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CANADA

## **Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, April 13, 2017**



**Chair**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry**



## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

Thursday, April 13, 2017

● (0905)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** I'd like to call the meeting to order, please. For the first part of the meeting we're going to be in public, because we're dealing with a motion that we had notice of at the last meeting. We will begin.

Mr. Nantel, would you propose your motion, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Yes. The motion is the following:

That the Committee invite the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to appear before the Committee within 45 days to discuss the efforts of the Corporation, by virtue of its mandate, to ensure the representation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and of francophones, and concerning the Corporation's activities in the context of the 150th anniversary of Canada.

[English]

I'm sure you all have it, anyway.

[Translation]

I think that this is very relevant. There was considerable controversy over this series. The CBC apologized. As you know, I am a staunch supporter of CBC/Radio-Canada. That said, we must be able to acknowledge that a mistake was made, and this one was shocking. Of course, it can be argued that the production company made mistakes, but it was still our public broadcaster that endorsed that series, bought its first episode, and then the second and the third, and felt that it was fine.

It is very relevant to ask the corporation's representatives to appear. I even think that it is an opportunity for CBC/Radio-Canada to provide explanations and make amends, for example, by saying that such mistakes will not happen in the future. It is clear that CBC/Radio-Canada has an important role to play, especially this year. So I think that it would be relevant to hear testimony from their representatives.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nantel. I would entertain discussion on this motion.

Mr. O'Regan.

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Pierre, I have issue with *The Story of Us* as well, notably the omission of St. John's as the oldest European city in North America. I do have some hesitation about the state making programming

decisions, but I think the motion you have is broad enough when you talk about representation. My only issue is the 45 days, only because I think we have enough going on. We have this, and then motion M-103.

I agree we should look at it, but it's the timing of it. I think we have a lot happening. That's my only issue.

**The Chair:** Are you proposing an amendment, Mr. O'Regan?

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan:** If we got rid of the timeline, I'd be satisfied with that.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on the amendment?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** It's kind of time sensitive, with the CBC, because we're dealing with the 150th. I think it's the sooner the better we get CBC. It is time sensitive.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** I agree with Mr. Waugh that it is time sensitive. The reality of this committee is that we have so much to deal with, and it's even worse out there. I mean, we all know the situation of all the media and printed material, Radio-Canada, and all journalist television. We have so much to do instead of anything else.

Obviously, this is time sensitive. The big celebration is on July 1. You do what you want, but I think it's clear.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** I'll speak to the main motion after we deal with the amendment.

**The Chair:** All right.

We're voting on the amendment. The amendment is to remove "within 45 days".

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we will go to the amended motion.

Mr. Van Loan.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** I will support the motion for the exact opposite reason that Mr. Nantel is bringing it. I actually want to commend the CBC for excellent work and make the observation I made previously on this, which is that I think the CBC should be doing more of this type of genuine public broadcasting, focusing on our history and our culture and the like, and doing less imitation of the States and less news and so on.

I observe that all the complaints are that people feel their story has been left out, which makes my point exactly, that there has not been enough of this kind of programming and that's why people feel left out. I want to commend them. I think they are talking about the things we should be talking about and focusing on the things we should be focusing on for the 150th. I'd be delighted to have them here to toss them a few bouquets. I'm sure I can find some other things that I don't like about the CBC if I look really hard, but this is an example of where they're doing it right.

**The Chair:** I should bring some ammonia salts with me for when that happens, Mr. Van Loan.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.):** I am also favourable to the motion. I have similar arguments as my colleagues.

I think that the CBC plays an important role, and I know that the network must play an even more important role. But precisely because of its importance, I would like the CBC's work to be

professional, and the corporation should ensure that the information it provides is consistent with the facts. I think that an institution like the CBC really has no excuse for having made such big mistakes. I would certainly like to hear what its representatives have to say, since someone approved what was shown. I like history, but I also like it to be consistent with the facts. I don't want to be brought to a place that does not belong to us. I am also looking forward to hearing from the corporation's representatives.

● (0910)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Is there any further discussion? If not, I will call the question on the motion as amended.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** Now we can have a two-minute break to get something to eat while we go in camera.

Thank you.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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