and Mr. Shields, thank you for this round of questions.

I will now turn the floor over to Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, I believe Ms. Dabrusin should have the floor.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I'm so sorry, Ms. Dabrusin.

The floor is yours.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

This gives me a chance to pick up where I left off, which was on this question. You've spoken a lot today about how there's a free platform provided to companies such as Village Media, from which they make money. It seems to me a bit surprising that Facebook is doing this just out of the goodness of its heart to provide a free resource or platform to these news media companies.

Can you perhaps help me better understand? How does that get monetized? If people are going to Village Media, for example, as you've pointed out, does that not boost them being on Facebook elsewhere or the data collection behind it for you?

Mr. Kevin Chan: No, ma'am. Again, I'm trying to make sure I understand your question so I can answer it appropriately, but I don't think—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Let me make it very clear, then, so we know. My question is, is it truly a free resource? Let's start with that.

Are you saying that in no way whatsoever does Facebook collect any data or receive any increase in funding through driving to other resources when you have companies like Village Media posting links onto your platform?

• (1230)

Mr. Kevin Chan: Oh, I see.

No, ma'am. I mean, obviously Facebook is an ads platform. It is a platform, so advertisers who want to reach a certain audience will say that maybe they'll advertise here and there, and maybe they'll advertise on Facebook because they want to reach a certain audience. That's how Facebook makes money.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Just because you keep on placing it as free.... This part just seems a bit surprising to me: that Facebook is providing an entirely free resource for our news media. That seems to be, if I understand correctly, what you're saying.

I'm just trying to understand. Do you not collect any data, or does it not keep people going back to Facebook more by having these links?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Oh. Well, there are a lot of questions there, ma'am. Let me try to unpack them a bit.

We do not make money off links being shared onto Facebook. We make money because people are there and advertisers say they want to reach them, much like, for example, the political parties represented here.

Presumably, political parties are using Facebook because they want to reach Canadians. Some of that might be by posting things organically, by sharing things, just like a publisher might share a link. Some of it might also be advertising. If you choose to advertise to people on Facebook, then obviously we are going to be the beneficiaries of it from a revenue standpoint.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Why don't I jump in? One of the things, if I look at the Canadian media concentration research project, if I understand correctly their argument—

Mr. Kevin Chan: Is that with Professor Winseck from Carleton?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Yes. It's about the Australian model. They actually suggested that the better response is to break the data surveillance model with stronger data protection rather than attaching something to links. What do you have to say about that? Isn't it all about the data?

Mr. Kevin Chan: No, I don't think so, in the sense that we are.... This takes us into a different regulatory area, but we are for strong privacy regulation. We are also for strong data portability rules.

On this idea, what that would mean is that if the government in its wisdom, or Parliament in its wisdom, wished to create data portability rules that allow it to be easier to transfer information from one platform to another, we would support that, as long as

certain privacy conditions are respected. In fact, we have built tools that allow for the transfer of information between the various platforms.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I have just a few minutes. I'm not really talking about.... Your advertising dollars are boosted by the fact that you collect data, are they not? The fact that you have data about who is on Facebook is how you build your ad platform, is it not?

Mr. Kevin Chan: The value of Facebook to advertisers big and small is that they're able to reach audiences on Facebook. For example, if you wanted to reach the community in your riding, ma'am, you can do that on Facebook because—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: The fact that you know who is in my riding or who is anywhere else is based on the data you collect, is it not?

Mr. Kevin Chan: It's based on the data of people who are on Facebook and who have chosen to share that, yes, but I would say, ma'am, though, that advertising is.... I'm old enough to remember a time before the Internet and, of course, when you think about how any other ad surface works [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] also a bit like that. It's kind of saying, listen, if you put an ad in a TV show—

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: I hear what you're saying, Mr. Chan, and I'm sorry, but I don't have much time. The question, though, is that the actual difference between the former system—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Ms. Dabrusin, I'm sorry, but your time is up.

Maybe Mr. Chan will have an opportunity to answer your question at another time.

