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Chair

Mr. Gary Schellenberger

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• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC)): Welcome, everyone. I'm sorry for the little bit of a delay. We had a little problem on where we were all meeting, so we're glad we have as many people here now as we do.

Welcome, again, to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, meeting number 26. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this is our study of plans and priorities of CBC/Radio-Canada.

Today we welcome our witnesses before us.

Before we start this meeting, I'd like to go over a couple of things. I want to remind members of the relevant legislation and point out that any questions that overstep the statutory limits set out in the Broadcasting Act or that inappropriately infringe on CBC/Radio-Canada's operational independence will have to be ruled out of order.

I'm sure we'll all have a good and profitable discussion today as we seek to learn more about the plans and priorities of CBC/Radio-Canada and how our public broadcaster is fulfilling its public mandate and serving our great country.

With that, gentlemen, I invite you to make your opening statements.

Go ahead on a point of clarification, sir.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, am I to understand that we can't ask questions about the two solitudes? You say any question about programming will be ruled out of order. Did I understand correctly?

[English]

The Chair: General questions can be answered, but if we get too specific....

I don't have a real problem with that. Let's—

Hon. Denis Coderre: Do you have specific examples of what you mean by “specific”?

The Chair: No, I don't, but I'll get there if I find it.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Will it be the feeling of the moment?

The Chair: Yes, sir.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Before starting, I would just like to mention that I have filed a notice of motion on TQS that I would like us to debate on Tuesday.

[English]

The Chair: We can do that. We'll put that on for Tuesday.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Welcome, Monsieur Lacroix, Mr. Stursberg, and Monsieur Lafrance. Thank you for being here today to speak with us about your plans for CBC/Radio-Canada and how CBC/Radio-Canada is fulfilling its mandate for Canadians.

Before we begin, I would like to remind members of the relationship that CBC/Radio-Canada enjoys with the federal government. CBC/Radio-Canada is an arm's-length crown corporation whose independence is legislated in the Broadcasting Act. I won't read that yet; let's hope we don't have to get there.

We welcome your words.

[Translation]

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation): Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, members of the committee.

Thank you for your invitation to come and talk with you today about CBC/Radio-Canada's plans and priorities. We appreciate your interest in, and your support of, public broadcasting.

Before moving on to the main topic of our meeting this afternoon, I would like to take a few moments to talk about your recent study on the mandate of CBC/Radio-Canada.

Since becoming President and CEO, I have spent a lot of time listening, reflecting on written materials and ideas, talking with our employees and meeting with various stakeholders who work in our broadcasting environment, and focusing on the issues that are currently confronting your national public broadcaster.

Obviously, I have also read your report and its 47 recommendations. I must tell you that I find many of your conclusions and recommendations absolutely on the mark.

[English]

First off, thanks to all of you. Thank you for your efforts and for your success in capturing the views expressed by Canadians across the country about public broadcasting and CBC/Radio-Canada. In doing so, you have highlighted the importance of public broadcasting in our country and the belief, which I strongly share, that CBC/Radio-Canada should continue to play a pivotal role in the social, cultural, and democratic life of this country.

It is particularly significant that so many of your report's conclusions are unanimous. Interestingly, you clearly recognize the importance of secure funding for the corporation over more than its current twelve-month cycles. And your call for a cost of living adjustment to this funding is a necessary first step toward stable funding.

Most importantly, this committee has made a clear call for a new relationship between CBC/Radio-Canada and Canadians. I cannot overstate the importance of the MOU proposal.

This document will clarify for all Canadians the services we will provide and the resources necessary to do that, thus allowing us to meet their expectations. It will enable CBC/Radio-Canada to evolve as a critical cultural institution in this country, according to the needs and objectives identified by the government and by Parliament.

This is imperative. If public broadcasting is to remain relevant in the modern broadcasting environment, it cannot stand still or offer a less compelling package of services to Canadians. Its competitors are not. Their new programs, products, and technological offerings are not. Consequently, status quo is unacceptable for your national public broadcaster. CBC/Radio-Canada must move forward. It must adapt to the changing cultural diversity of Canada. It must be flexible.

I believe your MOU proposal will enable us to do so. It will enable us to meet the needs of Canadians in an effective manner and to be accountable for it.

● (1540)

[Translation]

From an operational viewpoint, an MOU based on a seven-year period is the framework that we need. This longer-run horizon will enable us to plan more efficiently, organize ourselves more effectively, better forecast capital spending, re-think our infrastructure, and therefore link our strategic objectives to our resources over the entire seven-year period.

Overall, your report is a blueprint for action and we are ready to work immediately with the government to begin developing the memorandum. We, like you, are looking forward to the government's response to your report at the end of June.

However, I would like to emphasize the urgency of implementing your recommendations and, in particular, putting in place the MOU. The CRTC's proceedings on the renewal of our seven-year licences will likely take place in the second half of 2009. In the interests of good governance and efficient planning for all of the services we offer to Canadians, the contents of the MOU should set the stage for the CRTC proceedings. We therefore suggest that work on the drafting of the MOU begin as soon as possible.

[English]

Let me move to our plans and priorities. In the four months since I became president and CEO, I have begun a number of formal initiatives that I believe are vital for our company. All of these initiatives are focused around three key priorities: our people, our programs, and the need for this company to push forward strategically if it is to meet the challenges of its environment. Thus, all of our actions and decisions will revolve around these three Ps—people, programs, and pushing forward—all in one national public broadcaster.

At CBC/Radio-Canada, everything we do—TV, radio, digital content, programming ideas, and journalistic excellence—depends on the creativity, intelligence, and dedication of our employees. Our people are therefore key to our success. We will only succeed if they are engaged and supportive of our direction and initiatives.

In January I began meeting regularly with employees from across the company. So far I have visited various facilities and departments from Vancouver to Quebec City. I have sat in breakfast meetings with small groups, listened to presentations, walked the floors, and spent time in mobile units and production facilities. I will continue to do so throughout my term.

What I am discovering is that not only do our employees have a commitment to excellence in public broadcasting and a passion for CBC/Radio-Canada, but they are also committed to change, as they all realize what is happening to our environment. They're ready for this. They are willing to embrace this. We need to show them how to get there. They understand that if we don't keep up with the rapidly changing environment, we will be left behind.

● (1545)

[Translation]

Harnessing the enthusiasm for change that our employees have expressed is essential in helping to shape our strategic directions - not just within each department, media line or linguistic side of the company, but across the entire company and each of its components.

Because, while CBC/Radio-Canada carries out numerous activities, is present on numerous platforms and works in a very big country, we often forget that we are part of one company. We must think and act as a single entity if we want to achieve our strategic objectives.

This way of acting provides us with numerous advantages and permits us to distinguish ourselves from our competition. Let me give you a concrete example of this.

When I was in Vancouver, our news team there had just produced a story on the use of tasers by police. The journalist was a bilingual francophone based in British Columbia. The cameraman was a bilingual anglophone working for Radio-Canada. The researcher and radio producer were anglophones living in Toronto who worked for the CBC.

Their story ran that evening on both French and English national television networks. The following morning, it was adapted for English and French national radio. There was more in-depth information on our French and English websites, including streaming audio and video and podcasts. In the end, their story was picked up by other news organizations around the world.

[English]

The point is that by working together, pooling these strengths and resources, we provided, in this case, a much better service to Canadians, a service that no other broadcasting entity can offer in this country. Great things do actually happen when we work together. This is where we become distinctive, this is where we have an edge, and this is what your national public broadcaster will exploit.

As I indicated, strengthening this aspect of our operations is now one of our key priorities.

You have recently finished studying our mandate. You know that the broadcasting industry is defined by change: changing technology, changing audiences, changing demographics, thus changing demands on the public broadcaster.

You also know, as we do, that when it comes to their public broadcaster, not all Canadians are comfortable with change. You have heard some of the reaction we've had to our upcoming changes to Radio 2, and to the CBC orchestra. We are very sensitive to that. But we cannot shy away, and will not shy away, from making the tough choices and consequently effecting the changes that we think are necessary for us to serve all Canadians.

[Translation]

In a few weeks, CBC/Radio-Canada will showcase our athletes as they compete against the best in the world at the Summer Olympics in Beijing. It is the pinnacle of our commitment to Canadian athletes all year round. For some years now, we have been the recognized leader in developing new and more efficient and effective technology for our coverage of the Olympic Games. This is one of the ways in which our expertise clearly stands out.

At the same time, we must continue to use our limited resources in our daily operations in a way that ensures our services remain relevant to the changing needs of Canadians.

[English]

We are currently trying to find the resources we need to enhance our services, to make the transition to digital and high-definition television, and to make more programs. Our appropriation is lower today, in real terms—actually \$400 million lower—than it was 15 years ago, yet the number of platforms on which we are expected to deliver our services continues to grow, and the cost of making programming has exploded. We have to adjust, but we can't stop innovating or taking risks. We need to make sure that the widest

range of unique Canadian programming is available to Canadians when and how they want it. In this regard, the Canadian Television Fund is a crucial resource.

