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## Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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**Thursday, February 7, 2008**

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**Chair**

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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• (1535)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)):** I call the fourteenth meeting of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to order, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), for a full investigation of the role of the public broadcaster in the 21st century.

Before we go in camera, we have one notice of motion that's been put forth for the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage from Bill Siksay, MP, for February 7, 2008:

That the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage urgently study the matter of the sale of the international rights to 135 titles from the CBC catalogue to Fireworks International, a division of ContentFilm of the United Kingdom and that the Standing Committee request representatives of the Board and management of CBC/Radio Canada to appear before it the week of February 11th to present their rationale for this sale to a non-Canadian corporation and to outline the process they engaged in this matter, and that representatives of the Canadian Film and TV Producers Association and other interested parties also be invited to appear before the Committee on this matter, and that, if necessary, extra meetings of the Committee be scheduled to facilitate this urgent study.

I'm just going to let Mr. Siksay speak to the matter, and then we'll go to Mr. Bélanger.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

I apologize for being the last one through the door this afternoon.

Chair, this has been something that I'm sure most members of the committee are aware of. It has received some coverage in the media. I think it's a significant issue for our public broadcaster in the sense that these 135 titles from the CBC represent a significant piece of Canada's cultural heritage. I'm very concerned about the decision to sell them off to an offshore distributor, especially when there are Canadian distributors who apparently were interested in having that contract and buying those international rights to those titles. They

seem to have been completely left out of any opportunity to bid on that piece of Canada's cultural heritage.

I think it is a very important issue. There are many people who were very concerned about it. I think it would make appropriate sense for us as a committee to call representatives of the CBC, other distributors who are concerned about that, film and TV producers who are concerned about that, to come before us and look at the issue more carefully.

So that is the proposal that's before the committee.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bélanger.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Chairman, I don't want to belittle the significance of what Mr. Siksay has proposed; however, we have before us the task that we're nearing the completion of. I think it is an important task, and I would not want at this time to delay it. So I would move that we table this motion.

**An hon. member:** I'll second that.

**The Chair:** You don't have to second it.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** You can discuss the wisdom of tabling, can you not, Chair?

**The Chair:** No, you can't.

It's been moved by Mr. Bélanger that we table the motion.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** We'll just recess for a couple of minutes, because we do have to go in camera for the rest of our meeting. I ask all those who aren't part of the meeting to please vacate the premises.

Thank you.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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