So I will turn the floor over to Mr. Aitchison.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I want to continue with what I was talking about earlier, about the concept of a fee for membership. I know that the model right now is based on having lots and lots of users and the advertising revenue that's generated from accessing as many people as humanly possible.

I'm wondering, if you charged a membership fee, would that reduce, potentially, the number of eyes that might be on a particular ad and therefore affect ad revenue? Is that a fair statement?

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Chan: No, I think we want to give.... An Internet platform is valuable only to people who want to connect with as many people as possible. That's really the big development in the last little while—this ability for anybody any place in the world to be able to talk to anybody else. The value of Facebook to people and why there are 24 million Canadians on Facebook is precisely the fact that they're able to go somewhere and reach out to all these different people they may or may not even know already.

We think that ability should be free to people, but as Madam Dabrusin was pointing out, obviously we have to be able to.... As you can see from our expenses, it costs billions and billions of dollars to be able to offer this to people, and they value it, so the way we are currently able to pay for that and succeed as a business is through advertising.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: I'm not entirely sure I understand what was described at the very beginning of the meeting in terms of the voluntary relationship with local media. Could you get into that a little more, please?

Mr. Kevin Chan: My toddler is walking around outside talking to herself, so I'm going to defer to Marc Dinsdale—

Mr. Scott Aitchison: That would probably add an adorable element to your testimony. You should just let her do her thing.

Mr. Kevin Chan: I really should. I'll come back later, but Marc is really the expert. He talks to publishers all the time.

Perhaps, Marc, you could provide some insight.

Mr. Marc Dinsdale: Certainly. What we're seeking to do this year is enter into commercial agreements with news publishers that would see them set up as a service that would allow their publishing system, their publishing platform, to send links of articles that they publish on their websites directly to our back end.

This is a difference, as you've heard, from the way publishers currently share links to Facebook, which is through their page, which then shows up in people's feeds. Instead of publishers sharing links in that way, we'd like to take the links delivered through this service and put them in more places on Facebook, in front of more audiences in the context of places where a news context is important.

For example, we have a COVID-19 information centre that has government information, stats, etc., about the COVID crisis. If we could take links from trusted news sources and put that kind of editorial context—local, national, etc.—within that kind of information centre, that would lead to people being more informed about the pandemic, and when people click on those links, that would drive them back to the publisher directly as well.

The goal is to provide both a broader selection of links from trusted Canadian partners and also to find essentially a new way in which we can support the industry. The value we see to publishers is essentially that this agreement would see them provide and maintain the service and also drive more people back to read the full text of the articles on these important questions.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Could this potentially be the first step in a more structured Facebook as opposed to just a free-for-all of people sharing whatever inane idea they have?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Marc, I'm happy to answer that one. That was a very good question, sir, a very astute question. To be clear, I don't know if Marc mentioned, but these are actually very new things. Both surfaces we're talking about, these information centres, are new in Canada since COVID. We have a COVID-19 information centre and we have a climate science information centre. We are trying to connect Canadians with scientific information. In the COVID case we're trying to connect Canadians directly with information from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan.

If my notes are correct, it's Mr. Housefather's turn.

• (1240)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: That's right, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I want to circle back to a topic that was brought up by a number of my colleagues. I'm slightly astounded to hear that you cannot tell us what the ad revenues were in Canada in the last quarter or the last annual period. I was an executive of a tech company. I could have told you what our annual revenues were and what our quarterly revenues were. I could have broken it down by market segment. I could have broken it down by country in major countries.

Are you seriously telling us, Mr. Chan, that you do not know what Facebook's quarterly revenues were for Q4 2020 in Canada for advertising?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, what I'm trying to say is that, first of all, we don't break these out publicly.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I'm sorry, but I see here Facebook's revenue in Q4 2020, broken down by North America. Canada and the United States is \$13.2 billion in ad revenue. I see it published.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Again, we don't break it out by country, as you know, in these public documents.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You have broken it down by North America. You basically put Canada together with the United States and said it's \$13.2 billion. You're the senior executive in Canada. Don't you know what percentage is Canada?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, if the Canada Revenue Agency wishes to make it the case that all these companies report their local revenue to it, we will be happy to comply.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You are a public company. You're governed by SEC rules. You're governed by Nasdaq rules.