While I am the president and CEO of this organization, we will pursue this creative agenda as one company, building bridges between our employees, building bridges between Canadians, innovating and serving the interests of all in this country.

We will now be pleased to answer your questions.

Thank you.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you for that presentation.

Our first question will come from Mr. Coderre.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, it's a pleasure to meet you. As was said when the microphone was off, I've always enjoyed your basketball analyses. As a former minister of sport, however, I would say I'm not sure there are 365 days of sport a year, at either CBC or Radio-Canada. We could talk about *La Soirée du hockey*. Let me tell you that it will take more than *Passion sports* and *La zone*.

The financial management of the CBC is completely different from that of Radio-Canada. If I can be allowed one brief comment, I would ask you to invest more in amateur sport. That doesn't necessarily mean bringing back the program *Les Héros du samedi*, but you have to take advantage of the fact that you'll have the Olympic Games. I thank you for the work you've done with regard to China, particularly when an attempt was made to censor the site.

I'm going to talk to you about governance. I completely disagree with you when you say this is one company; CBC/Radio-Canada isn't one company. It's an institution whose mandate is to bring peoples together. You are a window on what Canada should represent and you should pay attention to the words that are used. There must be more transparency and respect and you must ensure that the attitude is one of bringing people together and not contemptuous, like the one we sensed in the Claude Dubois affair.

I'd like to talk to you about respect. It seems that your employees have a problem with absenteeism, deep depression and drug use, as a result of which workshops have to be given on respect, which will cost nearly \$1 million.

How much does the federal government subsidy amount to? Why do Radio-Canada employees need a workshop on respect? I suppose CBC employees will need one as well.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Good afternoon, Mr. Coderre. It's a pleasure for me to meet you officially. I appeared in December, and you were not yet on the committee. Incidentally, I very much believed in the program *Les Héros du samedi*, because I worked on it.

Mr. Denis Coderre: Bravo!

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: It's a pleasure for me to talk to you about our workshops on respect. This extraordinary initiative is the result of a joint effort by the union and management parties of Radio-Canada. In 2005, an employee survey was conducted, and we identified three causes of discomfort in Radio-Canada's working environment: respect, work recognition and workload.

We immediately got down to work. We called in Mr. Brun, an individual from the outside, a well-known teacher. He helped us build a program. To introduce that program, we trained 90 individuals, 45 managers and 45 union representatives, who gave the respect workshops. To date, nearly 6,500 of our employees, both anglophone and francophone, have taken those workshops. In fact, we've built 472 workshops.

Yesterday I spoke with Ms. Francine Durocher, one of the CUPE vice-presidents in Montreal. She has worked at Radio-Canada for 38 years, and she alone gave 84 of those respect workshops. We really believe in them. It's a major investment for our business.

Hon. Denis Coderre: How much?

• (1555)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: The investment amounts to nearly \$1 million, \$250,000 of which comes from the six unions and \$100,000 from a federal government grant under the employer-employee partnership program. The rest of the money comes from Radio-Canada.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Do we need workshops in order to get respect? Will that also include television hosts? I would propose Don Cherry.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I assure you that our workshops on respect are recognized as places where people work hard. They learn things there. Through this exercise, I really hope to improve the day-to-day work of our employees.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Is that working?

I'm a major consumer of CBC/Radio-Canada programs and I often take part in them, while respecting the independence of the programming.

Was it justified to send a letter of apology to Ms. Fabienne Larouche? Isn't that a disavowal of Guy A. Lepage? I saw the interview of Ms. Chantal Fontaine, and I didn't see the point of throwing a little left hook at the people on *Tout le monde en parle*. Since it's televised, viewers want to know.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Coderre, that kind of question concerns our programming and the way we manage our business, as well as the independence we show in our day-to-day activities.

Mr. Chairman, allow me not to answer that question. I believe that would be justified.

[English]

The Chair: I realize that, too, and the time is up right now—

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: I'll send you a letter of apology, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: We will move to Ms. Mourani.

[Translation]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here to answer our questions.

You mentioned the Olympic Games. I can't help but ask you the following question. Out of respect for human rights, to make a gesture toward China's attitude, are you going to refrain from broadcasting the opening of the Olympic Games?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Once again, that's a question concerning programming. That's a decision for the vice-presidents. We'll make that decision at the appropriate time, if there is a change in the normal course of our business, Ms. Mourani.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: From what I understand, programming is not at all influenced by the department.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Exactly. A major provision on the independence of Radio-Canada contained in the Broadcasting Act prevents the department, parliamentary committees and any other—

Mrs. Maria Mourani: It's really your decision.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I'd like us to talk about the Access to Information Act.

Your corporation has a very high profile. You must surely get a lot of access to information requests. How many employees have you assigned to that task? Are they qualified? Have they received training? Based on the information I have, three employees handle those requests, two on a full-time basis. Is that correct?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Allow me to give you some information on our access to information program.

Since September 2007, when our corporation became subject to the Access to Information Act, we've received 580 requests. To put that in perspective, the Crown corporation that receives the next largest number of requests receives 60. There's even someone in Ottawa who's making a business out of it. He asks us questions and then sells the information he's obtained. Two hundred and sixty of those requests have been met and 75 are waiting for a reply. That gives you an idea of the scope of the task.

We've added resources because we were surprised by the volume. Eleven employees work in our access to information department. Just yesterday we announced the hiring of a new director, who comes from National Defence, and who has a lot of experience, to help us resolve the requests under the Access to Information Act.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: All right.

From what I understand, people sometimes have to wait six months before getting an answer to a request. The act provides for a period of 30 days, and notice has to be given if you want to extend that deadline. I've been told that, in the case of a number of requests, no delay notice was even sent and that that is quite common.

Can we say that that's in the past, or that the past is an indication of what's to come?

• (1600)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I can assure you that we have no intention of not being transparent in handling requests. That's definitely not the way we currently handle requests. We were surprised by the volume. We're trying to solve this problem, and that's why we've just hired new employees.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: All right.

I have another question about the Access to Information Act. One citizen told me that he had made an access to information request in March or April of this year concerning an agreement reached between Radio-Canada and *La Presse* in 2000 or 2001. He was told that the agreement had been lost, then that there was no agreement. Ultimately, he received a letter of intent concerning the contract between Radio-Canada and *La Presse*.

That's quite recent. That person is still waiting for the agreement. In fact, this shows that there are some problems with access to information requests at Radio-Canada.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I explained to you that 73 of the 580 requests that we've received are pending. The other 150 or 170 are not closed files and are also part of the process. I'm not aware—

Mrs. Maria Mourani: —of that specific case.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: —of that specific case. If you want to send me a copy, I'll be pleased to follow it up.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Very well.

Do I still have some time?

[*English*]

The Chair: No. We'll move now to Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Thank you, Chair, and thank you for being with us, Mr. Lacroix, Mr. Lafrance, and Mr. Stursberg. I appreciate that you have come today.

I noticed, as did Mr. Coderre, the change in language that I think is evident in your opening statement, in which you were referring to the CBC as a company, not as the corporation or some other language term. I suspect you've done that rather deliberately, and probably there is an interesting discussion to be had there. I'm not sure I like the change, but that's not where I want to focus my questions this afternoon.

There are some things in your statement that I agree with. You talk about the CBC being a critical cultural institution in Canada, and I don't think anyone here would deny that. You talk about how the CBC provides a service that no other broadcasting entity can offer, and I think there's no disagreement around the table here about that. You talk about building bridges to your audiences and to the community across Canada, and again, there is no argument there.

However, I think one piece of your audience right now is feeling as though the bridge has been blown up, shall I say, and those are certainly the folks who have enjoyed the classical music services of the CBC for many years, particularly on CBC Radio 2. I know you've probably heard from many of them; I know I have, and I know that many of them are organized on Facebook, for instance, where I think 15,000 of them are protesting the changes at CBC.

You talk about key Canadian cultural institutions, and for many of us from the Vancouver area the CBC Radio Orchestra is one of those key cultural institutions. In fact, it's one of the few national cultural institutions that exist outside eastern Canada, and one that I think many people in Vancouver and the lower mainland guard very jealously as a result.

I think other people as well have been concerned about the ongoing commitment to the development of classical performers and composers in Canada with the demise of the CBC's Young Composers Competition, for instance, and all the changes at Radio 2. I think most listeners who are interested in classical music see that as a very significant downgrading of that service.

There are lots of folks who are concerned about that. There are people in the cities, because most of our cities don't have a commercial classical music option. It's not something the private sector is doing—there are some in, I believe, Montreal and Toronto, but outside of that I don't think there are. There are certainly no commercially available classical musical stations in rural Canada, and rural Canadians have depended almost exclusively on the CBC for classical music.

They want to know why. Why this abandonment of the classical music constituency? Why this abandonment of faithful listeners who are probably among the CBC's most devoted fans? Why in particular in Vancouver, where Radio 2 had its greatest success in the country, and where its listening audience is already declining sharply? Why, Mr. Lacroix?

• (1605)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Siksay, thank you for allowing me to address these two important questions. I know they've been on your mind, and they've been on the minds of everybody, particularly but not exclusively in the western part of Canada.

Let me deal with this in two blocks; first off, the block about Radio 2. We consider that our commitment to culture is to respect the full musical diversity of this country. Consequently, this exercise that everybody thinks we are doing, which the media have called “the dumbing down of Radio 2”, is not that at all.

We hope these changes will open Radio 2 to more genres of music, and that Radio 2 will become the greatest showcase for Canadian music in the country. We hope we will expose older people of this country to music that is current—not only classical music. However, classical music won't disappear. It will still be the most important genre of music on Radio 2. We have to remember this.

We would also like to remind people that as we are changing we are going to do more with Radio 2. You said you were concerned about the lack of classical music. In September, we are going to be able to stream, 24/7, classical music in one of our services. This is new. It's going to be added to other streaming initiatives. So Radio 2, we hope, is going to become a very important showcase.

As for the orchestra, it was introduced in 1938. It was a great orchestra, and its purpose was to stimulate the creation of arts and the artistic infrastructure in Canada. At that time, content was needed on radio. Live-to-air performances were what happened with orchestras of this kind. There were about 70 radio orchestras in North America.

We have to be very understanding of what's going on. With the resources we have, we think we have expanded the use of a radio orchestra. For every concert that we put on with our CBC orchestra, we can record three from other symphony orchestras in Canada. There are 46 of these other symphony orchestras that we would like to open to Canadians as they listen to Canadian music.

The Chair: Mr. Abbott.

Hon. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Thank you, gentlemen, for joining us here today.

I was just looking at the Broadcasting Act:

The Corporation shall, in the pursuit of its objects and in the exercise of its powers, enjoy freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence.

I think you've seen commendable restraint on the part of my colleagues. Certainly, you'll hear from us that we are not here to program CBC.

I have a couple of questions. I'm wondering about the connection you believe there might be between the CBC, which is sponsored in large part by the Canadian taxpayer, and the fact that the Canadian taxpayer also sponsors or finances publishers, writers, people like that. I'm wondering about a decision that historically has evolved over time. I'm wondering where you're going with it.

Our good friend Peter Gzowski probably sold more Canadian books than anyone in the history of Canada. On *Morningside*, it was a delight for many Canadians who wanted to listen to him and get that kind of input.

There are programs that the radio continues to use, but there is a diminishing of them. I'm wondering if you would agree that maybe there is a place for the CBC. It's unique, non-commercial. You can get on and talk about books and promote Canadian ideas. On CBC we're talking to ourselves through our own books and our own medium. Those publishers, those printers, those writers, the Canada Council and their programs—all are sponsored by the same sponsor you have.

What is the place of CBC radio with respect to helping to expose Canadians to Canadian authors?

• (1610)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Abbott, it's about culture. Authors, music, dance, sports—these are all about what we are. Our mandate is to make sure we promote Canadian culture to Canadians, that they can see, in all of the services we render, themselves, that they can

understand. And in an environment like ours, where we have a very changing landscape in Canada, we have to make sure that we can understand who the public is and that their desires and needs are changing.

To go back to the example, whether it's authors or music, Radio 2 is not about making classical music disappear. It's about sharing the airwaves among different genres of music. It's about exploding what we do and what we do well—for example, a very good host taking you on a Radio 2 journey through something, which was classical music, repeating this experience, and making it available to all sorts of listeners on different platforms with different aspects of our culture.

So yes, there is a place for this.

Mr. Richard Stursberg (Executive Vice-President, English Services, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation): Let me just add a word.

CBC radio remains absolutely committed to books. Just as you were talking, I was counting the number of shows we have. At this point we have, I think, two shows that are devoted completely to books. And books also are an important staple of Shelagh Rogers' show and of *Q*, Jian Ghomeshi's show. As you may know, we've relaunched a television channel, to have a sort of higher arts channel, called Bold TV. Our plan is also to put a talk show about books onto that channel.

We had last February, for a week, *Canada Reads*, which is, as you know, the great competition we have to try to figure out which is the book. This year it turned out to be Paul Quarrington's book.

So we are completely committed to radio and to books. We know from the booksellers that probably one of the most important things that can happen for a book is to actually get picked up and become part of something like *Canada Reads*.

I can tell you that, ideally, it would be very desirable for us to go further with books than we are even now, but our commitment is absolutely sympathetic.

Hon. Jim Abbott: At the risk of getting into a debate with you, the reason I raised the question is that the question was raised with me by people in that industry. They were envisioning that in fact, contrary to what Mr. Stursberg has said, there is a decline.

Be that as it may, I want to touch very quickly on BitTorrent. You used it to broadcast the final episode of the *Next Great Prime Minister* series. How do you see it fitting into your future plans? What role do you foresee for these applications or new types of media as far as within the stable of CBC actually getting its programming to people? Where does BitTorrent, where do these applications, where does new media, all fit?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I will ask Richard, please, to answer that question.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: What we know for sure is that the way in which people will consume television products over the course of the next little while is going to change. We've been doing a lot of different things about television products. The BitTorrent thing was simply one example, but I can give you others. We right now have a deal with iTunes for video. What we do is we put up our different shows, whether it's *The Tudors*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, or so on and so forth. Anyone can download them for a price and they can watch them.

Interestingly, although this is still a relatively modest service—a lot of this is very new, actually downloading television shows onto your computer—our show *The Tudors* is actually the most popular of the shows that are currently being downloaded.

I don't doubt for a second that we will go much further in this direction. Ultimately what we want to be able to do is make our shows available to Canadians in whatever way they find most convenient. We'll move further into video on demand, further into pay per view, further into download to own, in one variety or another.

•(1615)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much. I want to thank you for coming, because, as you know, following our report there was a real sense that we needed to hear from you with regard to how you are responding to the report and how you plan to implement some of the things in the report on your side.

I note in your opening remarks that you talk about the urgency of the government to implement the report and put in place the MOU. I agree with you on that. I think it's a pity this hasn't happened sooner, or at least that it has not been responded to yet by the government, but in the MOU there are going to be requirements for the CBC to be accountable. So I want to ask you a question about something we flagged in our report based on the Auditor General's report with regard to the six areas in which you were required to develop performance indicators. If you notice, there is a recommendation with regard to performance indicators in the report, so hopefully, as we deal with the MOU, we can get something from you.

I'd like you to respond as to why those indicators were not developed. Do you plan to develop them as part of your accountability structure? Why is it so difficult and different to have English and French radio and television reporting on performance indicators? Perhaps you could explain why that is.

My colleague, Bill Siksay, has already asked my second question in regard to the CBC Radio Orchestra in Vancouver. I must say that while you have met your mandate by now focusing on regional orchestras on the radio, it certainly puts people like me, in Vancouver, who will have to support our own orchestra, in a difficult position. But I suppose that's how it has to crumble.

I also want you to answer me the other question. You said in your report that you wanted to enable CBC radio to evolve as a critical cultural institution in this country. I believe that in order to do that you have to not only have a national reach but you have to have a

regional reach in which we can represent Canadians to each other in every region.

During our review we heard from witnesses in many parts of Canada who said they were not receiving CBC radio, that that reach was in fact being cut back. Why is that happening? I understand it's about infrastructure and the need to have infrastructure, so can you tell us what are your infrastructure needs in order to achieve that?

Thank you.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Madam Fry, thank you for the question. Let me go to the second part first. Let's talk about expanding radio service into different communities.

As you know, and you alluded to it in your report, Mr. Rabinovitch showed up here with his management team—the key guys being around me—and told you as a committee that it was really an important aspect of our lives to try to expand radio service to the 8 million Canadians that we could reach in adding our services into about 15 different communities.

There was a cost to that plan, \$25 million in infrastructure, \$25 million in operations. He told you about this, and in your wisdom you identified this as an important need, but you didn't make a recommendation on its funding. So I assume, if this becomes a priority in the MOU, that we would go down and have negotiations with the government. If this became a priority, the extra funding would go, to use your suggestion, to \$40 per capita, and we would use those dollars. If this were considered a service area in which the government would want us to invest, this is what we'd do. So it is a priority.

Right now, Madam Fry, with the dollars we have, we can't expand this without making serious inroads into what we have as services.