Mr. Kevin Chan: That's correct.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You make your revenues public. The only reason we don't have Canadian revenues is because you've chosen to consolidate them with the United States revenues. Is that correct?

Mr. Kevin Chan: No, sir. It's because of the rules that your system, the system of Parliament and the system of government, has decided to require.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You are a U.S. public company listed on Nasdaq. It has requirements, and the SEC has requirements of public disclosure of financials. You've disclosed financials. You simply disclosed them bundling Canada with the United States on a consolidated basis. That's all the more reason, then, that Mr. Zuckerberg, who is trying to say that he's an American citizen and shouldn't come here.... Well, Canada and the United States are lumped together in the way you report revenues. The only reason we don't have access to Canadian revenues on their own is that Microsoft—sorry, Facebook—has chosen to consolidate them with its U.S. revenues.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, I'm glad you mentioned Microsoft, because I think if you ask the question of Microsoft, Google, Twitter and TikTok—and now that Reddit will be coming to Canada, you can ask Reddit too—I suspect the answer will be the same. It's not because we wish—

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chan, is your answer that you don't know, or that you can't tell me because they're confidential? They're two different issues.

Mr. Kevin Chan: It's both.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: You don't know and they're confidential. That's it.

Mr. Kevin Chan: That's right.

Sir, my job, as you know—and I know you know this because we've had private conversations with you—and the job of Rachel Curran, is to work to deal with these very complex policy issues. We are not here to sell advertising to you and we're not here for profitability reasons. We're here to ensure that we have the right policy frames, both internally at Facebook, but also for public policy.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Of course, but on the issue that we're talking about—the issue of the news media, which was the primary reason we called people here today—the revenues of Facebook generated in Canada through advertising are a very important factor in the policy decisions that the Government of Canada should be taking.

Mr. Kevin Chan: I see. Sir, I think we can solve this by just being very clear about our posture about taxes, if that's what your question is.

If the Government of Canada, if the Parliament of Canada, in its wisdom wished to take more revenue from a U.S.-based company and give it to some other purpose, the simplest and most effective way to do that would be to tax these companies, have it go into the consolidated revenue fund, and then make a separate funding decision about what the government and Parliament would like to fund, as you do in an annual *[Technical difficulty—Editor]* every year.

I hear you, and we hear you, that people say, “You know what? We think these companies are doing well. We should tax them more.” Again, I just think the number is not really.... The principle is more important, I guess. What I'm saying to you, sir, because I want to give you some satisfaction in terms of getting at the answer you want, is that if you believe this is the right frame—

• (1245)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Chan. I have to stop you and turn it over to Mr. Champoux.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, I find this a very interesting set of questions from my colleague Mr. Housefather.

In fact, it is very interesting to hear you, Mr. Chan, explain how Canadian public finances should be managed with respect to multinationals, which generate billions of dollars on Canadian soil and are headquartered abroad. We will get there, Mr. Chan. We will find a way to make companies like Facebook contribute fairly to the system from which they still benefit quite a bit.

As you know, we are in the process of finalizing the study of Bill C-10. Many of the recommendations aim to bring social media under the regulation of the Canadian Broadcasting Act, which is not currently the case. Obviously, I expect there will be opposition from social media.

If that were to be the case and if social media like Facebook were to become subject to regulation under the Canadian Broadcasting Act, how would you adjust your responses to situations like the one regarding events in Christchurch, which we were talking about at the beginning of the meeting? Would you adjust your responses so that the 17 minutes of horror that was witnessed was no longer accessible?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: Sir, if I understand the question correctly, *[Technical difficulty—Editor]* talking about, to be honest, which is that we're talking about user-generated content. The frameworks will be different. A framework about what people can and cannot say is different from the framework that I believe is currently before the committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Unfortunately, I only have two minutes and 30 seconds in this round of questions.

According to Professor Jean-Hugues Roy, whom you were talking about earlier yourself, Facebook's algorithm is quite reliable, and advanced enough that the broadcast could easily have been stopped in seconds.

This may be a bit of a stretch, but doesn't it become an editorial choice, on Facebook's part, to allow slightly offensive images to be broadcast in contexts where no regulations are in place?

Mr. Kevin Chan: No, absolutely not.

Unfortunately, Professor Roy is once again misinformed; this is not the case.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I'll have to let him know quickly.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: Don't worry, I'll tell him myself.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Fine, thank you.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Chan: I have to tell you that the way.... It is just not—

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Mr. Chan, I have to interrupt you.

Perhaps Ms. McPherson will ask you to continue, since it is her turn to speak, but she has the floor for two minutes and 30 seconds.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to follow up on some of the questions Mr. Housefather was asking.

Mr. Chan, you've said that you neither know nor would be willing to make public the Canadian revenues. I'm wondering if you would be willing to find those numbers, to get that information, and share those numbers with this committee, if that would be possible.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Ma'am, I think we can do better than that. I'm pleased to share with the committee that we are working hard to change our structure at Facebook in Canada so that the entity [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. We are doing this unilaterally, on our own. No other company, to my knowledge, on the Internet space is doing that.

That will mean we'll register with the CRA. When we do that, we will, not just for 2020 but on a go-forward basis, report our revenue to the CRA in perpetuity. We will be doing that, I hope, in the coming months. There's some technical work that needs to be done to be able to do that.

That is our commitment, because we hear from you, ma'am, and from Mr. Housefather and others, that what people want is transparency. Again, and I want to be very clear about this, regardless of what the rules are in Canada, we will unilaterally make this available. We are in the process of undertaking that technical work to get it done.

Ms. Heather McPherson: That's great, and you expect that to happen in the next couple of months. That's good to hear.

• (1250)

Mr. Kevin Chan: Yes, that's right.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I want to ask a question as well about some of the online violence, and I know I'm following up on some questions that others have asked.

As you know, Facebook took down the Proud Boys' Facebook page in mid-January, after my leader stood up in the House and asked the government to act on declaring the Proud Boys a terrorist organization.

However, it was recently reported that hundreds of other militia pages are still operating openly on Facebook, including over 140 that have the word "militia" in the title. News reports even suggest that Facebook creates such pages automatically.

I'm wondering how you can say you're doing your very best to reduce these incitements to violence, when there are pages being created that will incite that violence?

Mr. Kevin Chan: First of all, I want to commend your [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] and racism. That is obviously something—

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Chan, because I think we all would have liked to hear your answer.

However, I must yield to Mr. Waugh, who will decide whether he wants to continue with this.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

A month ago, Facebook blocked its Australian users from sharing news articles.

Have you learned anything from alienating people in Australia, when you blocked it for three days and then you made the agreement? Has your company learned anything from that last month in Australia?

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Mr. Waugh, again, I want to characterize the way it has been, which is that exiting the news market was the only response to a proposal that didn't respect the realities of how the Internet works.

I would say that in Canada, we've seen examples of this. For example, if we look at Bill C-76, which was the Elections Modernization Act from the previous Parliament, we were very early supporters of that, and we supported it throughout its legislative process. We were the first to comply and build very robust systems to ensure that we did our part to ensure a free and fair election.

As you may recall, there were other platforms that had a different posture, including some that exited the market for political ads. I would hope for your understanding in this regard, in the sense that companies obviously are going to have to look internally to see whether or not they can meet the requirements set by authorities. Usually, when laws are fact based, we're able to do that, as we did with Bill C-76.

When a law disregards the basic premise of the Internet and how it works, it obviously makes it very challenging, so in the end, we exited the market.