You talked about accountability. You talked about the performance indicators. We are working on this right now. As a matter of fact, we talked to our internal auditor yesterday, with our CFO, in terms of measuring it and continuing to do this. This is important. I believe in performance indicators and tools of measurement. We are going to get there.

•(1620)

Hon. Hedy Fry: In English and French?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: In English and French.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Why is it that in English and French it is so difficult?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Simply, from what I understand, the way we report costing—and we're working on this also—the English services and the French services simply don't have the same reporting system. So we're trying very hard to make sure that the information is easier to compare and easier to report.

The Chair: Mr. Malo.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Chairman, Ms. Mourani has some supplementary questions to ask the witness.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm going back to the Access to Information Act. It states that you must make the manuals available to the offices so that the public can consult them. I was told that your website is in a way your physical location and that it could be accessible to the public. On that site, there's very little opportunity to get an enormous amount of information, in view of the fact that you have a lot of manuals. It would be virtually impossible to put all that on the Internet.

On the one hand, do you intend to find ways to adjust that? On the other hand, in the March 18 issue of *La Presse*, it was reported that someone had made an access to information request and had to wait six months after the initial request before the documents arrived in a used sport shoe box. Do you have so little money at Radio-Canada?

My third question again concerns that article. I'll jump to another theme, expense accounts. Reference was made, among other things, to Mr. Rabinovitch's expense accounts. It talked about reimbursements for limousines without invoices, invoices for \$4,000 for five nights at a hotel and \$7,500 claimed without an invoice. There was also talk about other individuals, not just Mr. Rabinovitch, in the *Journal de Montréal*, among others.

I would like to know whether you are going to travel by limousine and if we should expect equally enormous expenses, not just on your part—I don't know your current expenses—but on the part of various CBC/Radio-Canada executives? Can we expect a little more restraint?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Malo was right to say that Ms. Mourani had a lot of supplementary questions to ask me. Allow me to try to answer them quickly.

With regard to the physical location, your question is very specific. I don't have the answer, but I'll be pleased to do a follow-up for you to determine what kind of environment we offer our people.

Second, as regards the March 18 article, I believe someone gave the *Journal de Montréal* some information that didn't come from us and didn't come out of a shoe box. I assume instead that it's someone who took advantage of the information to fuel the story in question. In any case, that's what I understand from what happened.

As to the expense accounts, it's obviously very important for us to be absolutely transparent and reasonable in the use of public funds. That is not a problem. We moreover have internal policies. We've made changes in the normal course of the review of our policies on the way we'll examine expenses that are made in the normal course of conducting our business and travel. We expect the policies in place to be complied with. The people you see here are now responsible, under the new structure, for examining the expense accounts of people who report directly to them. I believe that transparency is key.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Are these new policies?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: In the normal course of the annual review of our policies, every time we can improve, it's a pleasure for us to do so. That's what we're implementing. It's easier to document

expenses with the new system. With the policies, we're continuing to improve documentation, and it will be even clearer and more readily accessible.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: I'll give you an example. In the House of Commons, we're currently asked to submit restaurant receipts in addition to the little coupon we're given when we pay by credit card. I've obtained documents—that I won't table—through the Access to Information Act that show that many people submitted Visa or MasterCard receipts and that it couldn't be determined why a meal was taken or whether there were three or four persons involved. It couldn't even be determined whether there were two or three courses. These were only receipts that could sometimes be for \$250 or \$700, and so on.

Is that also among the changes to your policy?

• (1625)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Yes. Ms. Mourani, we now have forms in which you have to explain with whom you ate and where you went. We intend to hide nothing. We want to be absolutely transparent. From now on, that information will be increasingly available on our website. It is at the moment, but it will be even more detailed and clearer so that people understand how we travel and what we do.

[English]

The Chair: We've reached the time limit.

Mr. Fast.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to join Mr. Siksay in voicing my concerns about the reduction in classical music programming on CBC Radio 2.

I fully recognize that CBC is a crown corporation. It's at arm's length from the government. I understand that the role of this committee is not to interfere in your day-to-day operational decisions. I don't believe that's the role of our government either. However, we do individually, as members of this committee, represent constituents in our own ridings, and I'm going to share with you some of the concerns they've raised with me.

Abbotsford is my constituency. It's a wonderful city, a musical city. In fact, it may surprise you to know that in the last five years of *Canadian Idol*, four of the finalists came from Abbotsford. I believe that every one of those finalists, whether it was Greg Neufeld, Shane Wiebe, Jacob Hoggard, of Hedley, or Karen-Lee Batten, each one of them had their roots either in classical music or in choral music. Of course, now they've gone on to other genres of music, whether it's country, pop, or rock.

I'm concerned about how we're going to judge your decision to scale back the classical music offering on Radio 2. I'm going to be very concerned that over the years, if we continue on that path, fewer and fewer Canadians, first of all, will develop an appreciation for classical music, and fewer Canadians will have an opportunity to become interested in classical music to the extent of developing their skills so that they can become skilled in other forms of music as well.

So my question is direct to you. How will you judge? Upon what standard will you be judged as to the success or failure of your decision to axe the CBC orchestra, as well as to scale back the classical music offerings on CBC Radio 2?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: There are two different things here. First off, we can't actually judge—to use your word, sir—the axing of the CBC Radio Orchestra. What we can do, though, is show Canadians and make them hear what the priorities and the investment of the dollars that used to go to fund this orchestra will do to classical music in this country, by exposing Canadians to other symphony orchestras in the country. That's what we will do.

If I can come back to a few things I said a few minutes ago, what's important to us is to make Radio 2 an incredible showcase of Canadian talent in different genres of music.

I can't emphasize enough the fact that classical music is not going away. On Radio 2, it's still going to be the most important and the most played music on that network, but it will share the airwaves with other genres of music so that we can better reflect and open it up to Canadians across the country in different genres of music. So I think that's really important.

Mr. Ed Fast: Could you not have achieved that same goal by perhaps establishing another channel for these additional music offerings? We presently have CBC Radio 2, which offers mostly classical music programming, and I think by your own admission there's going to be less of that available to the public, at least on CBC Radio 2.

First, were there other options that you looked at? Secondly, what consultation process did you go through to arrive at this decision? Were stakeholders in the classical music industry consulted along the way?

• (1630)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I know Richard wants to make a comment in regard to Radio 2.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: This change in strategy for Radio 2 has actually been the subject of studies and consultations that date back three years.

I have to tell you, I'm relatively new to radio. I became in charge of radio at the end of November last year, but I followed this—when I was in charge of television—and then looked into it in considerable detail when they asked me to worry about radio as well.

I have to tell you, I think this was certainly the most far-reaching consultation that I've ever seen in terms of a shift in CBC strategy.

I will just say a couple of other things. One is having access to classical music. As the president said, it will continue to be on Radio 2, but as he mentioned earlier on, the other thing we're going to do is we're going to put up a full classical music channel. It will be on the Internet. It won't be on the airwaves.

Now it's interesting that if you look at the consumption statistics for radio in North America, approximately 11% to 12% of all consumption of radio is now online, and that obviously skews very heavily by age. So if you were to look at a younger demographic, they're going to consume way more of that stuff online than an older demographic, and that is increasingly the case.

But I would say one other thing: one of the facts that made an enormous impression on me was that in Canada we release about 30,000 pieces of music a year, and of those 30,000 pieces of music, only 240 get commercial airplay. So there is a kind of vast musical landscape that you really can't hear. You just can't hear it. It's not made available, and that seems a shame.

So this shift in strategy is not meant in any way to denigrate classical music. Everybody understands the centrality and importance of classical music to the musical tradition in Canada. It's rather to open up for Canadians all the rest of the music to which they have so little access.

The Chair: Thank you. We move now to Mr. Scarpaleggia.

We do have another full hour. It seems that what happens is people ask questions, and then when it comes to about two seconds left to ask a short question, they ask a long one, which requires a long answer. That runs us a little over time.

So please try to organize your questions and answers a little better.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): I'll try that, Chair.

I congratulate Mr. Fast on pursuing this line of questioning. By the way, Mr. Fast is an accomplished pianist, as a matter of fact, and is very interested in musical tradition and so on.

I've noticed the change in the mix on Radio 2. I drive a lot, and it's getting to the point where if I'm looking for classical music—and I don't listen to it that much, but if I'm looking for it, I'm getting to the point where I'm saying maybe Radio 2 is not the place to go, because it's hit and miss. I'll get lounge music on a Sunday afternoon and then I'll get some jazz or whatever.

So I'm starting to think—in the Montreal area—is there another station I can go to and know that I will get classical music? Right now, I don't think I will with the same degree and depth of analysis that I would on Radio 2. So I'm not there yet.