It is also the case that the revised and amended law in Australia further clarifies...to state that exiting the news market is a legitimate outcome for the process if a company deems it to be too high a regulatory burden.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: That could happen here in Canada, then.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Again, as I've said elsewhere, that is not something that Marc or I or Rachel are working towards. We're working towards, and again I take it back to my opening statement.... We're working very hard and collaboratively with news publishers every day. We talked about the Winnipeg Free Press and The Globe and Mail. We talked about Village Media. Publishers will—

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Some will be left out, right? Some will be left out on this.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Mr. Waugh, our concern with Australia was very much that the framework, it appeared, was going to help only the big media conglomerates.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Rupert Murdoch—his empire over there—was the one who got the agreement going, right?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I defer to your judgment on that, sir.

We're very much concerned with a framework that wouldn't allow us to support local news publishers. While the future of news will involve all sorts of players, big and small, we are obviously sensitive to the fact that there are new models emerging and that these independent and small news publishers need to be supported. You've seen some of the programs we've announced that are designed to address exactly that point.

We're also pleased that, in Australia, the amended code allows us to now enter into agreements with small publishers and to pursue some of those ends.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: From France to Australia, who got the better deal?

Mr. Kevin Chan: I'm sorry. What do you mean by that?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Didn't you also have an agreement with news media in France? Both countries were [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. Of course, in terms of Australia, you've made a few agreements with their news media, as you've said. How about France? How can you compare the two, and how should Canadians compare with France and Australia when this gets rectified in this country?

• (1255)

Mr. Kevin Chan: Marc, you're closer to this than I am. I don't know if you have a thought on that.

Mr. Marc Dinsdale: The principle, no matter where it is, is the same in terms of the mechanisms we're seeking and the ways in which we can support media, and we're going to continue to do this in creative ways in Canada.

It points to each jurisdiction being very different, so when we hear of a made-in-Canada solution, we completely echo that, because nothing is necessarily transportable or comparable in that way.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: That's good. Thanks.

That's it for me, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Waugh.

According to my list, the last person to speak is Mr. Housefather.

Mr. Housefather, you have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Chan, when you last appeared before the committee on January 29, I asked you if Facebook controls my news feed. You replied, "No, sir," and said I can only see content from pages I positively connect to.

There was a BuzzFeed article on February 21, 2021, which spoke of a Facebook feature called "in feed recommendations", which is designed to insert posts into users' feeds from accounts they do not follow. It said Facebook users had complained they were seeing posts from conservative personalities such as Ben Shapiro in their news feed, even though they had never engaged with that type of content.

Does the "in feed recommendations" feature actually exist? If so, isn't that different from what you told me in January?

Mr. Kevin Chan: This is a recommendation engine. We're very public about it. We've had a post about this for some time now. We can send that to you as well, sir, so you can read up on how that works.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I'm interested to know.... Obviously you are aware of the Moonshot redirection method that they're using with Google, whereby they redirect users who conduct searches for harmful material to ads that would take them to positive alternative content. Does Facebook use any such technology, either with Moonshot or with anyone else?

Mr. Kevin Chan: Yes, we do.

Right now, if you were to search on Facebook or Instagram—and I know you've spoken with Rachel about this as well—for the Holocaust, for child exploitation or for COVID, in all those cases, we redirect. For COVID, most importantly, we redirect to the Public Health Agency of Canada. That's why we have this partnership.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: That is excellent, and I praised you for that the last time. I've been tough on you today, but some things you do are very good. I also want to commend you for that, specifically Ms. Curran for her openness in chatting with me through stuff.

In terms of the redirection, though, you're aware of the report that Moonshot erroneously redirected people searching for far-right content to an anarchist, in a joint project done in the United States with the Anti-Defamation League. How do you make sure that when using those third party providers, that isn't happening? Is it audited by anybody?

Mr. Kevin Chan: We partner directly with the organization. That's why we need to be absolutely clear.

For example, during an election, we might partner with Elections Canada, as we have in the last two federal elections, to redirect directly back to the URL that Elections Canada has provided. That's also why you have a public policy team in Canada, to make sure we are able to work collaboratively and to make sure we get the right information to Canadians.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: I don't want to diminish the role of the public policy team in Canada. With respect to certain issues, it's incredibly important, and you guys do great work. I want to again commend Facebook for what it did in the last U.S. election.