I'm just wondering, if you make the mix too broad—in marketing terms—are some people going to say...? You know the demographic or the psychographic—or whatever you want to call it—that listens to singer-songwriters is not the same as the one that will necessarily listen to jazz or blues or classical. Is there a possibility that you will get to the point where some people in major markets that have classical music radio alternatives will just disengage from Radio 2, so you'll find your numbers falling? Those who like pop more may just stay with commercial radio, and then you'll be back here saying your audience is only 1% now. From a marketing perspective, is that possible?

Secondly, are we getting to the point where—going back to Mr. Coderre's initial point, which is that CBC is a company, but it's not Proctor and Gamble—we are doing too much segmentation? Of course, I'm referring to the Claude Dubois incident. I was driving to Ottawa that night and I was listening to the broadcast on radio, and it was fabulous. You reserved a portion for Mr. Dubois and some interpretation of his songs in French. When I came to the House of Commons the next day and I heard the complaints, I said, "What are you talking about? I listened to it and there was a great mix." But on TV there wasn't.

I would just like your general comments on those two points.

• (1635)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely. Again, Mr. Chairman, there was all sorts of stuff in a couple of minutes of questioning. Let me try to take them one after the other.

Depth and analysis of your experience in Radio 2 in classical music—that's what we're trying to replicate in other genres of music. That's what we would like to make sure all Canadians get, not only classical music, but other genres. That being said, you know that from 10 to 3 every day you will get classical music, as you are getting now—weekends, afternoons, Saturday afternoon at the opera for years and years, and there is another classical show on Sunday afternoon. So you know where to find classical music. I would be very disappointed should you choose to no longer listen to CBC Radio 2 because at that particular time there is no classical music. I would like to think all Canadians would open up and see and hear how great this showcase about Canadian music will be. That's the music part.

Let's talk about Claude Dubois for two seconds. Yes, I could come back and give you all the reasoning behind the programming decisions that came from taking three hours and 24 minutes, or whatever the show was, and summarizing it into 44 minutes. I can tell you the programming decision that Sylvain Lafrance at Radio-Canada took when he chose not to take this out. The bottom line is, at the end of the day, when you look at that particular show, Richard wrote to the world and said, you know what, we could have done a better job at reflecting—

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I don't want to spend too much time on that. I want to get back to my first question, which you didn't quite answer. The depth of analysis of popular music, jazz, is fabulous on CBC. My question is, is the classical music listener in the major markets going to say he's not available 10 to 3 on that day, and if he wants to have a regular stream of classical music and doesn't want to listen to it on his computer—he wants to listen to it in the car or on the kitchen radio—have you thought of the possibility that this listener in a major market like Toronto, Montreal, or Vancouver, will find a good private classical music radio station, just hook up with that, and be lost forever by Radio 2?

My last question is this, and I know there are a lot of questions, and I think Mr. Fast asked this. If you had more money—I understand your fiscal constraints, and I think you should have more money—would you create a separate radio station for more popular music?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Let me say one thing before Richard and Sylvain, who want to add to my answer.

Let's talk about money for one second. It's not simply a question of dollars, because the question of dollars has to be.... I go back to the MOU because that's really important, as Madam Fry said a few minutes ago. The MOU is central to us going forward. If the MOU stated in broad ways the services that your CBC/Radio-Canada was going to deliver, and we hooked those services to the dollar impact, then priorities would fall and we would then decide what it's all about. So it's not simply about a particular action or inaction. It's about the CBC serving all Canadians.

I know my colleagues want to say something. Let's try Richard for two seconds on programming.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: First of all, just on whether we could build another FM radio network, the answer is probably not. The struggle just to get FM licences right now in the country is enormous. We're trying to get our AM station in Vancouver onto an FM frequency because all over Vancouver you can hardly hear it now. This has proven to be an enormously complicated and difficult undertaking. We're hopeful that will all be resolved shortly.

I would just say to your bigger question, one of the things that's very striking.... We did a lot of market research around the shift in Radio 2. One of the things that became clear when we looked at the audience for Radio 2 is that it was getting progressively older and older. Part of the difficulty is that in the past people used to say that eventually people will grow into the CBC. It wasn't happening. People in their fifties were not coming to Radio 2. People in their forties were not coming to Radio 2. So we thought to ourselves, as a matter of public service, that we were going to have to broaden this.

My strong impression to your question is that this will allow us to reposition Radio 2 in a way that will serve the Canadian musical community better and grow the audiences more than if we stuck with the strategy we had in the past.

• (1640)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: I'm sure you will, because you'll have more genre and you'll bring in more music.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: Yes, and that would be good, so I'm not too worried about losing audience, the way you implied.

The Chair: Is there another response?

[Translation]

Mr. Sylvain Lafrance (Executive Vice-President, French Services, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation): Since you asked the question about Montreal radio, I'll take the liberty of answering. The issue of a new classical music or other network, for example, isn't a matter of money but rather of frequency. I agree with my colleague: it's not easy to get cross-country FM frequencies.

I'm a radio bum; that's why I've seized the opportunity to address the subject. I'm especially familiar with the world of radio. In that world, the biggest problem, given current trends, is the loss of musical diversity. It's dramatic. We always hear the same songs, always in the same places. We don't hear any new artists from different cultures; nor do we hear a lot of up and coming artists or those from the regions. There's an enormous problem of musical diversity on Canadian airwaves.

That's all the more true in Montreal, in French, because it's a more restricted environment. So this is an enormous problem that is generational to a certain degree. The radio stations' biggest competitors currently aren't other radio stations: they're iPods and other devices that let you listen to the music you like. Today, in the radio world, you have to create real diversity, real surprise, and introduce the public to all Canadian artists from all genres and from all regions. We won't be able to create 60 stations representing six genres. We have to operate in such a way that our radio is really an open door to all Canadian creation. I'm absolutely convinced of that.

To answer your question about marketing, I will say that the example of Espace musique in Quebec is relevant. The network has expanded considerably since they opted for a multi-genre format. Today, audiences are ready to discover musical genres that they were previously not interested in. That's what the Espace musique experience is showing.

[English]

The Chair: No one listened to what I said before, because we almost went twice as long.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I said we'd give you a gold star, Chair, and we will.

The Chair: But I think the answers were good.

I'm moving now to Mr. Chong. Try to stay within the realm. We still have three-quarters of an hour, but please try to keep your questions short.

Thank you.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to talk about a couple of things today. First I'd like to comment on the decision about Radio 2. There are problems with that decision. First, you're hemorrhaging your core audience. When I heard of this decision I immediately thought of Coke's decision in 1985 to get rid of its product and replace it with something new. Yes, it was kind of the same and had the same basic ingredients, but then it backfired. They had to reverse their decision because a lot of people identified with that product, and they alienated their core audience. I think that's partly what's going on here.

If you're trying to highlight some of the new songs and works that artists create in Canada each year and have them appeal to a younger demographic, then logically you would be putting this online through streaming audio, as opposed to on the FM band. The FM band probably attracts a much older demographic, versus the younger demographic, which is much more apt to use the online streaming method. From that second perspective, it doesn't make any sense.

Another point is if you want to highlight a greater diversity of music, you should have a third station on the FM band. If there's no room, governments and agencies should make room. Every other public broadcaster in Europe has more than one or two stations. They have numerous stations.

We don't think big here. We end up doing things in half measures, and I think that's the corporation's biggest problem. Over the decades it has whittled away to nothing, and it is becoming increasingly irrelevant. I don't blame you for that, but I'm telling you that's the reality. I think it's partly because of a lack of funding and partly because of programming decisions like this that alienate your core audience. In the attempt to diversify your programming, you alienate your core audience and make yourself even weaker than the weak position you find yourself in.

Those are the points I would make on the Radio 2 decision.

• (1645)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Yes, I understand that is your point of view. Do you have a question for me, sir?

Hon. Michael Chong: My question is if you could tell the committee, which you haven't, what plans you put together with respect to expanding radio coverage throughout southwestern Ontario, throughout south central Ontario. What sorts of plans or proposals has the CBC put forward to expand Radio One in the southwestern Ontario market?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: That is something that was part of the plan, and you might be referring to Hamilton.

Hon. Michael Chong: Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, Barrie.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We understand we have an issue with radio coverage. That was my answer to Madame Fry. We have a plan we suggested here, referred to in the memorandum to expand radio service, because—you're absolutely right—there are some really important communities in Canada that don't get Radio One, that actually don't get our signals. And that was part of the 25 plus 25 plan that you referred to in your report, that didn't link to a particular funding in the recommendation. But if that were held as an important service that the government would like us in the context of an MOU to focus on, that would obviously become a priority.

Hon. Michael Chong: Have you received the funding for the 25 plus 25?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: No, there has been no indication of that. It is one of the recommendations without the funding link that comes out of the report that this committee worked so hard on.