In the last U.S. election, it should be known [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] million dollars for election integrity. Facebook created an excellent election information centre. It caused millions of people to register to vote, and it found poll workers. Facebook invested an enormous amount of money to protect the election integrity in the United States.

Given that the population of Canada is one-tenth that of the United States, can you confirm that Facebook will be willing to spend one-tenth in Canada of what it spent in the United States to protect our election integrity in the next election?

Mr. Kevin Chan: That is a good question. I would submit to you that, again, we have a global framework for these things. We apply the same infrastructure around the world.

Don't take my word for it. The media, academics and the government itself have said there was no material interference in the last election. That was very good to see.

Rachel and I and others are building out the team for the next election, whenever that may come. You have our assurances that we will do all that we need to do to protect—

• (1300)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): On those kind words, Mr. Chan, I must interrupt you. You are announcing that you and your team will be stepping up your work for the upcoming elections. The entire population will be very grateful.

I thank our three witnesses, who spent a good two hours with us.

Mr. Chan, Mr. Dinsdale, and Ms. Curran, thank you very much for coming today. We have successfully completed all four rounds. I congratulate all of my colleagues, who were willing to be rigorous about the time allotted to them to ask questions.

Before I end this meeting, as this is my first time chairing the committee, I would like to thank the clerk, Ms. Belmore, and her entire team, who have been with me since Friday to prepare for the meeting. They provided me with all the necessary documents and information. I also thank the analysts, interpreters and technicians for their very thorough work. Finally, I thank my colleagues for their indulgence with me today.

Before we end the meeting, I yield the floor to Mr. Champoux, who has raised his hand.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wanted to thank the witnesses. In fact, I would find it really disappointing if we did not take advantage of your first time as chair of a committee to debate motions. I would like to give you the full experience.

Colleagues, two weeks ago I told you that I had filed notices of motion for two motions, and I invited you to let me know if you had any questions—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Mr. Champoux, please wait a moment.

I would like to tell the witnesses that they can leave the meeting if they want to, unless the clerk tells us otherwise. I thank our three witnesses for attending.

Mr. Kevin Chan: Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Have a good day.

Mr. Champoux, you know I hate meetings that go on for too long; but since your sincere wish is to help me gain more experience as chair, in case I have to do it again someday, I gladly agree and you may table your motions.

Mr. Martin Champoux: It will be easy, since I submitted notice of them at least three weeks ago. I invited you to consult them two weeks ago and to let me know of any questions you might have. These housekeeping motions are available in the digital binder. Here is the first motion:

That the text of any substantive motion or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all committee members before the committee begins debate on such a motion.

The second motion is as follows:

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the Committee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advises the Committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

Let me tell you that these motions have been introduced in other committees as well, have already been discussed among our whips and have been submitted to the Clerk of the House.

I am prepared to answer any questions, if there are any.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I'm not an expert on procedure, so the clerk can help me if necessary. If you agree, we'll take them one by one, because there may be amendments and other comments afterwards.

I will read Mr. Champoux's first motion again to make sure there is no ambiguity. I hope that the interpretation is correct. If not, I will also read it to you in English. Then, Ms. Dabrusin, I will give you the floor.

So this is the first motion that Mr. Champoux has tabled today, the notice of which was tabled on March 1, if I'm not mistaken:

That the text of any substantive motion or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all committee members before the committee begins debate on such a motion.

Ms. Dabrusin, you have the floor.

[English]

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Motions can be brought from the floor in the course of proceedings and, in fact, have been. Does this motion not actually have the impact of blocking motions from the floor, going forward? You would have to have it in writing and translated and circulated to be able to have such motions.

• (1305)

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Ms. Dabrusin.

Are there any other comments?

Mr. Champoux, do you want to respond to Ms. Dabrusin's question, since it's your motion?

Mr. Martin Champoux: I think motions without notice can be discussed. However, by the time we discuss them before we vote on them, whether they are in French or English, we should have already received them translated in both official languages. This does not preclude us from having discussions on motions presented without notice.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Are there any questions or comments?

Mr. Waugh, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to amend the first motion to add “members' offices”. That would come after “a federal department”. We would like to add this, if possible.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): The clerk would like to speak.

Go ahead, Ms. Belmore.

[English]

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Aimée Belmore): I'm sorry, Mr. Waugh, but I'm looking for where it says, “federal offices”. I think perhaps you might not be looking at the right motion, sir.

I can redistribute Mr. Champoux's motion if that would be helpful for everyone.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: That would help, if you could. I was looking at the first motion. Is it the one that says, “That all documents submitted for committee business that do not come from a federal department”? We would like to add “members' offices”, if possible. Is that the first motion we're dealing with here?

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): No, it's not that one.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: I'm wrong, then. I'm sorry.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Madam Clerk, my understanding is that you're going to send the motion to all members.

I will read it again to make sure it is correct. I will try to do it in English, if I may.

[English]

“That the text of any substantive motion or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all Committee members before the Committee begins debate on such a motion.”

[Translation]

By now you should have received both the French and English versions by email.

In the meantime, if I may, Mr. Waugh, I will turn it over to Mr. Housefather. Then we'll come back to your amendment.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I put up my hand to clarify something for my friend Kevin. The motion he was seeking to amend was already adopted by this committee. We adopted it about a month ago.

There are two motions that Mr. Champoux has put forward today. The second one is absolutely fine and has been adopted at other committees. The one he is now putting forward has been rejected at all the other committees I've been to because of the feeling that it would stop the flow of amendments being put forward and the ability...

The interpreters do this work. They translate. The motion would put the clerk in the impossible position of having to translate something, be responsible for the translation and send it out to members when something comes up at the meeting, which is an impossibility for the clerk. It was rejected at other committees because it would make it very difficult to send something out in writing that came up at a meeting without somebody officially translating it. That's why it hasn't flown at other committees. I understand the reason for it.

[Translation]

With all due respect to Mr. Champoux, I don't think this motion works. The first possibility is that a lot of time may pass between the time an amendment is moved and the time we vote on it, because someone has to do the translation and send it to all the members. I am not sure who is responsible for doing the translation. The second possibility is that we may have a bad translation.

I prefer to oppose this motion, but I fully understand why you moved it, Mr. Champoux.

• (1310)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you.

I think everyone has received the motion by email.

Mr. Champoux, before I give you the floor, I'd like to go back to Mr. Waugh, who proposed an amendment.

Mr. Waugh, I'd like to check whether you still think it's necessary or whether Mr. Housefather's explanation has convinced you that it's not.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: No, it's not.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I'm pleased to hear that.

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I understand Mr. Housefather's concern very well.

A good way to reach a compromise would be for me to propose to remove the concept of motion in amendment from this request. On the other hand, in the same spirit and according to the same logic as the motion we adopted a few months ago to ensure the reliability of the translation of the texts that were presented to us, I think that, when we vote on a motion, there can sometimes be subtleties. We can discuss them. However, when we vote, I think it would be appropriate for the text of a motion to at least be presented to us in writing.

What does Mr. Housefather think?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you, Mr. Champoux.

The clerk could confirm the following. If we take out part of the text of the motion, it would read as follows:

That the text of any substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all committee members before the committee begins debate on such a motion.

I think this is already the case. I don't think we can receive a motion only in one language. Basically, it must be sent in both official languages. So I personally don't see the point. However, it will not prevent us from voting again on something that is already in the legislation or in the way we operate.

In my view, if we take "or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion" out of the motion that you put forward, it becomes meaningless. I've been a member of Parliament for five years, and I've never seen anyone introduce a motion in advance without it being in both official languages.

Madam Clerk, could you confirm that a substantive motion could not be introduced in only one official language? As I see it, if it were not in both official languages, you would not even send it to us.

The Clerk: For the work of the committee, it would be okay to move a substantive motion without notice and without it being in both official languages. You always have the right to do so without notice in the committee's work. The interpreters then take care of the translation.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I'm sorry, I was misinformed. I have never seen that before. This is good news. It means that, in general, people are very careful.

Mr. Champoux, you have the floor.