Hon. Michael Chong: How much do you think the decision with respect to Radio 2, the classical station, is linked to the fact that you don't have the wherewithal or the ability to create a third FM station that would highlight some of the new genres, the new music that's out there?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: When we look at the Radio 2 decision and the services we have right now and the constraints and the dollar limits we are playing with, we think the best way is for us to expose the Canadian music that Richard was referring to in the same context as we did with what Sylvain spoke about a few seconds ago, which is *Espace Musique*. We think the best way for Canadians to listen to new genres of music without affecting.... And I respect the love and the passion of the classical music supporters. They have been very vocal. I know they're there. They're disappointed, but we are trying to tell them they've got to share their airwaves with other people. We will give them more through different services we do. That's what we're trying to do at Radio 2.

Hon. Michael Chong: Can I just rephrase the question?

The Chair: No, you can't. Time's up.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Thank you, Chair.

I'm struggling a little to understand the impact of the change at Radio 2. Do you have audience numbers since the changes began at Radio 2, and can you tell us what is happening, with some clarity?

Mr. Richard Stursberg: First of all, to the issue of how we are doing more generally with respect to our core audience, English services this year, and in the last results in terms of audiences, have the highest share for Radio One that they've ever had—

Mr. Bill Siksay: I understand it's really good with Radio One, but the question was about Radio 2.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: Radio One and 2 combined—I just have to say this: television had the best share it's had in many years. For the first time it beat Global. Now—

• (1650)

Mr. Bill Siksay: The question is about Radio 2, Mr. Stursberg.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: Can I? On Radio 2, we have not yet seen any erosion of audience. I don't expect we will see any erosion of audience.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Even in Vancouver?

Mr. Richard Stursberg: No, not yet, and—

Mr. Bill Siksay: That's not what I was told by officials of Radio 2 in Vancouver.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: We have not seen erosion of Radio 2. And in fact we will not really have a clear sense of what's going on until probably the beginning of next year, because what we're going to do is re-launch a lot of the shows come this September, and then we're going to promote the new Radio 2. Then we'll see how the listeners respond to it and get a better idea when the books come out in January.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Sorry, when did these changes begin at Radio 2?

Mr. Richard Stursberg: The big changes are not even starting until September.

Mr. Bill Siksay: But they started already.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: Yes, we've done some small changes over the course of the last little while.

Mr. Bill Siksay: And you've done no audience surveys to find out what the effect of that is on your—

Mr. Richard Stursberg: We don't actually do the audience surveys. BBM does the audience surveys, and we obviously study the results very carefully, but so far we have not seen erosion.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Okay. I'm also interested in the idea—and Mr. Chong was raising this—about saying you're going to put up a classical music channel on the Internet and encourage folks to get their classical music fix that way. It would seem to me that when you've got an established audience that's using over-the-air broadcast to receive this service—admittedly maybe they're older than others—why would you suggest they're the ones who have to figure out the new technology? The younger audience that maybe you're trying to attract, who may be more familiar with that technology, why wouldn't they be the ones to look for this other content on the Internet?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: We receive, as everybody in this room is well aware, about \$1 billion from government. We think that the best way to ensure that with Radio 2 we serve all Canadians who basically contribute to these services is to offer to our listeners more than simply one genre of music. That is the point of the changes we're trying to do to Radio 2.

We're not trying to make classical music disappear. We have too much respect for that. In September you will see the new schedule, the new shows, the new host.

Mr. Siksay, you're absolutely right, and I think Mr. Fast referred to it also: when you listen to Radio 2, it's an experience; people take you by the hand and make you understand what you're listening to. We hope to multiply this by three, four, five, and six, and to open up this airwave to more Canadians so that they can enjoy more genres of music. That is what we're trying to do with Radio 2.

Mr. Bill Siksay: With regard to the CBC's mandate, clearly there's one that says that you're to safeguard, enrich, strengthen the cultural fabric of Canada. Over the years CBC has taken a particular leadership role around classical music. Now with these changes many people feel like you're exactly abandoning that specific mandate around classical music. It's something the CBC has taken initiative and leadership in over many years, and now is backing away from that commitment—and I listed the ways at the beginning.

Is that not in fact abandoning your commitment or your mandate to safeguard and enrich the cultural fabric of Canada, by backing away from the long-established traditions of the CBC around classical music?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I respectfully disagree with that comment. We think that by taking this to another level, on the contrary, we will show Canadians, and we will meet our mandate requirements even better by changing the format of Radio 2. We are not abandoning classical music. It will still be on our airwaves on Radio 2, the most important music that you will hear.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Were other options considered, other than disbanding the CBC Radio Orchestra?

The Chair: Very short, Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: It's a fairly specific question, Mr. Chair.

Were there other options considered, other than just outright disbanding the CBC Radio Orchestra—finding another home, finding another sponsor, selling off the asset in some way? Was that considered?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Richard.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: I think we have to sometimes just remember what the CBC Radio Orchestra actually was. The CBC Radio Orchestra is not an orchestra like the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, where we have employed musicians, full-time. That's not what it is. It's different kinds of players who get together occasionally to play music, and we pay them to do that.

I just don't want people to have the impression we were winding up something that is now scattered to the winds. Many of these people continue to play; they play for different orchestras around Vancouver. That's the situation.

As we were saying earlier, really, this issue of the CBC orchestra in Vancouver was one of cost. As the president said, for the price of doing one recording for the CBC using the CBC Radio Orchestra in Vancouver, we could do three if we used other orchestras, of which there are about 46 symphony orchestras across the country.

That just seemed to us, frankly, as a matter of fairness, economy, and good sense, the right thing to do.

I would just say there's a reason why all other radio orchestras of this variety in North America, of which there were very many, have been disbanded. This is the last one left in North America.

• (1655)

Mr. Bill Siksay: There are many in Europe still.

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up for questioning.

We now go to Mr. Coderre. I'm going to give you an extra little bit of time, because some of these people have had so much time.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: That's kind of you, Mr. Chairman. French Canadians and Quebecers, of whom I am one, are very pleased with that rebalancing.

One ally, friend and colleague of ours, Mr. Don Bell, member for the riding of North Vancouver, adds his voice to that of everyone here in saying that I don't consider the CBC Vancouver Orchestra just a salon orchestra that gets together from time to time. I think it's an important orchestra. There is a sense of belonging and loyalty to it, and it would be important to think about restoring it. We should think that way every time. Fortunately, television viewers prevented *Le Jour du Seigneur* from disappearing. There's a question of belonging and loyalty. That's important, both for a radio station and for an orchestra, particularly since it's the last one, to consider the fact that you're not representing a company. You represent an institution that provides a public service. I can understand the diversity and multiplicity of genres, but I think you also have to show a certain balance and a certain restraint in certain decisions because of the symbolism and representative nature of that agency. Allow me to disagree with you. Like a number of people in Canada, I would respectfully ask you to review that decision.

I want to go back to the question of public services. I would like to hear Mr. Lafrance from time to time. Earlier you said that CBC Radio 2 is a public service and that you want to ensure that everyone can have it. I would like Radio-Canada to have the same reflex. Sometimes French Canadians, Acadians or people from outside don't get the same service. *La Soirée du hockey* is a very good example. There's no problem with *CBC's Hockey Night in Canada*; you can see that program everywhere. On the other hand, with regard to *La Soirée du hockey*, not everyone in the regions can afford cable.

How do you make decisions? Do you study ratings? I know you don't have the same funding methods for sports, because you have a consolidated fund as opposed to a dedicated fund. Doesn't that trouble you at times, Mr. Lafrance or Mr. Lacroix? We're sports junkies. I'm not just thinking of *La Soirée du hockey*. Sometimes I get the impression there's a double standard for CBC and Radio-Canada. I feel like a second-class citizen.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Coderre, I hope you don't really feel that way. I'm a francophone as well. I was also disappointed to lose *La Soirée du hockey* from Radio-Canada's airwaves. Like you, I was used to René Lecavalier and Richard Garneau. Those voices were part of my everyday life when I was a child. However, you have to understand that it's not because Radio-Canada didn't want to broadcast *La Soirée du hockey*. In a competition in which the hockey people decided to set up an auction, we never had a chance to make a bid to bring *La Soirée du hockey* back to Radio-Canada. We lost it in an auction that was won by RDS. It's not because we didn't want to keep it at Radio-Canada.

• (1700)

Hon. Denis Coderre: Would you be ready to get it back?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I think they signed a contract for five or six years. We can do nothing in that case. When the contract is reopened, we'll see whether bringing *La Soirée du hockey* back to our network is one of our priorities.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Lacroix, do you watch Radio-Canada?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Of course, sir.

Hon. Denis Coderre: When you see an anglophone artist, do you change the channel?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: That's always a major question that comes up in comments made on the gala. I'm a francophone—

Hon. Denis Coderre: I'll stop you right there. I won't be talking about the gala because, on May 27, you'll be testifying before the Standing Committee on Official Languages, on which I sit. Decisions have been made.

Generally, when you watch Radio-Canada television and you see an anglophone artist, do you change the channel?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: If you're asking me the question as an individual, the answer is probably no. That also depends on the person who's on screen and whether I'm interested in the subject.

Hon. Denis Coderre: It can be boring in both languages; we agree on that.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Exactly.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Do you believe that a general interest television network includes a news service?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Take the example of Radio-Canada: the news service there is very important.

Hon. Denis Coderre: What's your reaction to the TQS situation? Obviously, at some point there will be in-depth discussions about the future of general interest television. We know we'll have to adjust to specialty services. Thank God we have to invest and continue to support Radio-Canada and the CBC. There's also the question of fees, cable operators' revenues. TVA will emphasize the fact that Radio-Canada is subsidized. I think you should take advantage of this forum, Mr. Lacroix, to give us your view on the matter.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: On what exactly?

Hon. Denis Coderre: On general interest television, revenues and all that.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Pardon me, Mr. Coderre, but is the purpose of your question to determine whether, in my view, our revenues are a significant factor in the context of general interest television?

Hon. Denis Coderre: I want to hear your point of view. Earlier you said that general interest television should include a news service. I'd also like to know what you think about the future of general interest television in view of what is happening with regard to the CRTC. The CRTC is independent, but, if the minister does her job right, she'll manage to overturn decisions. We think it's possible to determine an orientation without waiting for the CRTC.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: A general interest television network like ours is constantly under economic pressure. Our revenue figures will be available soon. Advertising revenues are down approximately 7% or 8%. Our revenue base is shrinking, and we're facing some difficult issues.

Earlier you were talking to me about TQS. I'm not aware of the business model that the TQS people want to try to build. Like you, I read the news and I saw what they were doing. I understand the economic realities of the model they're dealing with.

I don't know whether Sylvain wants to add anything on general interest television.

Mr. Sylvain Lafrance: In public policy terms, a fundamental issue will arise in the next 10 or 20 years, both for us and for you. That is the funding of aspects of television that represent a market failure, that is to say those that the market will not be able to support.

I'm going to take the example of Quebec because it's a smaller market and it enables us to see today what will happen in Canada as a whole in five or 10 years. General interest television networks are currently the ones generating the major dramas, called the high-cost series, and which have regional stations and news services. They are all losing revenue. Their revenues are melting away, whereas those of the specialty channels are increasing. If no one acts, the regional stations, news services and major dramas will decline.

The news about TQS merely confirms this. We predicted it a long time ago. The general interest television networks are the ones that create the news, the regional news more particularly, and the dramas. If funding sources aren't rebalanced now, our entire system could be weakened in the long term.

In fact, public and private services are facing the same problem, that is to say declining revenue. That's affecting us as well. In Quebec, we're headed toward a decline, even the disappearance of high-cost series, a reduction in news services and problems at regional stations. It's really a major problem for the television industry.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Have you—

[English]

The Chair: Okay, I think we evened up there pretty good.

Hon. Denis Coderre: We're evened up?

The Chair: Yes, sir.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Okay. Merci.

The Chair: Now we'll move to Mr. Del Mastro.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing today. I've enjoyed hearing about the vision of the CBC, moving forward.

I have a couple of questions. One was alluded to by my colleague and I want to go back to it briefly.

In March, newspapers were commenting on expenses of former CBC/Radio-Canada executives. It was an access to information request. Obviously we have a responsibility to taxpayers, and I wonder if you could comment on the policies of the corporation when it comes to the use of taxpayers' funds for expenses. I know a CBC spokesperson defended the expenses. I just want to give you the opportunity to expand on that a little bit.

● (1705)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Thank you, sir.

We have policies with respect to travel expenses. We have policies with respect to the way they are reimbursed and the use of business class.

I was saying to Madame Mourani a few seconds ago, in the context of our normal processes we are reviewing these policies—as a matter of fact, right now, because they are coming up in our schedule. We respect and understand the fact that we have taxpayers' money that we play with and use and spend, and we are respectful of that environment. We will be very transparent, sir, with the way we do this as we go forward.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: I commend you for that.

There's a bit of a debate raging on an issue before the CRTC right now on fee for carriage. I assume you're familiar with it. I've heard both sides of the debate on this. I am concerned that costs of fees for carriage will be moved on to consumers of cable TV and satellite TV. Does CBC have a position on the fee for carriage issue? If so, what is it?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely. I'll ask Mr. Stursberg, who has been in this industry and has known this aspect of our business for 25 years, to help you with this.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: I used to also be in the cable business and in the satellite TV business.

I think what Sylvain gave you by way of an account of the situation with respect to the Quebec marketplace and the centrality of conventional broadcasters is absolutely accurate, and he puts it very nicely when he says, “it’s a little bit the canary in the mine shaft”.

What’s happening in the Montreal market is what is beginning to happen now across English Canada. The issue that’s before us is that if we want to maintain—it’s exactly the same thing in English—strong news services, regional news services, and Canadian drama, which is very expensive, the conventional broadcasters are the ones who do it.

They find themselves in a very funny situation—by “they” I mean us and CTV and Global—which is that the specialties, whether TSN or whoever it happens to be, have access to two forms of revenue. One is with the cable companies and the satellite companies, which pay them by way of fees, and the second is advertising revenues. We’ve said, if it matters to the system that we continue to do drama and news and regional shows and whatnot, then we should make sure that everybody has access to the same various sources of revenue.

So we’ve said to the commission, absolutely, you should tell the cable companies they should pay the conventional broadcasters a fee. But we’ve said the fee actually has to be tied to programming commitments. It has to be tied to things you’re actually going to do, not just to help out your bottom line.

We recognize that a lot of people have asked whether that will make basic rates for cable go up, so the other thing we’ve said we think is very important is this. Right now your basic service, if you live in Toronto, consists of over 60 channels. It’s an enormous basic service on which the cable companies keep piling more and more stuff. We said, why don’t we make it simple? Let’s make a very small basic service that would just consist of the key Canadian services.

Right now, the funny thing is—it’s a sort of irony—that if you want to buy basic cable service, they force you, essentially, to buy American channels.

So we said let’s make the basic service very small, and after that people could just pick whatever they want. Then, if the service comes down from being 60 channels to 12 or 10, you can see that the price of basic will collapse and the amount of freedom consumers will have to pick whatever it is they want and to control their own cable bills will be dramatically increased. That’s our proposal.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Are the cable companies currently paying a fee for service to U.S. broadcasting networks or affiliates?

Mr. Richard Stursberg: No. They pay to U.S. cable channels. So for example, the Arts and Entertainment Channel would be paid a fee by the cable companies for carriage; so too the Golf Channel, or Speedvision, the racing car channel. They would all be paid fees by the Canadian cable companies.

• (1710)

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Am I out of time?

The Chair: Make it very short.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: A very short question?

The Chair: A very short question that will take a very short answer.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: You’ve got it, Mr. Chair.

My concern on this issue is that consumers will see it as a tax. What would you say to those consumers? If you’re going to reduce the basic service, by extension they’re going to have to pay, if they want to maintain all the channels they have.

What would you say to them? What are they going to get in return for paying this extra money?

Mr. Richard Stursberg: I would say to them two things. First of all, if this is a tax, you’re already paying it, and paying it for TSN and for Showcase and for everything else. So I don’t think it breaks any new ground.

I think if they were to follow our proposal, what would happen is that they would not only get a much less expensive form of basic; they would also continue to get, and might get enhanced—ideally we would like to enhance—Canadian drama and Canadian news and regional services.

Over and above that, as I was saying earlier, they would be able to pick only the channels they want. Right now you buy channels in bundles. If you say, “I only want the Home and Garden TV channel”, they say, “No, you have to take the dog channel with it.” So you say, “Well I don’t want the dog channel”. In our proposal you would be able to say, “I’m only going to take the gardening channel; I won’t take the dog channel.” So your bill overall should shrink, since now you’re only buying the things you really want to watch. Most people actually don’t watch more than about 15 channels.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Ms. Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Thank you very much.

I just wanted to make a quick comment—

The Chair: Sorry for interrupting. There’s time for one good question. We have two or three minutes each for this round.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Sure. I want to make a quick comment and then my question.

My comment is about the idea of classical music. As someone who views classical music as an important component of our heritage, and loves opera, etc., I also believe that classical music can be Chinese classical music, Indian classical music. So when we speak to classical music, are we merely speaking to western European classics? And if you could do a classical channel and include the demographics of Canada—its new demographics, and that classical music—would it be a costly thing to do?

And I want to ask you something—to shift from all of this—about digital. The ability for us to see Canadian drama and Canadian films and to distribute it is very compromised in Canada today, as you well know. Distribution of Canadian film is poor.