Mr. Martin Champoux: I was just going to say that it is possible to introduce a substantive motion right off the bat. I expect that it will be translated into both official languages by the interpreters who are already on site at the committee. We don't have to send it to the Translation Bureau. We don't have to wait for the next meeting, because it can be done fairly quickly.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Mr. Champoux, do you want to move an amendment to your own motion and then have a vote?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Sure, if everyone prefers.

In the same spirit, any motion in amendment could also be discussed. However, if it is the will of the members of the committee to accept this motion, including the amendment about any motions in amendment.

Let me move an amendment, no problem. The motion would read as follows:

That the text of any substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all committee members before the committee begins debate on such a motion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Mr. Champoux is moving an amendment to his own motion.

Does anyone have a comment on...

Just a moment, because I see the clerk nodding at me.

Madam Clerk, go ahead.

The Clerk: I'm sorry, but Mr. Champoux is not supposed to move an amendment to his own motion. It should come from another member of the committee.

• (1315)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Okay.

Mr. Housefather, I see your hand raised. Do you want to move an amendment to Mr. Champoux's motion?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, I would like to suggest an alternative. I know that Mr. Champoux unfortunately cannot move an amendment to his own motion. I would also like to point out that we have not received the English text of the motion. The text of the amendment was actually drafted in French only.

Finally, I would like to point out that, in other committees where a member wanted to make an amendment to their own motion, the chair has sought unanimous consent of the committee to allow the member to withdraw their original motion and reintroduce the motion with the amendment. In fact, this has always been allowed in every committee in which I have participated.

With your permission, Mr. Chair, I move that Mr. Champoux be allowed to withdraw his original motion and reintroduce it with the proposed amendment.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): I'm in complete agreement. I think it's very logical. I need to know whether we have unanimous consent to allow Mr. Champoux to amend his own motion by replacing it with a new one, from which he has removed the words "or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion".

All those in favour, please raise your hands.

Mr. Champoux, unfortunately I don't have unanimous consent.

Does anyone else want to comment on the original motion?

If there are no further comments, I will ask the clerk to proceed with the vote.

[*English*]

The Clerk: Are you voting on the motion as amended, or on the motion as proposed by Mr. Champoux?

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): This is the motion as proposed.

The Clerk: So it's the motion as proposed without amendment.

[*English*]

I'm going to read it again to ensure that everyone is voting on the same item.

[*Translation*]

That the text of any substantive motion or any motion in amendment of a substantive motion be distributed in writing in both official languages to all committee members before the committee begins debate on such a motion.

[*English*]

Is this what you're voting on?

Thank you very much for clarifying, everyone. I just wanted to make sure I'm recording this correctly as a decision of the committee.

(Motion negatived: nays 9; yeas 1)

[*Translation*]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you. The motion is therefore defeated.

We'll proceed with Mr. Champoux's second motion.

Mr. Champoux, you've already read it. I'll read it again quickly to see whether people have any comments.

That the clerk inform each witness who is to appear before the Committee that the House Administration support team must conduct technical tests to check the connectivity and the equipment used to ensure the best possible sound quality; and that the Chair advises the Committee, at the start of each meeting, of any witness who did not perform the required technical tests.

I don't think there will be much debate on this, but I don't want to take away your right to speak. Does anyone have any comments on this motion?

There being no comments, I will turn the floor back to the clerk so we can proceed to a vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas, 10; nays, 0)

Mr. Champoux, you are batting .500. That is not so bad.

I gave my thanks earlier. I'll just add the ones I owe to Mr. Champoux, who allowed me to practice managing motions during a committee meeting.

Mr. Champoux, would you like to say a few words? They will surely be the final ones.

● (1320)

Mr. Martin Champoux: Thank you all for your patience. I'm not a big fan of extending committee meetings, but these motions have been on notice for some time. I'm glad we were able to vote on them this morning.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Rayes on his performance as committee chair today. Great job!

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Alain Rayes): Thank you.

I hope you have a good week in your ridings. We will be waiting for the notices of the next meetings.

Have a good day, everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.

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