Could the CBC see itself as one day fulfilling the role of being the Canadian distributor in the way that the BBC does? If so, what would you require? Would you require getting on to digital, or the digital platforms, and what would that cost?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Richard—who's in the film industry, literally—can help you with that, and then we'll talk about costs.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: I also used to run Telefilm, so I know a little bit about the feature film business. What you say is quite right, that there is a big problem about the distribution of feature films in Canada. That's absolutely true, particularly in English Canada. In French Canada the situation is much better.

We have actually proposed a model to the industry whereby the CBC would become much more heavily involved in the support of the feature film industry. The difficulty that we confront is that the way in which feature films get released is they first all go into a cinema, then they go to DVD, then they go to the pay networks, and then they come to the broadcasters. So by the time we get the film, it may have been basically over two or three years since it was at the box office, and when Canadian films don't perform that well to begin with, people have forgotten about them after three years.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Excuse me. Look at the BBC model.

Mr. Richard Stursberg: I know. I'm going to come to that.

So what we've said is that we would be very happy to actually promote the theatrical release of feature films, but the way it would have to work is that it would go to the movie house first, go to DVD, and then we have to get the film on the same day and the same date as pay TV. We believe that this would do no damage to the pay TV operators—because in English Canada, their business is essentially selling U.S. films—but it could dramatically strengthen the Canadian film industry.

We've had conversations with the pay TV operators; we've had conversations with the film producers in this country; and we would be delighted to move in that direction, but so far we haven't been able to get the pay operators to agree to the shift.

• (1715)

Hon. Hedy Fry: What about getting on platforms like iPod, etc.?

Mr. Richard Stursberg: I think you're right, but I think in terms of feature films it's still the case that the big experience runs off larger screens.

The Chair: Mr. Malo.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being with us today.

I'd like to go back to the fees that you claim from cable operators for general interest television networks. Mr. Lafrance, in your comment earlier, you talked about the rebalancing of revenue sources. In my mind, that means that you take existing revenues and you redistribute them differently. Mr. Stursberg said instead that an

additional amount was going to be required for public television services. However, as its cable operator will be redistributing services to its subscribers, I would like to know how much more that operation will cost the subscriber.

Mr. Sylvain Lafrance: I have the same answer to your question. We all have the same position. We're talking about two things. On the one hand, things have to be rebalanced between broadcasters, specialty and general interest networks. We also think that consumers should not have to absorb the costs. In our proposal, it's not the consumer who absorbs the costs. We're saying that there has to be a minimum basic service and we have to create greater free choice for consumers, which will mean that the overall cost to consumers will remain low and a rebalancing will occur between those that have to receive fees.

Mr. Luc Malo: Isn't it unrealistic to think that ultimately it won't be the subscribers, citizens who will pay more?

Mr. Sylvain Lafrance: I get about 80 or 90 television channels at home. If I was asked to choose, honestly, I don't know whether I would receive that many. Perhaps my cost would go down. Moreover, most Canadians think they're probably paying for TVA, TQS, CTV and other channels, when they're not. And yet the general interest channels still attract the vast majority of television audiences in the country.

Mr. Luc Malo: How much additional revenue does that represent for Radio-Canada or the CBC?

Mr. Sylvain Lafrance: We haven't proposed any specific revenue. We never specified an amount. We said that the day the principle of fees is recognized, it would be up to the CRTC to determine, through hearings and on proposals by broadcasters, what the amount should be.

If we at Radio-Canada wish to support Canadian drama, support the regional presence and increase our presence in international news, we develop a project and we request a fee of such and such an amount for that project. So we think that should be related to a proposal by broadcasters to improve television content.

Mr. Luc Malo: Does that mean more dramas and high-cost series at Radio-Canada?

Mr. Sylvain Lafrance: That's probably what we would propose because we think that Canadian drama, at both the CBC and Radio-Canada, is a fundamental aspect of our role.

Mr. Luc Malo: For example, we're talking about helping private general interest broadcasters by removing advertising from Radio-Canada. How much could that measure cost?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: In the breakdown of our revenues, between \$300 million and \$350 million in advertising revenue is generated by our activities. That figure is in addition, among other things, to the millions of dollars invested by Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Luc Malo: And of that portion, product placement represents very little.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Bill Siksay: I want to come back to my first comment, Monsieur Lacroix, about your choice to use the word “company” in referring to the CBC. In the past, I’m sure we would have heard “corporation” or “public broadcaster” used more regularly.

I’d like to ask why you’ve chosen to use that terminology. Are you preparing us for a future privatization of the CBC by using that kind of language? I’m sure many of us might take that language as an indication of future direction.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Siksay, I apologize. My use of that word simply shows where I come from, my background before CBC. I could have and should have used “corporation”. I stand corrected. The word “company” is for me the environment in which we work every day, and that’s the reason it was used. As a public broadcaster, I clearly understand where we’re going. I do not have—nor do we have—an agenda to privatize your national public broadcaster.

Mr. Bill Siksay: It’s interesting, Monsieur Lacroix. Did you write the statement yourself and go through the process of having colleagues look at it?

• (1720)

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely. A number of people worked with me in delivering my remarks. The word “company” for me means the environment in which we work. We are a public broadcaster, but we are a corporation. Where I come from, “corporation” and “company” are synonyms.

Mr. Bill Siksay: Is driving Radio 2 into the ground also a direction to prepare for privatization of that service?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Siksay, with all respect, we are not driving Radio 2 into the ground.

The Chair: Mr. Chong.

Hon. Michael Chong: I want to focus on the comments about generating cable fees, which I thought were quite interesting. I know that the British Broadcasting Corporation charges a licence fee of approximately £120 per household per year, which is \$250 Canadian. This is mandated by the British government, and it generates about £3 billion in revenue. This is about \$6 billion Canadian. With 60 million citizens in the United Kingdom, this works out to about \$100 per capita in funding. I know that your public resources are approximately \$1 billion Canadian. With 33 million Canadians, that works out to about \$33 per capita.

Could some of the funding shortfalls you feel you face be addressed by this new carriage formula?

Secondly, we as members of Parliament get complaints about Radio 2 trying to diversify and the lack of expansion into the largest market in the country, the greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes Barrie, Kitchener, Waterloo, Hamilton. This is a market of almost 10 million, and will grow by three or four million in the next 25 years. How many of your problems are due to your not having access to greater revenues?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: No doubt, sir.

In your report, one of the recommendations that came out of this committee was an increase from \$33 to \$40 per capita, which would have been an increase, if we use your numbers, of about \$200

million for CBC/Radio-Canada. This obviously would be a welcome improvement.

When we look at the services we would agree upon—and I go back to the MOU—the MOU would then describe in this new contract with Canadians what we would do. We would then link the dollars and the extra money to these services in order to deliver them in the best possible way and also to a level of service that Canadians expect from their national public broadcaster.

It would obviously make a very big difference.

Hon. Michael Chong: Have you modelled the amount of additional revenue that could possibly come from these carriage fees?

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: The answer is—and Sylvain explained it well—depending on the circumstance, depending on the services, and depending on what the object of those dollars would be, because the fee for carriage would go into programming and the delivering of a particular project. It wouldn’t go to the bottom line and simply add to the national broadcaster’s revenues.

Hon. Michael Chong: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We all did an extra round.

Hon. Denis Coderre: Can I have a point of clarification?

The Chair: Yes, you can have one point of clarification.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: Mr. Lacroix, earlier you said something important in English. You changed the word “company” to “corporation”. Since this meeting is being televised, could you repeat that in French, please.

[English]

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I would be happy to do that.

Where I come from, the definition or—

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre: In French, please.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Of course, pardon me.

Hon. Denis Coderre: We’ll start over.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: The definition of “corporation” is found in the federal Companies Act. The French translation of “corporation” is “compagnie”. In my way of viewing the business, “company” and “corporation” are synonyms.

Mr. Coderre, I hope that that—

Hon. Denis Coderre: So it’s an institution, not a company.

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Absolutely.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you for that.

We aren’t taking any more questions.

Ms. Mourani.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Chairman, earlier I asked Mr. Lacroix a number of questions. He told me that he didn't have the answers. Would it be possible for him eventually to submit them to the committee in writing?

• (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: Mr. Chairman, can I address that?

The Chair: Yes, if you can answer it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hubert T. Lacroix: I would be pleased to do so, madam. I would ask you to be a little more specific about the question you asked me. You asked me a number of questions on access to

information. If you ask me those questions specifically, I'll be pleased to answer them in the best way possible.

Mrs. Maria Mourani: All right, I'll send you something in writing.

[*English*]

The Chair: I would suggest that you send something, and when the answer comes in, it could be distributed to all members of the committee.

With that, I thank you very much, gentlemen, for your candid answers here today and for listening to this committee.

With that, I adjourn the meeting.

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